Family Group Conferences in Sweden 2012

Background
Family Group Conferences came to Sweden in the mid-1990s. Two projects were run by the Swedish Association of Local Authorities, the first between 1995 and 1997 and the second one between 1998 and 2000.

Present situation
There is no legal mandate for using Family Group Conferences in Sweden, but the values underpinning the method are consistent with legislation.

There has been no national funding for developing Family Group Conferences after 2000 and no state-funded national organization that takes responsibility for promoting or supporting FGCs. Instead, municipalities using Family Group Conferences have formed an informal network and representatives meet on a regular basis to share experiences and discuss quality standards. Predominantly, two municipalities take responsibility for promoting and supporting FGCs in Sweden; Höör and Botkyrka.

In Höör, Family Group Conferences are used very frequently. The three social workers responsible for investigating children at risk have between two and four FGCs a month.

Somewhere between 5 and 10 out of the total of 290 municipalities in Sweden use Family Group Conferences on an “on and off” basis.

Coordinators
Most municipalities in Sweden employ coordinators for one assignment a time. The coordinators are mostly lay people and common to all of them are that they are accustomed to working with people, without necessarily having caring professions. Botkyrka have full time employed coordinators.

**Scandinavian network**

In a Scandinavian network representatives from Sweden, Norway and Denmark discuss joint quality standards for FGC, as well as a joint programme for coordinator training. It is of great importance for us in Sweden that Norway has a strong national support system for Family Group Conferences, both on a state level and in the five regions. Their work is an inspiration for us and helps us in our ambition to develop FGCs in Sweden, to set and maintain quality standards.

Höör November 2nd 2012

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