

# WORKSHOP: Enlarging the family through the courses of a meal!

## AIM

Aim of this laboratory is to make an existing group of families socialize, to get to know each family's attitudes better, to stimulate discussion on critical issues linked with every day life of families, and to bring the participants to identify possible solutions within their own community.

## TARGET GROUPS

Participants should be part of an existing group of families, linked at least by one element, like for example a school-class, an art-class, a sports group, a scout group, families living in the same house block in a city, families of a neighborhood or village. Families are intended in the broadest possible sense: parents, grandparents, children, grandsons, uncles, aunts, friends, classmates, foster parents, parents in second marriage. We suggest that a group be formed by 10 to 20 adults. Childrens' participation should be limited to eating and playing.

## DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES

FIRST PART: a lunch step by step.

The lunch should be organized by 4 families living all in a neighborhood, at a 1 km walking distance (max 2km). If you have higher distances think about using cars but we don't suggest it, because we don't like cars!

Each course of the lunch is prepared by the hosting family.

First step/ first course: the group meets at the first family's house and they start the meal together whilst talking about the first subject of the discussion: **Parents-Children-Grandparents!** How is our daily organization with sons and grandparents? Which kind of problems do we have? Just talk. 30 minutes talking and eating, then we all move walking and talking to the second house.

Second step/second course: now we talk about **Transport** (moving from/to work, moving children from/to school, sports or other activities). How do we manage? Do we need help? 30 minutes talking and eating, then we all move walking and talking to the third house.

Third step/ third course: now let's talk about **Sustenance** (grocery shopping, the material necessities and requests of youngsters). How do we deal these? Do we need some help? Can we make it easier and/or cheaper if we act as a group?

Fourth step/fourth course: corresponds to the Second part. But this part can be separated from the moment of the meal and can take place at any other location (maybe on a second day).

SECOND PART: the rope game.

The participants should arrange themselves in a circle trying to stay closer to their nearest neighbor. At the center of the circle there are balls of wool of different colors. Each color corresponds to one of the themes discussed during the meal.

Each participant chooses a subject from those of the previous discussions and tries to focus on the problem he/she would like the community to help solve. Whoever feels that they have similar problems and/or that cooperation between them can help solve the problem, should say so and, making the suggestion, take an end of the ball of wool. In this way the two participants, physically linked by the piece of string, will form the first segment of the community/open family network. The participant who took the string, should then point out another personal problem to be solved, and so on. The different colors of wool should be used for the different issues discussed (parents-grandparents-children, transport, sustenance).

The network will be visible through the string of wool, the first end of which each participant will keep in his/her hand, whilst the ball will gradually unwind in the hands of all those that will network together. For example, if two mothers find that they both rush from work at the same time of the day to take their children to the swimming pool, they will cross their balls of wool, if an elderly, who wants to occupy his/her time with a gratifying activity, finds that a teacher needs a librarian, he/she will cross her ball of wool with the teacher.

The laboratory ends when all participants have an answer or a proposal for their question. At that point the network created will be commented briefly.

#### TIMING

Total 4 hours.

40 minutes each step. 10-15 minutes transfer.

Final step/part: 1 hour.

5 minutes for preparation and positioning of the participants.

40 minutes rope game.

15 minutes close up of the laboratory.

#### EXPECTED RESULTS

It is expected that participants, becoming aware of the fact that their problems are common to those of other participants, use the occasion of this laboratory to create a network of reciprocal aid for helping each other in tackling their problems. This should strengthen community ties and reinforce the concept of “extended families”, intended as not strictly parental families, that cooperate together, at times as if they were a single family, for a common well being.

#### COMMENTS