

Project title:

Community mediation in Nagybörzsöny

Country of origin:

Hungary

Project description:

Hungary is suffering of a large number of ethnic-based conflicts of which the majority involves Roma people.

Recognising it as a serious problem, Foresee Research Group, together with its numerous consortium partners, has been running a three-month-long experimental project funded by the Hungarian Crime Prevention Committee.

The project combined community building and mediation methods in a small rural Hungarian village. Throughout the project we provided training for the local people, including: 'tolerance', 'mediation' and a so-called 'implementation training', namely how to locally implement the learnt techniques and apply them in a sustainable way; organised group activities for children, young mothers and local volunteers and offered ADR (alternative dispute resolution) services in which the trained local people participated as co-mediators besides our team's mediators.

Although the project was of short duration, some successful outcomes could be perceived: several successful mediations were conducted, the community cohesion has been significantly improved according to local people, and the newly trained locals has become committed and willing to give ongoing help as mediators and volunteers. Their work is largely supported with a community mediation protocol (a kind of handbook) that we have compiled by the end of the project.

As one of the most important lessons during the project, we learnt that community building and mediation are mutually interrelated. Namely, mediation cannot become a trustworthy and successful activity in a locality with such weak social cohesion, thus the community must be prepared and strengthened beforehand or parallel. On the other hand, if successful mediations are conducted in a community, it can rebuild bonds and relationships, hence lead to a stronger sense of community, which may make the way for further structural development efforts.

As an ultimate project outcome, we have made a 15 minutes promotional film (directed by Eszter Hajdú) with English subtitles, which can be watched from: <http://vagyunkmiis.foresce.hu/>

WE also exist

Community building and conflict resolution in local communities

A film about alternative dispute resolution techniques and community building methods to empower local communities in rebuilding social bonds, resolving conflicts, re-enforcing cohesion and finding shared goals for the future.

A film about how living together in peace is not simple, but not impossible...

Project start date: February 2009

Project status: fully implemented

Date of last review: May 2009

Contact details: Gabriella Benedek, gabriella.benedek@foresee.hu
Web: www.foresee.hu, <http://vagyunkmiis.foresee.hu>