

**Annual report on FGC by Francesca Maci,
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In this document I will describe my work on FGC development in Italy. I studied the model for my Phd thesis in Uk and after that I have committed myself in disseminating FGC in child protection services as a new way to work with families and child.

At this moment, FGC model and his implementation is the main topic of my research work as example of family decision making approach.

The context

Family group conference is a quite new approach in Italy. In the last years professionals show interested in knowing and using FGC. The use of the model is related to pilot projects set up by local authority and mainly founded by private foundations

The interest of italian professionals engaged in families and children services on FGC is related to the fact that they realized that clinical interventions lead from experts that don't involve parents child and wider family in building a good and safe protection plan, do not produce a really and helpful changes in family life conditions. To really help families and empower them is necessary to work with them in order to try to find joint strategies to cope with their problem.

Another reason for which professionals take into consideration FGC model is the big economic crisis. In a year there was a cut in social service funds of around 70%. When standard provisions are not available it is necessary to find other creative solutions in order to helping people. Personally I don't agree with this position because I think that FGC first of all are a culture approach, a way to look at family and to conceptualize the social work but in any case in this context the crisis seems to be an opportunity to develop a new democratic and participatory way to work in child protection field.

The FGC pilot projects

Pilot projects are realized in the framework of action research. The structure of the is composed by three different part

- training step realized with the aim to train practitioners and co-ordinators on principle, value and main features of the model;
- modeling step in which maintaining the orthodoxy of the model we try to adapt the process to the specific context of work
- implementation step in which FGC are realized
- evaluation step

Italian pilot project

- “Progetto di concerto”. The project started in november 2013 and will finished in december 2015. It has been promoted by Bollate district situated in the North of Italy in partnership with the University. The aim of the project is to use FGC in foster care as a good way to planning the protection and care project to ensure the well-being of the child. In specific case of foster care interventions FGC could represent a good way to reconcile the conflict between biological family, foster family and social service. The project provides six FGC and contemplate a qualitative evaluation. At the moment we have analized 11 situations and realized 2 FGC (of 6).

- Progetto “Il diritto del minore a crescere nella propria famiglia (“The right of the children to grow up in their own family”). The project started in september 2012 and will finished in June 2014. It was promoted by Provincia di Varese, situated in North of Italy in patenership with the local authoriteis of the district and University. The aim was to use FGC in child protection service sas a way to involve parents and children in decision making. The project provided 12 FGC and contemplate a qualitative evaluation,

- Progetto “Riunioni di famiglia”. (School FGC) The project started in september 2013 and will finished in 2015. It has been promoted by Comuni insieme social service organisation in partnership with University and others subjets. The aim of the project is to use FGC as a prevention intervention to cope with drop out students and involve 14 schools. We realized 83 FGC.

Our research aimed at evaluating the effectiveness of FGCs to improve student well being and its feasibility in school environment. To gain this aim we developed three research actions: 1. a RCT to test the impact of FGCs on student wellbeing; 2. a qualitative implementation analyses to document the adaptations of the model required by the school setting; 3. a systematic review of previous literature on FGC effectiveness. We will be able to present at the conference the main results of our systematic review, some considerations coming from the implementation analysis and the preliminary estimates of FGC short term effects on student wellbeing.

- Progetto “Cousulta Diocesana” The project started in november 2013. The aim of the project i to use FGC in educational field. In particularly the FGC are used in daily children residential care as good way to involve parents in defining child protecnion and care plan in order to ensure their well-being.

Closed project

- “Progetto Volano” started in september 2010 and finished in december 2011. It was realized by Comuni insieme social service agency in partnership with others local authorities. The aim of the project was to use FGC in youth justice as a good way to planning restorative project.
The project provided tree families group conference but were helded only two FGC due to lack in referral.
- “Progetto Prisma” started in september 2011 and finished in december 2012. The aim of the project was to use educational FGC in nursery school as a way to planning educational and protection project for the collaboration of families, school and social service in case of child in need for which attending the nursery represents a prevention intervention.

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REPORT ANNUALE FAMILY GROUP CONFERENCE



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DISTRETTO INTEGRATO DI ECONOMIA
SOCIALE MARCHE NORD



**Associazione di Famiglie
con bambini autistici**

STRUTTURA INTERVENTO

PUNTO DI PARTENZA

Dalla presentazione al Convegno erano emerse le seguenti criticità:

1. Sovraccarico del Manager del Servizio;
 2. Sovrapposizione del ruolo di Manager e facilitatore;
 3. Perplessità dell'Istituzione Pubblica
 4. Perplessità dei information givers
 5. Analisi e difficoltà nella selezione dei facilitatori
 6. Radicamento e sensibilizzazione su un più ampio territorio
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AZIONI

1. PROPOSTA COMUNE DI MONDOLFO FGC agendo sul coinvolgimento di un Comune più grande e trasferire la buona prassi dal momento che l'analisi del contesto poneva caratteristiche simili al progetto pilota Prisma (presenza intensa di stranieri provenienti per lo più dal Marocco, Polonia, etc.). Coinvolgimento del responsabile dei Servizi Sociali, Assessore di riferimento e Assistente sociale al fine di creare già in fase di valutazione della proposta il coinvolgimento di più soggetti interessati alla metodologia)
2. PROPOSTA COMUNE DI FABRIANO la proposta, grazie all'interessamento della Cooperativa locale Mosaico e dell'avv. Armezzani interessato al modello ci ha consentito di coinvolgere sia gli operatori della cooperativa che il personale operante presso il consultorio locale ed il Coordinatore d'Ambito territoriale. Il workshop si è svolto per una durata complessiva di 4 ore coinvolgendo circa 20 operatori che si occupano di tutela minori. Oltre a domande specifiche inerenti la metodologia sono state affrontate con i responsabili il tema del reperimento fondi per sviluppare tali strategie.
3. PROPOSTA COMUNE DI PESARO in occasione della presentazione del progetto "Accoglienza Temporanea di famiglie" su richiesta dell'Assessorato ai Servizi Sociali di Pesaro e per dare risposta al disagio abitativo di alcune famiglie con conseguente disagio sociale, emotivo e relazionale l'obiettivo 5 prevedeva l'utilizzo di una metodologia di Family Group Conference con particolare attenzione all'advocacy per la presenza dei nuclei familiari con presenza di minori.
4. PRESENTAZIONE REGIONE MARCHE: Fondi sostegno alla genitorialità, n. 4 corsi finanziati di cui 1 (16 ore) su FGC.
5. PRESENTAZIONE ALL'ASSOCIAZIONE FAMILIARI OMPHALOS E AL CORSO FSE PER OPERATORI CENTRO AUTISMO in fase di chiusura della metodologia delle FGG. Delle 410 ore previste 80 ore hanno sviscerato in modo specifico la metodologia e raccolto feedback importanti sulle eventuali criticità, sulla figura dei facilitatori, sull'operatore advocacy nel caso specifico dell'autismo.
6. La metodologia è stata illustrata con brochure informative e distribuite sul territorio all'interno della RETE di appartenenza dalle cooperative al DIESMN a cui faccio riferimento per la progettazione locale e per l'implementazione di

metodi partecipativi oltre che per la formazione in tema di progettazione europea.

7. Partecipazione al confronto conversazioni su FGC italiane – Varese del 7/6/2014.
8. Incontro Associazione ASTREA e Mosaico Cooperativa Sociale per FGC in penale minorile.

ZONE SENSIBILI SU CUI LAVORARE

Partendo dall'esperienza del convegno e da un'analisi delle risposte alle proposte effettuate in quest'anno emergono due aspetti che ho definito zone sensibili su cui è possibile lavorare e si deve lavorare per l'implementazione del modello nella nostra realtà:

1. Il bisogno emergente di sostegno alla famiglia e tutela dei diritti dei bambini e bambine è all'attenzione dell'Istituzione Pubblica (Comuni, Provincia, Regione, etc.) che si mostra sensibile e ricettiva verso una metodologia che pone al centro la famiglia nel progetto di tutela. L'interesse, però, si scontra con la carenza di risorse economiche a disposizione ed il sovraccarico delle risorse umane. Questo richiede al manager del Servizio FGC in fase propositiva di prevedere un progetto comprensivo di fondi a disposizione attraverso il cosiddetto crossover (es. Prisma con Fondazione cassa di Risparmio di Pesaro e Tulip Bulgaria con Unicredit).
2. Le azioni previste nell'implementazione delle FGC cioè la formazione dei facilitatori e la Riunione di Famiglia devono essere azioni contestuali e non scollate fra loro come nel progetto iniziale Prisma. Questo richiede molta chiarezza nell'esplicitazione della proposta formativa al fine di non generare confusione con metodi di intervento altrettanto validi ma che NON sono FGC. Inoltre la **RETE** è importante per il crossover e per la sensibilizzazione e lo scambio di competenze specifiche con adeguato coordinamento dei servizi oltre che la valorizzazione di quanto già esistente.
3. Attenzione UE e possibilità di reperimento fondi diretti e non solo. I criteri europei per le FGC prevedono una particolare attenzione al TEMPO privato della famiglia come fulcro del processo. Doppia INDIPENDENZA dei facilitatori sia dai servizi che dalla famiglia. Partecipazione dei BAMBINI e RAGAZZI alle FGC già nella fase di preparazione della riunione con spazio adeguato per loro. TEMPO sufficiente per la preparazione della FGC che consenta di lavorare ed invitare la FAMIGLIA ALLARGATA. Analisi del contesto UE e possibile coinvolgimento di paesi europei che non hanno ancora attivato e non hanno ancora avuto scambi di buone prassi con paesi come UK, Olanda e Nord Europa che si pongono come esempio in tale contesto.
4. Perché la Regione Marche in questo momento? Il progetto di ampio respiro potrebbe essere un modo di coinvolgere la Regione Adriatico Ionica che nella mappatura a nostra disposizione ancora non sembra coinvolta in tale metodologia e per valorizzare e mettere insieme alcune germinali esperienze, con il supporto e la supervisione del network italiano, che sono state attivate nei ns. territori e con operatori che lavorano con il Tribunale di Ancona.
5. Interesse della Comunità Europea all'aumento della consapevolezza del bambino/bambina nel contesto civile, penale ed amministrativo dei

propri diritti. Implementazione della sensibilizzazione di tale metodologia nel penale minorile. Rif. DG Giustizia

6. Multifondo: FSE formazione ai facilitatori, agli insegnanti, ai caregivers; ITC – Europa Creativa e bandi di riferimento per attività interattive che tengano conto dei singoli paesi e coinvolgano come partner anche enti profit per lavorare sui ruoli, responsabilità e diritti con un gioco interattivo, Volontariato/advocacy e servizio civile.

PERCHE' DIESMN – DISTRETTO INTEGRATO DI ECONOMIA SOCIALE

www.diesmn.org

Da un modello individuale o collettivo ad un modello connettivo

Il modello da cui partiamo, a differenza dell'approccio classico che riconosce nei soggetti non profit principali attori dell'economia sociale e parte da un presupposto diverso: a determinare le politiche locali di sviluppo dell'economia sociale sono una serie di **connessioni** strategiche, organizzative, progettuali e culturali tra un *panel* di attori fortemente differenziato che – in maniera coordinata e a partire da una visione e dei valori comuni – possono giocare ruoli, funzioni, mandati e azioni integrate ed efficaci ai fini dello sviluppo di un modello specifico di politica pubblica finalizzato a promuovere benessere diffuso e sostenibile, oltre che coesione sociale.

Investire sull'economia sociale di territorio

- Costruire processi di democrazia deliberativa e di partecipazione (nelle comunità locali, nelle istituzioni e nelle organizzazioni lavorative) in grado di promuovere modelli di governance locale che restituiscano responsabilità e protagonismo alla cittadinanza e ai lavoratori, all'interno di un rapporto dialogico tra cittadini, organizzazioni e istituzioni;
- Ridefinire e potenziare sistemi di welfare locale nella direzione di un tendenziale e diffuso benessere individuale e collettivo collegato alla valorizzazione di un panel di politiche pubbliche di qualità della vita (occupazione, ambiente, green economy, welfare e salute, wellness e tempo libero, sport, cultura, tutela del patrimonio, turismo accessibile e sostenibile, etc.)

FAMILY GROUP CONFERENCE E CLLD

Il DIESMN può organizzare e costituire sezioni subprovinciali o sovracomunali, a partire anche da orientamenti ed indicazioni previste dall'Unione Europea come nel caso dei **CLLD (Community-Led Local Development)**, nei luoghi che riterrà più opportuni al fine di un più completo e perfetto raggiungimento degli scopi sociali. Come la **Family group Conference** anche il **CLLD** è uno **STRUMENTO INNOVATIVO** che consegna alle famiglie e al territorio la partecipazione diretta. Questo consente di "incrinare" un welfare basato su una logica prestazionale e dall'alto.

Report concerning annual activity on FGC in Genoa 2014.

Our cooperative (La Comunità, a social cooperative society) has encouraged the formation of a group of four social workers who have acquired skills of FGC facilitator and advocate. During the last year we have made two FGC in Genoa in the protection of minors area: the first in July 2013 and the second in July 2014.

Our client was the Social Service of the City of Genoa: all costs were sustained by the cooperative with the intention of promoting this instrument for the service.

At the end of both conferences, moments of reworking were planned with all professional operators involved for their various competences in a training purpose.

In both cases, there was a very high rating by the social operators, who has felt supported throughout the process, in opposition to the loneliness usually perceived in taking decision.

Families, we have to say, in both cases have expressed their appreciation in a quite cautious way, still dominating by mistrust and fear.

In addition to those experiences we had in our working contest, this new approach inspired by the FGC and other models under experimentation that promote the same logic are now part of our way of thinking and of our language. Leaving aside the results (number of FGC actually started...scant by now for the few resources, but the cooperative is working on this) a new point of view is beginning to doubt the previous one, not without resistance, hesitation and conflict, as it always is for changes.

However, we can say that there is already a potential claim to Conference by the local social services which could know this method and its practical achievement, to

demonstrate the interest and also the feasibility of a service, or at least an experimental one.

During this year we had the lucky opportunity to join the project in Lombardia, coordinated by Francesca Maci, about FGC in school areas.

Inspired by our experience, we have proposed a FGC to a very problematic local school that asked for help the social services system, bringing as one of the the most critical problem the gap between school and families. We are still waiting for an answer, but the idea is to ask the school to use a few of its resources to contribute to the costs to achieve two FGC.

As you can see, Ligurian numbers are low, the pace is slow, but the movement is perceptible.

We joined the first meeting of the Italian network, which we hope will become an important landmark for sharing, promoting, training and fund raising.

Brief Paper about FGCs in Piemonte, Italy, in 2013/2014

Torino 27/10/2014

On Saturday 23th of February 2013 in Settimo Torinese, a town near Turin, Piemonte, Italy at 5pm have began a meeting between 2 children, 6 adults, a social worker, an FGC's Coordinator: it was the Family Group Conference, in Piemonte named "Riunioni di Gruppo Familiare", dedicated to Marco, a guy 15 years old with serious problems on school dropout, vandalism and suspect robbery, and her sister Matilde, a girl 13 years old that have to leave the Daily Centre that she attended since 2008 and have to face a lot of decisions on wich she needs adult's help.

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It has been the first Family Group Conference ever runned in Piemonte, Italy, and it has required a long work with social services, with the kids and with the family members, but it was well worth it: the Conference has run for less 5 hours, with three hours of "private time" for family members. At the end, the Conference has produced two projects, one for Marco and one for Matilde, that has been both accepted from the social worker.

This has been the first FGC realized in Piemonte after Cooperativa Animazione Valdocco and Forcoop Agenzia Formativa has introduced the method since late 2011, charging Mr. Max Ferrua and Mrs. Stefania Giudice to built in Piemonte the first FGCs Service in the area, in strict connection with Mrs. Francesca Maci and with Family Rights Group (UK).

And also the last one at the moment!

Before and after that moment, a lots of activities has been done:

- with the support of Mrs. Maci, 24 FGC's coordinators has been trained and qualified;
- a training course for social workers and child protection service's managers has been realized on November 2013, engaging 18 professionals comin' from all over the Region;
- durin' the last year, more than 50 social workers has participated to meetings dedicated to introduce the FGCs approach;
- managers of social services connected to youth offenders court has been involved in November 2013, and in May 2014 an experimental plan to realize 6 FGC's in restorative justice context has been established;
- two private funders and two public services for child protection has financed a total amount of 29 FGCs, to be realized in Piemonte within the end of 2015.

European FGC Network meeting 2014

REPORT CONCERNING ACTIVITY ON FAMILY GROUP CONFERENCES

Edizioni Centro Studi Erickson: who we are

Edizioni Centro Studi Erickson, founded by two young psychologists, Dario Ianes and Fabio Folgheraiter, in 1984, was originally a centre for reintegration and rehabilitation of persons with mental disabilities, that used to conduct researches, training and consulting activities in the field of teaching and social work. Shortly after the opening of the centre, Italy passed laws prescribing the inclusion of persons with disabilities in primary and secondary schools and in workplaces. The implication was that most of psychologists, educators, support teachers and volunteers, at that time, needed an adequate training to handle the new scenario. Erickson took up the challenge and started a process of cultural mediation translating and publishing theories, methodologies and experiences, mainly coming from UK and USA, which reached a wide circulation and enjoyed an extraordinary reception all over Italy.

This is why and how Erickson, thanks to its high scientific standards, has become a leader in Italy in publishing, software creation, training and research in the fields of teaching, education, learning disabilities, special needs, full inclusion, applied and clinical psychology, social work and welfare. Our publications are well known and much appreciated because they couple innovative theory and methodology with operational suggestions, case studies and good practices. Our training and research department, well-known Italian leader in proposing training activities for teachers, pedagogues, educators, school professionals and social workers, organizes every year a variety of training solutions: online courses, seminars, workshops and international conferences.

Edizioni Centro Studi Erickson and Family Group Conferences

Centro Studi Erickson is dealing with promotion and activation of Family Group Conferences since 2010, working in collaboration with Catholic University of Milan, in particular with Francesca Maci and Maria Luisa Raineri (Research Professor in Social Work).

The Family Group Conference model was presented by Centro Studi Erickson to the Italian audience in 2010 and 2012 in the Congress "Child Protection" (Riva del Garda, Italy). Both editions was attended by about one thousand social workers. A presentation of the model also took place in November 2014 at the Congress about adolescence "Supereroi fragili"(over 1000 participants).

Books and journal

In 2011 Centro Studi Erickson published and promoted Francesca Maci's book "Lavorare con le famiglie nella tutela minorile" ("Working with families in child protection") which describes a research experience of the author and introduces the model (about one thousand copies sold). At the moment Francesca Maci is writing a new book about facilitating Conferences. The model of the Family Group Conference and its experimentations are also examined in articles published on "Lavoro Sociale" journal (900 subscribers, mainly social workers) and on the website www.lavorosociale.com.

Social workers training and experimentations

Centro Studi Erickson organizes a annual training for coordinators of Family Group Conference (about 100 participants). In 2014 we've organized the third edition.

Furthermore Centro Studi Erickson organizes customized training for school and welfare organizations. In the last two years we activated more than 10 customized trainings all around the Country. These projects permit to:

- trasmit knowledge about the model
- help organizations (mainly child protection services) to activate Family Group Conferences
- encourage social workers to work with families and children in a respectful way.

In 2014 Centro Studi Erickson is realizing a Family Group Conference Service (for the first time in Italy), in collaboration with Francesca Maci.



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