



## ONLINE EU FGC Network Meeting – CZECH REPORT 2020

**RK centrum** (FGC centre) is the biggest organiser of FGC in the Czech Republic (active in 4 out of the 14 regions). The Centre for Realisation and Development of Family Group Conferences (FGC) was established in January 2017 as part of a joint project of **Amalthea** (organisation providing social services for families and children) and **energeia** (generates eco-friendly electricity from small water plant to raise funds for social and educational activities and implements the projects at the same time). **RK centrum** follows up on the work of the FGC team (formerly under Amalthea), which started promoting the idea of introducing FGC in April 2013.

**The mission of RK centrum** is to enable families, by means of FGC, to resolve difficult situations of their children by themselves. We advance and disseminate the idea of this approach among the general public (by means of discussion sessions, lectures, educational seminars, expert conferences, methodological meetings for all FGC fans).

**Our target group** are families with children up to 18 years of age (including unborn children, as well as dependant children up to 26 who are not gainfully employed). We offer our methodological support to other organisation working with different target groups (seniors, people with Intellectual Disability).

**Corona crisis** have stopped several FGC although we are trying to encourage families to use contactless form. We have not realised online FGC yet, the reason is the preference of families for personal contact and technical limitations. Several preparations are currently underway. FGC are mostly requested by OSPODs (governmental institution: Social and Legal Child Protection Authority). OSPODs register families that deal with endangered children, not pursuing prevention so much. Demand for FGC frequently arises the moment a child is seized from its biological family, located in temporary foster care or in institutional care. The most common issue handled by FGC is how to ensure care of the child in the extended family or how to safeguard its safety and stable environment, or at least how to assure children's contact with the biological family.

**Our effort** is to spread FGC as a preventive tool because we have registered increased demand for FGC mostly requested by Social and Legal Child Protection Authority as a solution to long-term crisis situations (right of first choice X right of last choice).

Our current objective is to raise awareness of FGC among School personnel and the Courts and implement FGC within the **Cochem model** (interdisciplinary cooperation on family conflicts).



**Our team:** 2 employees at the Centre and 25 independent coordinators who completed a two-day training, they have an employment agreement for 1 year, our vision is that each of them will organise 2 - 4 FGC's a year.

**Support for our coordinators:** consultations with the administrator, 4 meetings annually for all the trained coordinators (the meeting agenda includes sharing family stories, methodological support and informal sharing), participation in an external supervision for coordinators preparing FGC, irregular offers for various training courses, most frequently on topics of respecting communication.

**Evaluation:** We established a collaboration with Palacký University in Olomouc in April 2019. We were involved in the production of the evaluation questionnaires.

The University is continuously evaluating FGC benefits. It makes use of questionnaires collected from FGC and then, 3-4 months later, conduct interviews with family members who have experienced FGC.

**Conclusions of the Research Report** are very encouraging: Most family participants rate FGC as successful, they are satisfied with their plan and almost 80% would recommend it to their friends! According to social workers are family plans created at the FGC feasible and solve the identified problem. Changing the approach from the expert to participatory, in which the family is supported and empowered, is the necessary challenge for the social workers, however complicated!

**FGC and Service Learning (September 2020):** by this form of experiential education are students of Social Work at Palacký University engaged in project activities related to FGC, our RK centre is a project partner.

There is not a functional **organisation covering FGC providers** in the Czech Republic. We cooperate with other organisations that attempt to organise FGC in other regions (organization Lata – realising FGC in Prague). Most of them face low demand and financial obstacles.

In spite of the fact that **FGC practise is consistent with a new conception of Family policy** respecting the autonomy and ability of families to make their own decisions, we are aware that FGC advancement will require a change of mindset not only in the social care sphere but across the society.

The best **FGC promotion** is sharing our Family Stories! Follow our [website!](#)