



Grundtvig Learning Partnership - Public living room - a safe learning space

DISCUSSIONS on TOPIC NO. 2 SAFETY IN THE FAMILY

What do you expect from the meeting?

- ✓ New methods, learn new ways
- ✓ Open and vivid exchange of knowledge
- ✓ meaning of safety in the family in the other countries
- ✓ new ideas and new points of view on the topic
- ✓ Getting to know new people
- ✓ Learning from different points of view
- ✓ Discuss organisational matters if we have time

What do you want to contribute with

- ✓ Making good atmosphere
- ✓ My own knowledge
- ✓ Enthusiasm and love
- ✓ the outcome of the discussions from my country
- ✓ My experience on topic
- ✓ Our methodology on working with the topic
- ✓ reporting back to the partners
- ✓ cultural diversity

What do you want to avoid

- ✓ Boredom
- ✓ not keeping time
- ✓ bad atmosphere
- ✓ Negative atmosphere or blaming one another
- ✓ feeling guilty about not doing more than we can
- ✓ bad atmosphere

Countries presented in Nižná: UMC Slovakia, Turkey ICC, Austria, Nest! foundation. (Bavaria, Germany and Poland – excused)

Slovakia led discussions in order to work together on outcomes to each aspect of this topic - Safety in the family. We define that this includes physical, social, emotional and spiritual aspects of our homes. Poland sent their report – see dropbox. Germany and Bavaria didn't organize for discussions or report.

Safety in relation to sexual education.

In several countries (Turkey, Slovakia) conservative forces intend to reduce programs about sexual education, especially to young children. The view of conservatives is that it promotes pornography instead of the other way around. Open discussion exchange and information instead support the safe emotional environment that creates the trust and self-confidence that is needed for children to develop. Being silent about sexuality is exactly creating



an atmosphere where taboos and secrecy give opportunity for distorted sexuality like pornography to exist in the shadow of society.

Austria notes on paper on DV

Early helpers programme is what the MC do already, better structured, why reinvent the wheel. Prevention programme to support young families to make use of support programmes. Family midwives would get contact and access to support systems. Our task is to try to survive and adapt the MC concept in a changing society. The need is there but it is a bit outdated, mothers are different now, less time and less isolation gives different conditions. There are few volunteers and the needs of mothers are different. There is a growing discrepancy between the requests of mothers (more service oriented, a larger request) and the possibilities with potential volunteers leaving MC within a half a year and with less money. The workload for the active is growing so much that burnout of the last dinosaurs is a risk.

Austrian MC are originally rather "white" middle class well educated. Some centres have Turkish participants and middle European participants, who are also middle class, well educated. This is because we need to ask for participation fees, it is not possible to provide for the needs of other groups in their financial possibilities.

DISCUSSIONS SAFETY

Discussions: Where did you do discussions, how many people participated and their reactions?

Turkey

MC Hope (Umut) 8 people participated.

Most interesting point: we have been over flooded with Syrian refugees (just one hour from Aleppo). There are large problem related to this, for instance strain on resources, increased drug use.

Largest worries were related to the influx of Syrians followed by accidents at home.

Leaving children at home on their own is legal from the age of 15 in many countries.

Austria:

Each topic is adopted by different centre. They focus on it and formulate conclusions that next are sent into the network and they give feedback. So also nationally we have a host of each topic and others are participants. It is difficult to say how many people participated. There were 7 MC who were organising and summarising the discussions with about 100 participants. There were not so many differences in the answers, because the host of this topic is a rural small community where is a homogeneity in opinions. Physical safety (especially electricity) was the most important. Mothers split into 2 extreme ways of dealing with it – cotton baby approach and on other hand being careless and let children to find out themselves about right and wrong. Another focus in the discussions in Austria was the difference with our own childhood: finding the balance between providing safety and allowing your child to have experiences of small dangers to assure they get resilience and are not overprotected – connected to syndrome of helicopter parents.

A general conclusion was that emotional safety is at the basis of a good development.

Slovakia:



The topic was discussed in Nižná with about 10 people. This is also a homogenous society with a strong Catholic signature. The main important things for them were emotional and social safety. Montessori education is very much in fashion and parents experiment with allowing their children to experience dangers and accept the responsibility for the consequences (if you fall in the puddle you get wet). Spiritual rituals (derived from their Catholic faith) are important for the women of this group as they provide security and calmness to the mothers. They pray for the children. This was similar in Poland.

Safety in whole is a hot topic for UMC and is covered in APP course.

A) safe space: physically (house, electricity, environment)

- What we have in common:

All partners treat safety in house, especially electricity dangers with great care and have mastered this area in the past. Households have special storage solutions for fertilisers, cleaning products, everything what could harm or cause poisoning. Children swallowing things – danger of choking (this sometimes gets worse by the reaction of the parents). Food question of eating organic or not, E numbers and their effect on our health, we all read the labels and worry about it (creating new religion of eating habits concept). "Cotton baby effect" It takes time for children to learn and understand when parents say "NO". There must be a balance between the environments for the adults and making all adapted to the needs of children (walking barefoot, running around, playroom).

- What is different

Rivers, ponds and open shallow water is an issue in Austria. Also worry about falling into it and burns is very big. In Turkey there was not so much an issue of being over-protective to the children and specific to Gaziantep is the issues of insecurity related to the large amount of refugees.

- What is interesting

How to deal with toddlers bumping their heads? On one hand parents should prevent a real risk, but on the other hand children should develop an understanding about how the body parts hurt when falling occasionally. Small ones should NOT get a helmet. If you worry too much about the small dangers in the end the kids get afraid as well and they do not develop a healthy sense of what is really dangerous.

Everybody takes care of electricity but many have so many internet cables which can be dangerous if it is pulled down.

So many parents are not aware of the capability of children to assess what is a risk and what not.

There are situations that make my heart stop but somehow the kids when playing never fall. It is only the risk of electricity that they cannot overview, for the rest they know well where is the limit.

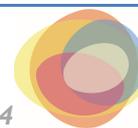
The electronic watch dog functions of mobile telephones have counterproductive effect. Especially kids who are always supervised tend to run off. It is good for a child once in their life to experience a panic moment "Oh my goodness, I am lost!"

- How can MC support a feeling of safety

In Dupajda, Nižná the radiators are not covered, we do not suffer from the cotton baby syndrome but real dangerous things like the stairs and electricity are fine. We give first aid courses, especially for child related accidents. We offer various course for parents: internet and mobile phone safety, food and good eating habits, courses for mothers and staff. In Austria they do cover front door safety with having an adult watching it and also there are gates. There is a list of emergency telephone numbers always handy.

- What MC does?

Offer various courses and staff training. First aid courses are always very popular. Exchange views on safety and monitor the level of insecurity.



- Inspiration

The culture of public living room supports exchange and interaction. A situation that is not perfect in MC sparks debate and brings the balance between protection/responsibility/experiencing 'small risk'. We are not a public service but a group that exchanges and learns from one another. In the MC we are exposed to different views on issues and discuss them and this sharpens our ideas on our own situation.

B) Safe space: socially

- What we have in common:

Several of the groups present come from a very homogenous environment. Still we try to be open too and curious about others. We are also tolerant and open-minded towards other cultures and religions. All of us tend to tell our children things but main thing is to live it and be an example. We all deal with online social life of our family. Trust as a basis of dealing with issues and opening up the discussion.

We request transparency without getting into a control that limits the privacy of children.

Internet safety:

We all have concerns about internet use of the children. The social networks are the present day version of the kids withdrawing into their own group. How do we deal with that? Control is not the way, they need their own intimacy and they have rights. Our first reaction is "DANGER" and yes there are dangers, but it is also something new which we need to find out about in good contact with children we can cope with it. An open relationship and confidence allows communication and prevention of problems. Youngsters, teenagers especially need to have privacy. Internet makes the barrier to speak out lower. As parents we can support our children to recognise that there is something strange. Control undermines trust and will stop them from coming to the parents with questions. It is a matter of communication with the children. The children are different, they do not all speak up about it. Some need more support than others.

Everything we forbid becomes more interesting. Still there needs to be rules: time limits for instance.

- What is different?

We have different views on internet issues – for some it is safe, for some it is not. Virtual communication is different to real one. We trust our children, but can we trust who do they meet online?

- What is interesting?

In our discussion it stood out that feeling safe is a very personal and subjective feeling.

- How can MC support a feeling of safety and what MC does?

MC should offer various courses and create safe chat rooms. Also one of the staff should be trained and offer practical help to parents

- Inspiration www.ovce.sk

C) Safe space: emotionally

- What we have in common:

Unconditional love is a base of our family life. This is the area we are most confident in. All groups recognise that as the basis of other safety. Our own upbringing shapes our own views and how we feel.



Shedding light on a topic helps, it creates trust and safety. Emotional safety means a loving home, a place where I can return, a place where we acknowledge child's need and a place where we know how to talk to each other.

- What is different

Turkey brought up a fact that fathers have more difficulties to show and share their love with his children. A child helps a man to deal with their feelings, they can be a catalyst. It is not common for men to show emotions, but this way they open up a bit.

- What is interesting

Domestic violence is a primary source of emotional instability and it gets passed on to next generation – confirmed by Turkey. The rest of partners agreed that we deal with domestic violence and try to prevent it. It's not a part of our culture or behaviour maps.

- How can MC support a feeling of safety

Anything can be said. Everybody is invited. What you feel is ok. Your feelings are taken seriously. They are not good, not bad, they are your feelings and you can express them in the MC. The culture of public living room creates the culture by example. By discussing things, we are acknowledged. Subjects come in to open, warm and understanding atmosphere where the shame or fears drop off. The MC does that, we can discuss it, put it out and make it visible. In order to pass on an emotional stability you need to be stable yourself. We should not say: "Do this or do that". Say what you feel and be open about it. MC also should open talking groups to share emotions/promote solutions from APP.

- What MC does?

Tell our parents to be authentic. For instance, just touching a child because of its good behaviour is not a good idea. In that case it would be good to discuss "why do I feel this way, why am I disgusted by the idea of hugging and kissing. Am I strange when to me the pink cloud does not happen?" The MC passes on the knowledge that we are different and we practice the openness of talking about those differences, about our experience.

- Inspiration

Programme APP introduced by UMC. You are the expert on your child. You need a process of reflection to not do the same things as your parents.

The Slovak Academy of Practical Parenthood is an inspiration. It could be a subject of a new Grundtvig project, it would fit the programme.

D) Safe space: spiritually

- What we have in common:

Both in Slovakia and Poland there is a large majority of Catholics. This provides safety because faith provides the self-confidence and strengthening of community feeling. We get to know each other through our faith. In Turkey the feelings of security is coming from Islam are similar. Celebrating religious holidays support the family and community. More and more the religious content gets lost and the occasion becomes a shallower/commercial holiday feeling. Similarity between the groups was that spirituality is considered private and all partners are open to various religions and atheist too.

We do not as MC show affiliation to any religion but we keep cultural habits, like st. Nicolas or workshops to make advent wreath even though both have religious background.

- What is different

Faith and religion is private that we keep protected in Austria. We were astonished to talk about it in MC we do not want to create differences between groups. Nowadays it is not common to raise children in a religious tradition. We



recognised that religion gives a frame. This is not a case in Slovakia or Poland. In Turkey religion is very strong in everyday life.

- What is interesting

Religion is considered private topic. It was interesting to me that people do not like to speak about spiritual matters. The faith is private; the celebration of Bayram or Christmas is social and public.

Finding out about other religions is very interesting, especially the common issues. Jews, Christian and Muslims have many stories and habits in common. However not everywhere people have the open mind and are curious about other religions.

- How can MC support a feeling of safety

The individual framework differs, but a MC can encourage to compare the way different religions, or humanism or atheism develop views on moral standards. Instead of declaring a part of life that is so fundamental, we are shy to talk about it.

Religion seems strong in Slovakia but it is not in all regions (if I lived here in the North I would probably be burned like a witch). There is dominance over moral issues from churches. In catholic societies atheists feel like they need to be explained. In Western Europe religious people feel underdog, it is difficult to have an open discussion on content without judgement and with respect for differences.

It is a tricky subject, we need to be careful. Celebrating the cultural celebrations is a safe way of finding out about the spiritual content of people who have other faith (looking into the same room from a different window)

- What MC does?

People should not be pushed. The history of socialism did much harm. There is a split between religious people who go to certain MC's who have a more catholic profile. In Austria there is a conscience that in a MC there should not be a cross on the wall.

Without labelling or being part of anything we are open to cultural social outings of spirituality. Whatever happens depends on active people. Many do the MC work because of their spiritual background, without speaking about it.

It is a difference if a group runs a minority spiritual group in the MC or if it is an expression of the mainstream culture. In Vienna there is a Jewish group, which is different from the centre with a cross on the wall.

- Inspiration

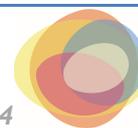
Promoting respect, honouring diversity, being open, having the public living room culture in every MC.

Even if you are catholic or run by church being open implies that still you are including all. Some MCs that run on money from church are operating like other MCs.

COMMON OUTCOMES FROM DISCUSSION DURING MOBILITY

All present partners (Turkey, Slovakia, Austria, Nest Foundation) have discussed this topic through and through and agreed on this PYRAMID ACCROS EUROPE structure which points out:

- what does matter in order to establish security
- what MC should focus on
- what MC should organize for



The most important items are at the top. The base level represents what we have mastered and we can build on it.

TRUST, RESPECT, OPENESS, LOVE

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

POSITIVE ATMOSPHERE IN MC

EMPHATHY

CONFIDENTIALITY

TRANSPARENCY

SUPPORTING

COMMON

COMMUNICATION

STABILITY

GROUPS

RULES

(management, finance, space)

PRACTISING FAITH

GENERAL SAFETY

HOUSE/FLAT

HOUSEHOLD

HELICOPTER PARENTS

IN MC

MEASURES

DESIGN

ACCIDENTS

"COTTON BABY EFFECT"

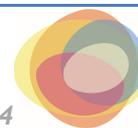
QUESTIONS USED FOR DISCUSSIONS

A) Safe space: physically (house, electricity, environment)

1. What does safety in the family mean to you?
2. What did you consider as safe home, when you were little?
3. What safety features does your flat/house have now and before your children were born? (Security cameras/doors, electrical plug covers, drawer stoppers, locked pill boxes, fire protection,..)
4. Do you consider the place where you live now to be safe in its design? Why?
5. Do you monitor and fix what is safe/not safe around you and your children (toys, furnishings, playground, hygiene environment and behaviour, food, clothing, appliances, ...)?
6. How do you secure a safe environment for your children, when they are home on their own?
7. Are you aware of internet risks? Do you know how to protect and control internet use by children?
8. Do you explain to your children what is safe and what is not?
9. Do you rather protect children from dangerous situations or do you make them responsible by taking risks and leaning lessons?
10. How do you in your Mother Center create a safe environment through equipment and furnishing?

B) safe space: socially

11. Would you feel safe if you live somewhere with members of different culture, religion or race? Why?
12. How do you explain culture/religion/race differences to children and do you teach to tolerate them? How is this done in your Mother Center?
13. How do you create feeling of security for your children and partner?
14. Do you teach your children basic safety skills when outside on their own, give attention to situation which might not seem dangerous at first sight (don't talk to /follow/accompany strangers, playing with animals on the street, what emergency numbers to call,...)
15. Does your MC offer lectures or courses which address safety? (first aid course, safe internet, educational courses for parents, safe playroom, safe eating habits)



C) safe space: emotionally

16. How do you care about the child's emotional needs for comfort, stimulation and affection?
17. How do you formate stable and loving home to ensure good mental health?
18. Do you know/learn parenting skills which also help improve the relationship with the child and help develop attachment?
19. Do you allow the child to express their thoughts, fears and needs in order to improve relationship with your child?
20. Are you aware of negative impact on a child's emotional and behavioural development when lacking love (depression, Learning difficulties and behaviour problems in school, Inability to form meaningful relationships, Low self-esteem)?
21. How do you recognise and prevent problems with attachment/lack of emotional ties within family?

D) safe space: spiritually

22. How does faith/beliefs helps to create a feeling of safety for you and members of your family? (for instance a prayer before a journey, blessing, a prayer for a family member, joined evening prayer)
 23. Do you have spiritual decorations/signs at home to strengthen the morality or faith of the children?
 24. Do you think that a faith can positively influence child's behaviour and create safety around it?
 25. Should we as Mother Center use rituals or spirituality to create a safer environment or be neutral?
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