



Lifelong Learning Programme

*GRUNDTVIG – 2011/2013*

## **NEW FAMILY, NEW CHILD? EARLY CHILDHOOD AND FAMILY TODAY IN EUROPE**

### **Principal aims of the project**

Main goals of this project are to reconsider educational processes in the light of intercultural approach; to define strategies for involving families in early childhood education; to create pedagogical tools which further good relationships between children and adults.

Europe is undergoing a deep economical, cultural and social transformation, and the role and space of early childhood education for the future must not be underestimated.

With regard to facilities for early childhood, in different European countries one notices some common phenomena: a) decreasing public resources b) increasing private participation, including by families themselves c) an increasing intercultural dimension and presence of so-called “different families” d) an increasing request for quality education both from families and from institutions e) a variety of responses to care and education needs for early childhood.

At the same time one notices contradictory phenomena: a need for politics for the family vs. decreasing social investment, a multiplicity of social actors vs. cultural standardisation. These are only two examples of the contradictions.

Our project aims to: create a context in which the partners may share their different experiences; further a shared understanding of the situation in each country with regard to institutional and project responses to early childhood and family's participation. The project offers opportunity to share educational methods through practical exchange between partners. This cooperation at a European level aims to promote mobility of people involved in project, to enhance exchanges and to enrich the experience of the participants. We will produce intercultural educational tools aimed to increase the impact of the project in different countries.

### **Why this project...**

Early childhood and family politics represent a strategic choice today in Europe. The guarantee for a better future depends from the ability of both single countries and whole Europe to respond to fundamental needs of children and their families. Today the family is transforming and we have to talk about “different models” of families because there isn't a singular model anymore. This changing regards the evolution of our society on a cultural basis but is also due to coexistence of different cultures and traditions. In the same way children are changing, because of media influences but also because of family

social and economical changes. Our intent is to establish our project on basic needs of children, because these needs are fundamental, and they last also when reality around us is changing. We refer to the need to be welcomed, to feel safety both affective and tangibly, to directly experiment a relationship with reality, to play, to feel authors of their own growth. Meanwhile we're aware that social and cultural reality is deeply changed. Today the whole Welfare system is in discussion, and it seems to us that is essential to understand proposals, solutions and experiences which are developing in Europe regarding care and education for early childhood. Besides, nevertheless the changing, family remains the point of reference both for children and institutions. And family politics haven't only an economical implication, they also imply educative and cultural aspects we would like to deal with.

We intend to - work around an "aware parenthood" – elaborate and compare educative strategies for active participation of families – create tools to fight stereotypes – get over intercultural barriers, always in full respect of centrality of children needs.

All partners in this project are organizations of Non Formal Education sector and many of them subscribed a platform dealing with formation of educative actors in this field, realised through another project of this same Program (Networking for non formal education in Europe): our motivation is also to enlarge our contact nets, our exchanges, and to enrich knowledge in the specific field of early childhood, connecting also with experiences that International Federation of Cemea (which some partners of this project joins) realised in cooperation with Unesco and European Council (see [www.ficemea.org](http://www.ficemea.org))

### **Aims of the project**

- to compare family and early childhood politics in different countries through examination of social, economical and cultural contexts of partners of the project, and comparing them with European community politics
- to compare and study the system of different typologies of care centres and facilities for early childhood in countries of the partners of the project
- to compare and integrate pedagogical tools for educators training in order to enrich the quality of welcoming for children, and experiment a more effective answer to their growth needs
- to compare and integrate pedagogical tools for support and development of parenthood in order to increase participation of families to conscious educative processes for children

All partners of this project share methods of active education, based on people participation in educative and formative processes, on interaction between theoretical and practical tools, on active work group, on sharing experiences as starting point of training.

### **Prevision of a general work plan**

September 2011

knowledge of national contexts and European appliances regarding early childhood

December 2011

synthesis of the research of different national contexts and production of a comparative document

March 2012

visits in different countries and exchange of practices around project subjects

July 2012, European formation seminary for early childhood operators/ first evaluation of the project

October 2012

synthesis of visits (knowledge of different typologies of structures and projects) and first common formation, together with common knowledge of European politics regarding early childhood and family

March 2013,

local experimentation conducted by application of tools created and elaborated during the exchange

June 2013,

production of a DVD with the synthesis of work and pedagogical tools, and final seminary with presentation of the process

July 2013

common evaluation and balance of partners around the project and preparation of the final report

September 2013

Dead line for the final report of the project.

## **DISTRIBUTION OF TASKS**

The coordinating organisation:

- 1) manages information to get started in the action
- 2) ensures communication between partners and participants
- 3) monitors the projects in determining an assessment plan
- 4) controls that all engagements are respected
- 5) ensures the following-up of activities
- 6) ensures the continuity of the project during the second year
- 7) promotes the project and its acknowledgement by European Institution
- 8) promotes the results of the project to international media and on line (web sites)

Each partner:

- 1) shares the information to get started on the action
- 2) makes sure everything is done for all partners to communicate efficiently
- 3) respects its engagements
- 4) takes part in the elaboration of the research fund and pedagogical tools
- 5) ensures the visits for the partners and the meeting with local partners (institution, association, pedagogical structures)
- 6) ensures the development of the experimentations on a local level
- 7) promotes the project with the regional and national institutions of its country
- 8) takes part in promotion of the results with national media
- 9) shares the project with members of its organisation

For all partners:

the core of the project is to share our skills, our experiences, our information and to engage in the elaboration of common training perspectives and pedagogical tools

## **EVALUATION**

The steering group (one person for each organisation) is the core of the evaluation, the group will decide markers and criteria for the general and scientific objectives that are

- evaluation of the different steps of the project
- individual and collective self-evaluation of the members of the steering group;
- interactive evaluation of each participant's work through the exchange of personal practices and schedules;
- a mid-term evaluation will be done in July 2011: the steering group will prepare a form for all partners to fill in.

Each seminar - each visit - each meeting will be evaluated: we will use specific evaluation forms that we will add to the final dossier. It is important that in occasion of the visits the partners can meet parents and have a special moment of evaluation with them. Pedagogical dimension will be assessed for the training seminars: methods, contents, progress of the trainings, difficulties encountered and problem solved, interpersonal relations, communication between trainers and trainees, managing the concepts, the theories.

- There will be an individual as well as a collective assessment

The production of a common tool will be the result of this common work and will testify that one of the goals of the project has been reached.