



Education and Culture
Lifelong Learning Programme
GRUNDTVIG



Grundtvig Learning Partnership

**The Grassroots Women's International Academy -
A Peer Learning Strategy applied to the Mother Centers Movement**

Report Constituting Meeting in Amsterdam

November 30 – December 4, 2007 by Monika Jaeckel/Marieke van Geldermalsen



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Introduction Round

After an icebreaking activity and welcoming words everybody introduced themselves and their organization, answering to the following questions.

QUESTIONS FOR INTRODUCTION ROUND

- Who do you represent?
- What are your expectations of the outcome of the project?
- What will be your involvement in the project?
- Puzzles and Open Questions?

Following an initiative from several participants a further information round was introduced in which all countries with Mother Centers responded to a set of questions of how the Mother Centers function in their country.

QUESTIONS FOR COUNTRIES WITH MOTHER CENTERS

- Where do you get space and other resources, how do you do fundraising?
- Who is in the Mother Centers? (men/women, urban/rural, diversity, representation of minority groups)
- How are the Mother Centers organized? (board, paid staff, volunteers, legal status)

General Overview of the Project

Summary of the Partnership:

Mother Centers are self-managed community meeting places, providing support to families of often marginalised background. They are a social cohesion strategy and a rich setting for informal learning and empowerment.

Women from established Centers transfer their knowledge to women interested in starting Centers in their own country. Those will not be passive recipients of knowledge, but go on study visits and actively shape their own learning through the Grassroots Women's International Academy (GWIA). This unique, field-tested peer learning format, got the 2006 UN Best Practices award. The GWIA-methodology structures a process of peer learning, where participants learn to be owners of their knowledge on coping with everyday issues, to develop strategies based on their competences and skills and to transfer their knowledge to others. It is a basis to strengthen social and political participation, especially for women from marginalised groups. The GWIA-methodology and process will be extended to bilateral peer-exchanges and study visits: the Mother Centers approach will be adapted to different national and cultural settings that include Roma run Centers. Peer learning between established Mother Centers will improve their educational programs. Partners meet during the peer exchanges and study visits, at the GWIA, and at the concluding conference.

Partnership topics:

- to gather, consolidate and disseminate bottom up knowledge on grassroots women's organising strategies as developed in the Mother Center movement
- to adapt and apply the knowledge to different cultural settings in peer dialogues
- to further stimulate resource-based learning processes in existing Mother Centers
- to give mothers from different nationalities, social and cultural backgrounds, the opportunity to meet, exchange and to participate actively in the project.
- to develop and use new forms of knowledge building and communication
- to further integrate Roma in the Mother Center movement
- to further build up and consolidate the GWIA methodology
- to strengthen European cooperation amongst parent led parent education groups

Broad subject area(s) covered by the Partnership

- | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| X Intercultural dialogue | X Active citizenship | X Basic skills |
| X Education for parents | X Languages *English | X Other, namely: Governance |

Goals: The Learning Partnership has three major objectives

1) Learning about GWIA as a methodology for peer learning and peer dissemination of grassroots best practices

- 1a) Experience the functioning of the Grassroots Women International Academy and learn about peer learning and teaching (all)
- 1b) Deepening the GWIA methodology and evaluating the 2 year process (all, but in particular NL&ES)
- 1c) Learning how to teach your knowledge on Mother Centers (how they work, what they achieve, how to start, how to adapt the concept to local conditions, how to spread and transfer the concept) to others of different cultural background. (NL, DE, CZ, BG, AT)

2) Learning about Mother Centers

- 2a) Allowing women (especially from disadvantaged groups) to make study visits and follow a targeted programme about initiating Mother Centers, that is fine-tuned to their context (PL, TR, BE)
- 2b) Gathering and exchanging knowledge on Mother Centers as informal learning places that promote intercultural and social competences, civic engagement, engendering governance, equal access to assets and services (in particular ES PL TR)
- 2c) Deepening and exchanging the knowledge of Mother Centers and their functioning in different contexts (NL, DE, CZ, BG and AT)
- 2d) Creating Mother Center start-up materials (NL, DE, CZ, BG, AT)

3) Link the Learners, in order to combine learning with empowerment and networking

- 3a) Give mothers from different backgrounds the opportunity to meet, exchange and to participate actively in the project. (all)
- 3b) Strengthen the voice of Roma inside the Mother Center movement and of women inside the Roma movement (CZ, BG, PL)
- 3c) Strengthen European cooperation amongst parent led, parent education groups (all)

Impact the Partnership is expected to have

(1) on the learners and staff directly participating,

- Increased awareness of existing informal knowledge and competences. As a consequence increased self assurance
- Increased knowledge and improved skills in organising, project management as well as civic engagement
- Improved knowledge on how to run Mother Centers and how to introduce new educational programs
- Strengthened capacity for verbal and written expression, English language skills
- Improvement of intercultural/social competences and tolerance, new international/cultural contacts and friendships

(2) on the organizations participating in the Learning Partnership as a whole,

- Exposure to and gaining initial experience with new methodologies for organising peer learning and networking
- (First or continued) exposure to international co-operation with like minded organisations in a peer learning setting
- Development as a learning network within a trans-national context

(3) on the local community / region where each organisation is located.

Our experience is that marginalised and grassroots groups are taken more seriously by local partners such as municipalities or formal training institutes, once they are the ones bringing in international visitors. As such the project is likely to have a positive impact on local relations in the participating communities, especially where the partner is not a known professional institute (NL DE CZ AT BG). As part of the coaching visits, establishment of good relations with formal partners will be included as an important element.

In addition we foresee a contribution to social cohesion and an improvement of civic engagement of marginalized groups in the participating communities, through the establishment and strengthening of Mother Centers, as well as through peer exchange on how to improve their functioning.

Activities of the Project and Mobilities

| Planned Date | Location(s) | Activities description |
|---|--|---|
| 30 November - 4 December 2007 | Amsterdam NL | Network meeting for planning, organising, content debate. Defining responsibilities + communication procedures in regard to output, dissemination and evaluation. |
| December 2007 -January 2008 | All participating countries | - Communicating results of Amsterdam to learners - Working out national work plan 2007-9 - Preparing the study visits and peer exchanges (both practical and content wise) |
| _____spring 2008 _____spring 2008 31 March – 5 April 2008 | Czech Republic Netherlands | Study visit women from Poland Study visit women from Spain Study visit from women from Turkey, Bulgaria and Belgium |
| 21-23 April 2008 | Stuttgart, Germany | Exchange visit from Austria (joined by participants from Tyrol, Italy) |
| December 07 – April 08 | Arnhem, Netherlands | Project coordination, information exchange, consolidation and dissemination of first outcomes. Exploration of web based partnership- and dissemination-tools |
| January-August '08 28-29 April 2008 | All countries Amsterdam | Preparation of GWIA and End Conference Project meeting key organisers GWIA and End Conference |
| 15-19 September 2008 20 September 2008 | Barcelona ES | GWIA on Mother Center Start –up Methods and Learning Partnership Themes: GWIA (www.GWIA.net) is a one week event of workshops, presentations peer consultations Network meeting + evaluation of the 1st year |
| October- December '08 | All partner countries | Follow up of GWIA consisting of - Feedback to others at home in workshops, seminars, debates as well as dissemination of results and PR - Implementation of lessons learned in own context - processing/publication outputs |
| November 08-March 09 | Poznan PL Gaziantep TR | Coaching visits to the new initiatives as follow up of the study visits and GWIA. Teams consist of 2 women from the hosting country of the study visit + 2 mine trainers (NL+DE) |
| October-December 08 | Stuttgart, DE | Study visit from Spanish women |
| April 2009- April 2009- August 2009 | Vienna, AT All partner countries | Concluding conference+ network meeting - reporting, sharing results of the process - gathering lessons learned - evaluation of process - defining next steps (where relevant) Feedback to and discussion with local groups on the conference outcomes and dissemination of results |

| COUNTRY + partner | Nest/ Netherlands | Muellerforum, mine Germany | CZ MC Network | Integro, Bulgaria | Francesca Bonnemaison | Austria MC Network | ICC/ | Gaziantep, Turkey | Lingren Institute ECD | Totals |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|---------------|-------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|-----------|-------------------|-----------------------|--------|
| Country mobilities planning | NL | DE | CZ | BG | ES | AT | TR | PL | 8 countries | |
| Mobilities as planned originally | 13 | 13 | 15 | 14 | 12 | 13 | 17 | 12 | 109 | |
| Amsterdam | 0 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 18 | |
| STUDY VISIT | 0 | 0 | 0 | 8 | 7 | 5 | 13 | 4 | 37 | |
| GWIA planning meeting | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | |
| GWIA Barcelona | 5 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 0 | 6 | 8 | 6 | 38 | |
| Coaching | 4 | 2 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 10 | |
| Endconference | 4 | 4 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 19 | |
| Total mobilities foreseen | 13 | 15 | 15 | 15 | 12 | 13 | 27 | 14 | 124 | |

Numbers in **bold** reflect the changes compared to the original project document.

Visions and Outcomes of the Project

Informal Learning

The project is anchored in the EU Life long Learning program and focuses on drawing out, reflecting and documenting the informal learning that goes on in the every day setting of Mother Centers. It highlights and further develops GWIA as an innovative grassroots learning format and initiates peer learning across cultures and borders. In the process Mother Centers are developed and recognised as “Universities of Parenthood” and “Universities of Life.”

Women develop skills by being active in the Mother Center. Through this project they will become aware of these skills and document these competencies. The treasure of grassroots knowledge is there and needs to be unearthed by the women themselves. They need to be owner of their own competencies and knowledge. At EU level through this project we want to help formulate the authentic grassroots voice.

The short term goal: Development of Mother Center and GWIA teaching materials (curriculum).

The long term goal: Accreditation of Mother Centers and GWIA as educational learning spaces.

The Nest! Foundation functions as legal and intellectual home for GWIA and harbors the GWIA website and archives.

Agreement was reached among the partners on the following project goals:

1. To spread MC, strengthen the MC network and develop MC as Universities of Parenthood and Life.
2. To develop formats and structures to become a learning network.
3. It is a learning partnership, the focus is on active learning and grassroots methods of learning.
4. It is important that grassroots learners are involved in running the project.
5. To reflect, become conscious of and make visible what skills, competencies and informal learning is developed in Mother Centers.
6. Grassroots women to become owners of their knowledge on themes & issues.
7. Grassroots women to develop strategies based on their competencies & skills.
8. Participants learn to transfer their knowledge to others.
9. We are taking a step forward in our goal of creating ‘universities of parenthood/life’ by making curricular elements of the learning of the study visits and the GWIA and by introducing educational programs into Mother Centers (developing the skills to introduce them).
10. We are developing new learning methodologies.
11. The study visits should be made relevant to the local work and setting, there should be learnings and benefits to the local groups involved.
12. We want to develop new partnerships between grassroots and local authorities and grassroots and academic learning institutions.

The central themes of focus (last four added at Amsterdam meeting)

- What are Mother Centers, how do they work and how do they empower women? (concept and implementation) How can we transfer the skills to understand and to start-up MC?
- How do Mother Centers contribute to the themes of focus? (Empowerment, Intercultural Dialog, Governance) What skills are involved and how to increase the skills?
- How can MC gain recognition and validation as Learning Spaces?
- Taking GWIA to another level, enriching and widening the GWIA format by including a learning process before and after: Study visits feed into the GWIA. Results of GWIA are implemented and feed into local practice. The GWIA Barcelona event is an integral part of the overall process and format.
- Intergenerational dialog and learning
- Self Sufficiency/Sustainability of Mother Centers
- The contribution of Mother Centers to the Health of women and children (campaign: “With love into life”)
- The contribution of Mother Centers to the eradication of poverty

Study Visits: Themes, Elements and General Objectives

Study Visits Themes and Objectives

- ❖ *“Understanding the Mother Center Concept and Empowerment Strategies”*:
 - Turkey – Belgium – Netherlands;
 - Poland – Czech Republic;
 - Spain – Germany
- ❖ *“Mother Centers in Roma and Non Roma Communities”*:
 - Bulgaria – Netherlands
- ❖ *“Mother Centers as Learning Spaces for Intercultural Dialog, Civic Engagement and Governance”*:
 - Austria – Germany – Italy
 - Spain – Czech Republic

Elements and Steps of Study Visits

- ❖ **Involving the Learners:**
 - Building the group: Who will take part in the study visits, who will take part in hosting?
 - Defining the Objectives: Facilitating group discussion: What do we want to learn from visiting, what do we want to learn from hosting/teaching?
- ❖ **Defining the Learning**
 - Defining the Learning and Teaching Methods. What methods will we use to teach and to learn?
 - How will the Learning be reflected, monitored and documented?
 - What evaluation tools will support reaching our goals?
- ❖ **Generating Grassroots Knowledge**
 - Thematic Field Work on empowerment, integration, governance and parent education
- ❖ **Partnership Building**
 - How can the study visits be used to strengthen local partnerships?
(including local authorities and other partners in the program)
- ❖ **PR and Dissemination Strategies**
 - How can the study visits support public relations and visibility at local, regional or national level?
- ❖ **Securing the Outcomes**
 - What will be the outcomes of the visits?
 - What Reports will be produced?
- ❖ **Spreading the network**
 - What other countries can be included in the visit?
- ❖ **Implementation**
 - How will the Results be spread locally back home?
 - How will the Results be implemented?

Specifics of the planned exchange visits

First Exchange visit to Germany (Date: 21-23. April)

The first exchange visit to the German Partner will involve the Austrians visiting several Mother Centers in Baden Wuerttemberg. Centers will be visited in Stuttgart and the region in urban and in rural areas. A focus will be on income generation, economic self-sufficiency and sustainability of MC (discussion of possibilities to structure MC as cooperatives, childcare services as income generating strategy), intercultural integration (how does the magic of integration happen in Mother Centers, name it and define it) as well as how to build equitable partnerships with professionals and how to sustain MC services for poor families and how to get recognition as spaces of learning and gaining competencies.

Expectations of the Austrians: To learn about differences between their centers and the centers in Germany, how MC in Germany address the issue of poverty of families, to understand the German MC concept of becoming accredited as agency of parent education.

Mother Centers from other parts of Germany as well as participants from Tyrol and Swiss Mother Centers may join the study visit.

Second Exchange visit to Germany (after GWIA)

The second exchange visit to the German Partner will involve the Spanish partner.

Expectations: To understand the MC concept and how to place it in a broader context of women's empowerment and gender policy. To examine the potential of the MC concept to reach and involve migrant women. To introduce city councils and local authorities of the Province Barcelona to the Mother Center model. Spanish local authorities will be part of this exchange visit and interested in meeting and exchanging with their German counterparts on municipal and regional level to learn the political rationale behind why German municipalities and local authorities support Mother Centers.

Polish – Czech Exchange visit

The visit is an exchange between the Polish and Czech Partner. It involves visiting 4 local Czech Mother Centers.

Expectation from Polish Partner: Learn how to start up Mother Centers. Why has what we have tried so far not worked? What is the difference between Parent-child play groups and a Mother Center?

Spanish - Czech Exchange visit

The Spanish study visit to the Czech Republic could take place during the same period as the Polish - Czech exchange but has a different program.

Expectation from the Spanish Partner: Learn about Mother Centers, learn about the Czech campaigns of family and child friendly cities, on the Czech approach to civic engagement and engendering governance (round tables, MC women becoming active in municipal government) Also this visit will include Spanish local authorities, so it would be good to include a meeting with Czech local authorities in this visit.

Exchange visit to Netherlands (Date: 31.3. – 5.4)

The exchange visit will involve the Turkish, Bulgarian and Belgian partners. The Mother Centers in Nijmegen as well as MC in other Dutch cities will be visited.

Turkey: Goal is to start up a MC in Gaziantep and possibly also in Ankara. The MC concept fits in very well to the local culture of neighborhood contacts and networks.

Expectation: Learn the concept points and the “How to’s” in order to get Mother Centers started up and running. How do mothers and children interact in the Mother Centers? How do women from Turkish origin interact with other mothers in the Dutch centers?

Bulgaria: Expectation is to learn more about the creation and development of MC. To get fresh ideas of how to continue with the centers already existing in BG as well as exchange on how to start up new ones. Because we only have 4 centers we will include all in the exchanges. How is the balance kept between support and empowerment of women? What are activities for children in the Mother Center? Learning about intercultural and intergenerational activities, income generation as well as civic engagement are further important aspects.

Netherlands: Expectation to strengthen Twin City ties with Gaziantep. Concrete result of Mother Center(s) up and running in Gaziantep.

Belgium: Expectation is to understand the Mother Center model and how it can apply to the local work in Belgium with migrant mothers. Understand “the secrets of success” of the Mother Center model.

The visit will involve a Mother Center start up training conducted by the founder of the Mother Center concept as well as a presentation of methods and results of the Dutch Big Mamma campaign. It will also involve meetings with local authorities (Twin Cities representatives, supportive parliamentarians)

General Points for the Exchanges focusing on the Start-up of Mother Centers

- All partners focusing on the start up of MC want **concrete knowledge** on how to start up Mother Centers. How to find rooms and funding? Who are the visitors? What are activities and the program in the center? How does self management function? Are women paid? Do MC involve staff? What is the role of professionals? How to include fathers? Etc.
- How do Mother Centers contribute to the empowerment of women?
- How does the intercultural approach work in the Mother Centers?
- How do women of Mother Centers become active in their municipality? What forms of civic engagement and influence to make cities and society more family and child friendly have been undertaken by the Mother Center?
- What forms of income generation have been developed in Mother Centers?
- Meetings and presentations of local authorities who explain why they support Mother Centers should be planned as part of the exchange.
- Extra point for visit to German Mother Center: How does the intergenerational approach work?

Integration of Roma

An overall theme of the partnership is how the project contributes to the integration of Roma. Reflection on this is to be included in all exchanges involving the Roma MC as well as Roma groups that might be contacted in the other partnership countries (Spain, Germany, Turkey).

GWIA

The GWA preliminary program has been adapted according to the debate at the Amsterdam Kick Off meeting. A further GWIA Preparatory Meeting will be held in Amsterdam on April 29th involving the Spanish, German, Austrian and Dutch Partners to further work out the program of GWIA and the end conference in Vienna. Childcare services should be considered for the two events.

GWIA Preliminary Program 15-19 September 08 (second version)

Day 1: Introducing and Expanding the Learning Partnership

Morning: * General Opening, Local VIP Greetings (DIBA)

- * Greeting Address from Wandia Seaforth, Chief of UN-Habitat Best Practices & Local Leadership Programme
- * Greeting-Addresses to GWIA and the Grundtvig Partnership from Local Authorities of the Partner Countries
- * Ice Breaker/ Cultural contributions (Project Partners) ,
- * Introduction to overall goals of the project, Introduction to GWIA methodology (Nest! Foundation)
- * The Mother Center Model – Concept Points and how they function in practice (Muetterforum Stuttgart)
- * Logistical Announcements (DIBA)
- * Going through the week's Program (Nest! Foundation)

Afternoon: **Presentations of Non Grundtvig Countries** focusing on their interest in MC and their interest in the Learning Partnership themes: Empowerment, Intercultural dialog, Civic engagement and Governance.

Day 2: Women's Empowerment

Morning: with translation:

- * How do Mother Centers contribute to the empowerment of women? (Nest! Foundation)
- * Marcella Lagarda (Mexico): Workshop on Women's Empowerment

Afternoon in Working Groups:

- * Spanish Speaking Group (with translation) with local groups on Women's Empowerment
- * Peer learning consulting sessions on the start up of Mother Centers in :
 - Turkey
 - Poland
 - Non Grundtvig Countries(What questions/limitations/barriers are you currently struggling with?)

Day 3: Intercultural Dialog and Integration

Morning: * Intercultural Dialog and Integration in Mother Centers (MC Network Netherlands)

- * Reports of Thematic Field Work and Exchange Visits to Netherlands and Germany (visiting & hosting groups)
 - What have you learned? (as individuals and as a group)
 - What skills did you develop by participating in the study visits?
 - Was developing intercultural skills part of the learning process?
 - How have you put into practice/implemented what you learned?
 - What impact have the visits had on your local group and situation, and on the community and families (husbands, children, neighborhood, local authorities)?

Afternoon: Working Groups on the following themes

- * What are issues of intercultural dialog and how to stimulate and support integration?
What are similarities between diverse groups, what do we have in common?
What are differences and how can these differences be seen as resources and strengths?
- * Integration of Roma and Non Roma
- * Continuation of peer consultation with Non Grundtvig countries

Day 4: Civic Engagement and Engendering Governance

Morning: * The contribution of Mother Centers to Civic Engagement & Engendering Governance (Czech MC network)

- * Reports of Thematic Field Work and Exchange Visits to Czech Republic (from visiting and hosting groups)
 - What have you learned? (as individuals and as a group)
 - What skills did you develop by participating in the study visits?
 - What have you learned about activating women to get involved in local governance?
 - How have you put into practice/implemented what you learned?
 - What impact have the visits had on your local group and situation, on the community and families (husbands, children, neighborhood, local authorities)

Afternoon: Working Groups on the following themes

- * Family friendly Cities (“Allow me to enter” and Family Friendly Hospital Campaign SL, Cities for Children initiative Turkey)
- * Linking the formal and the informal - New Channels and Methods of governance (Round Table approach CZ, Big Mama Campaign NL, Local to Local Dialog GER)
- * Continuation of peer consultation with Non Grundtvig countries

Day 5: “Looking forward in the rear view mirror”

Morning: Harvesting the Learning: Results of the Working Groups on the themes:

- * Women’s Empowerment
- * Starting-up Mother Centers
- * Intercultural Dialog and Integration
- * Civic Engagement and Engendering Governance

Afternoon: Implementing the Learning: Working Groups on:

- * Implementation of Results of GWIA in participating countries on the way to Vienna
- * Planning the coaching visits (Turkey, Poland) and the second round study visits (Germany, Spain)
- * Joint international projects, campaigns and exchanges between Mother Centers (Sister Mother Centers, International task force and activities in local Mother Centers and regional and national networks)

Plenary: Strengthening the Mother Centers Network

- ✓ ICE BREAKERS and CULTURAL CONTRIBUTIONS should be included throughout the program..
- ✓ There will be lunch meetings between a core group to adapt the program to issues and debates that arise.
- ✓ Evenings free for relaxing, informal exchanges and social program

GWIA Preparatory Activities

We ask all partners to engage in the following preparatory activities for GWIA:

- Book your ticket and your hotel rooms as soon as possible (for those attending the **mine** meeting, it will take place directly after GWIA as a 1 day meeting on Saturday Sept 20). Information as provided by the Spanish partners is in a separate file 'Logisticinfo_Barcelona.doc'.
- We ask all partners (also the ones not officially Grundtvig partners) to gather statements from local authorities (municipal, regional, national) why they support Mother Centers to be presented at GWIA.
- For those partners to whom it applies, choose which Non-Grundtvig partners you want to sponsor to participate at GWIA (Argentina, Cameroun, Belgium, Italy, Nepal, Slovakia, Sudan) and let us know, so that we can give you the contact information.
- Check out possibilities to raise your own funding to include more participants to GWIA.
- Prepare your presentations for GWIA (10 minutes).
- Prepare your cultural contributions (songs, theater sketches, exhibition (for the exhibition hall) and let us know what you plan. Let us know before April 29th (Amsterdam preparatory meeting) what technical requirements you need for your presentations, theater plays, exhibition materials as well as any comments/ideas you have on the GWIA program.
- Prepare your list of learning questions for GWIA, in what areas you want to deepen your learning.

Support a Sister to come to GWIA List

Countries needing support for participation at GWIA are:

- Argentina,
- Belgium (migrant women),
- Cameroun
- Italy
- Nepal,
- Slovakia,
- Sudan

Please let us know who you are supporting, so we can include them in the participant list.

Process after GWIA:

GWIA is not over after the Sept 15-19 event in Barcelona. The learning at GWIA needs to be documented. This can take the form of individual diaries, and/or group discussions, reports/feedback at home to local group, newsletters, the media etc. We need something in writing that documents the learning, how you have shared this learning with your group at home as well as what you are implementing after GWIA in your practical work.

Participants going to GWIA need to prepare after the event:

- Report on learning results of GWIA: What did we learn?
- Feed back to local group at home
- Dissemination of results in network, newsletters, media
- Implementation plans: What do we want to implement at home and how?

Field Work

In between the study visits and learning partnership meetings we suggest grassroots knowledge generation to be conducted through local field work. We suggest doing this through a set of interviews, dialogs and discussion groups on the focus themes and through documenting the learning from this field work. Mutual interviewing could also be a methodology used during the exchange visits.

This could also be linked to the “How do we want to raise our children campaign” by integrating the focus themes into the campaign and by focusing on creating a wide diversity of participants in the dialog groups and discussions.

The focus themes for the discussion groups and interviews are:

- How do MC empower women?
- How do MC contribute to intercultural dialog and integration?
- How do MC activate women in civic engagement and local governance?
- How do MC contribute to parent education?
- How do MC support intergenerational dialog and intergenerational learning?

For this fieldwork the questionnaires below can be used and/or own or additional questions can be developed. Also partner countries who are not “official” Grundtvig partners can take part in the field work.

Questionnaires for Fieldwork on Focus Themes

Interviews can be conducted individually or with groups, with MC initiators and participants, family members, neighbours, religious leaders, local authorities and politicians, members of youth groups as well as other relevant stakeholders in the community .

A) Integration

Dialog Groups and Interviews (between migrants/locals, Roma/Non Roma) could be conducted on questions like:

- ✓ What ethnic and minority groups participate in the Mother Center?
- ✓ What is their living situation in regard to housing, employment, family income, childcare, school performance of children, education and knowledge of host language?
- ✓ How does the Mother Center meet their needs and interests?
- ✓ How do they participate in the Mother Centers?
- ✓ Do they take on active roles?
- ✓ Do they experience Mother Centers as different from other services and projects? If so, in what way?
- ✓ What have they learned about the host country in the Mother Centers?
- ✓ What do they define for themselves as integration?
- ✓ What are areas of intercultural contact and dialog in MC?

- ✓ How does the MC contribute to integration?
- ✓ What do participants gain in terms of integration from participating in the Mother Center?
- ✓ What is the motivation to work with an intercultural approach?
- ✓ How does the Mother Center benefit from diversity and an intercultural approach and dialog?
- ✓ What are visions to enhance intercultural dialogs and integration?
- ✓ What skills are needed for intercultural dialog and integration?
- ✓ How are these skills developed and enhanced in MC?
- ✓ What obstacles have come up and how have they been overcome?
- ✓ What do you see as the major successes of the intercultural work in the Mother Center?
- ✓ What are the major lessons learned?
- ✓ What would be done the same again, what would be done differently, if there was a second chance?
- ✓ What would be major recommendations to other Mother Centers?
- ✓ What parental skills are needed to introduce children to respect diversity? What is education for diversity?
- ✓ How are parental skills in raising children to respect and embrace diversity learned in MC?
- ✓ Do Roma women participate in the Mother Center and if so what has been the experience?

The following experiences of how MC participants benefit from diversity in MC can be confirmed, elaborated or modified in the discussion groups:

Migrants: Learning and using host language, gaining cultural orientation and understanding of host country, gaining social networks and contact to locals, gaining recognition for skills and resources and opportunities to apply them in host countries, gaining opportunities for education and further training, finding support for integration into labor market or active participation in neighborhoods).

Locals: Gaining Sensitivity and understanding of migration situation and issues, gaining intercultural skills, being enriched by diversity, learning about other countries and cultures, benefitting from other skills and traditions.

B) Empowerment

- ✓ How are women and children empowered in the Mother Centers?
- ✓ What skills do they gain by participating in the Mother Centers?
- ✓ In what way do they gain self confidence?
- ✓ In what way have women become more independent in their lives?
- ✓ In what way have new choices opened up for women through their participation in MC?
- ✓ How have women gained through MC in terms of education, income, participation in the labor market?
- ✓ In what way have participants gained confidence and security in their role as mothers?
- ✓ In what way have participants gained confidence and security in their identity as women?
- ✓ What impact does women's empowerment have on husbands and partnerships, on gender roles and gender balance in the family?
- ✓ What impact does women's empowerment have on the children?

C) Civic Engagement and Governance

- ✓ What are issues in the community, neighborhood and town that concern the mothers, children and families of the Mother Centers?
- ✓ Are these issues seen the same way by MC parents as by the local authorities or public opinion? If not, how do the perspectives differ?
- ✓ What would you like to change in your community?
- ✓ What activities has the MC undertaken in regard to the community issues mentioned?
- ✓ Has participating in the MC increased the civic engagement of participants?
- ✓ How have you addressed the governance issues that are important for MC participants?
- ✓ What have been obstacles and how were they overcome?
- ✓ Where has support come from, who have been allies in the process?
- ✓ What methods and channels were developed and used for engaging in governance and how effective were they? What works best?
- ✓ Were new tools and channels of communication and governance developed and if so what are they, and why were they developed?
- ✓ Is the Mother Center seen in the community as an active player in governance?
- ✓ Have partnerships and alliances developed with other groups and stakeholders and what is the quality of these partnerships?
- ✓ When do partnerships work, when do they not?
- ✓ What have been the biggest successes in terms of civic engagement and local governance?
- ✓ What have been failures and disappointments?
- ✓ What are the major lessons learned?
- ✓ What is needed for cities to be women and child friendly?
- ✓ In what forms are MC influencing decision making in their cities and communities?
- ✓ What would be done the same again, what would be done differently, if there was a second chance?
- ✓ What would be major recommendations to other Mother Centers?

For further reference consult also the Guidelines for the Mother Center Start up Visits as well as the Thematic Exchange Visits in the Annex of this document.

Learning Methodologies/ Training Materials

We need formats through which we can document and transfer the knowledge generated by Mother Centers into something that can be taught: teaching material/curriculum. We want in this project to create educational and didactic materials, training manuals, working books etc. For this we are also looking to include partnerships with academia.

The goals of creating teaching material is to make visible and increase the understanding in society of Mother Centers and the knowledge they generate. We want to make grassroots knowledge more communicable, transferable, and thus create more recognition and a solid basis for support from local authorities and funders as well as for the mainstreaming and up-scaling of grassroots knowledge. We want to create accreditation of Mother Centers and GWIA as educational learning spaces and to create awareness of their importance in life-long-learning. Throughout the project and exchanges the knowledge of MC is to be gathered on the following 4 subjects and made into 4 teaching materials. It is important that all partners collect the information and content base as well as stories, pictures and cartoons to make this material rich and readable:

- 1) Start up Package on How to create Mother Centers .
The **mine** MC start up materials that exist in English, German, Slovak, Bulgarian, Albanian and Serbian are to be elaborated and made into attractive teaching material.
We also ask the partners who have MC start up materials of their own to add any points or elements from their start up packages that they feel are missing in the **mine** material. Translations of the materials into the other partner country languages is recommended.
- 2) How to support MC as places of integration: Celebrating diversity, intercultural dialog and integration in Mother Centers. How to raise children to respect diversity as a sub-theme.
- 3) How to support MC as places that contribute to gender equality and to the empowerment of women as well as to changing gender roles and the gender balance in the family.
Empowerment is defined as increasing women's capacity to take life into their own hands and go for their own opinions and goals, making visible their skills and contributions, increasing the status and profile of women in society, enhancing respect of women as 1st class citizens and members of society.
How to raise children to embrace gender equality as a sub theme.
- 4) Creating family and child friendly cities

We have included the **mine** Mother Center Start up Materials for your reference in the Project Tool box which you can access on the GWIA website.

Link to How to we want to raise our children campaign and University of Parenthood

The questionnaires and themes for dialog groups that are being developed by the Union of Slovak Mother Centers and the **mine** Working Group in the continuation of the "How do we want to raise our children" campaign are to be used and included in the Grundtvig project as part of the field work and as basis for creating the teaching materials.

Partnerships

Partnerships with academia, local authorities and international organizations like Unicef should be actively explored during the project. These partnerships can focus on supporting Mother Centers and their activities, on partnering in advocacy and lobbying issues, on support in the development of Mother Center training materials and curricula, on linking professional know how to Mother Center participants and on gaining recognition and accreditation of Mother Centers as developmental space for grassroots knowledge and learning.

Administrative Procedures

Checklist administrative procedures

- Read your contract carefully. It consists of 3 parts:
 - The contract itself
 - Subsidy rules (about administrative obligations)
 - The original project document (defines project)
The project as planned in the application is a part of the grant agreement with your national agency. Therefore, modifications to the project plan are subject to approval of your own national agency. For the modification procedure please contact your national agency.
- Money is for activities with and mobilities to partners, according to plan.
- Mobilities are across borders, relevant and need to be proven.
- A progress report needs to be submitted by 30-6-08 to your National Agency following the model they provide
- Final activity report (due on 30-09-09) to national agency for each partner
 - **project report** reflects the impact of the project as a whole, it contains contributions from all project partners. Coordinator compiles, on the basis of information from all partners. It contains:
 - * Monitoring progress of the project according to plan;
 - * Course of activities.
 - * Participation of all partners.
 - * Changes in the planning of project activities
 - **national impact report:** addresses the local, regional or national point of view of a specific partner institution. Therefore, project partners write their own national impact report. Ask your national agency for format and special requirements.
 - National activities in the framework of the project.
 - Keeping project records.
 - Mobilities
- Final payment depends on approval of final report

Documents

You will find all the papers and documents handed out at the Amsterdam meeting under the links in the information e-mails you will be receiving. Please send us the dates and program of your exchanges so that we can make them available on the website to all partners.

How other countries can join

Countries not included in the official Grundtvig partnership like Belgium, Slovakia, Italy, Switzerland can join the project by joining exchanges, raising money to participate in GWIA and/or end conference in Vienna, conducting the field work in their local centers, or organizing a twin city exchange program with a Mother Center in another country. They can also create and join a new Grundtvig partnership. Next calls for submissions will be issued in February.

Issues to be addressed during the partnership activities by all partners (outcome evaluation first meeting)

- Translation
- Individual comfort needs
- Planning for enough breaks
- Including open question time
- Including social program

Communication Commitments

Partners agree to answer e mails inside 5 days. Latest in 10 days. In urgent cases write in subject line: Urgent Grundtvig. Answer needed by then and then.

- **Internal communication within the project:**
 - One key person per country is constantly involved in the project.
 - All partners contribute to maintaining a good overall atmosphere.
 - Be clear about expectations, especially towards the coordinator.
 - Visitor and host work together in preparing mobilities.
 - Be precise and prompt in sharing information with partners.
- **Communicate the project ideas inside your network/organisation**
 - Involving more people locally in project activities;
 - Producing a leaflet/brochure that describes the project;
 - Informing about the project at meetings or in newsletters;
 - Using a bulletin board to exhibit material from the project;
- **Communicate externally: the project is also an opportunity to promote your organisation**
 - Contribute to the joint website www.GWIA.net;
 - Contact local/national press about international visit, and the project as a whole;
 - Providing information about the project at meetings/conferences;
 - Writing about the project in magazines;
 - Publishing final products in your country
 - other ideas?
- **Practicalities of communication**
 - ✓ Per country one contact person, or country coordinator: they share project information with the national team and do national (in- and external) communication.

| | | |
|------------------|----------------------------|---|
| • Austria | Katharina Kamelreiter | info@kind-und-kegel.at , info@ekiz-dachverband.at |
| • Bulgaria - | Biser Alekov | biskol@mail.bg |
| • Czech Republic | Monika Petruchová | info@materska-centra.cz |
| • Germany | Petra Renz | info@muetterforum.de , Petra.Renz@gmx.de |
| • Netherlands | Marieke van Geldermalsen | m.geldermalsen@xs4all.nl |
| • Poland | ... | biuro@imd.org.pl tel +48.061.847.4576 |
| • Spain | Maria Concepcion Odriozola | odriozolaek@diba.cat |
| • Turkey | Prof. Kadriye Yurdakok | yurdakok@bilkent.edu.tr |
 - ✓ Contact person provides information to the other Grundtvig-partners:
 - Share list of other people involved nationally (roles, contact info)
 - Share agenda and report for every mobility your country does.
 - Share photographs, documents, materials produced in the project.

Documenting the Learning and Evaluation

We have put together a tool-box of instruments to be used for the documenting of the learning and the evaluation of process and outcomes throughout the project.

This tool box contains the following documents:

- Documentation and Reflection Tools to be used before , during and after the study visits (exchanges)
- Overall evaluation of the Peer Learning and Start Up Process of Mother Centers – Individual and Collective Benefits
- Overall evaluation of the Peer Learning on the Focus Themes – Individual and Collective Benefits
- Self Evaluation Tool for Implementing Mother Centers
- Self Evaluation Tool for the Theme Integration and Intercultural Dialog
- Self Evaluation Tool for the Theme Civic Engagement/Engendering Local Governance
-

You can access this tool box with the following link: (link to GWIA website). Partners can choose which instruments they want to use, and/or can adapt or make new instruments.

Reflection, Documentation and Evaluation of the Learning Process in one form or another, however, is required of all partners and information on what tools are used and how they are being used needs to be sent to the coordinator.

Success Indicators

The Working Group: “Tools and Methods” at the Amsterdam meeting formulated the following success indicators for our project:

- 1) A group of learners in the Mother Centers has been activated to host exchange visits and have participated in the preparation and conducting of the exchange.
- 2) The group has monitored & documented their learning.
- 3) The visits have increased visibility of the centers in the community.
- 4) New Mother Centers have been set up.
- 5) New initiatives have been started in the centers regarding:
 - intercultural dialog
 - civic engagement/governance
 - gender equality
- 6) Curricular Elements have been developed in regard to:
 - Start up of Mother Centers (Training Materials)
 - Intercultural learning
 - Civic engagement/governance
 - Gender Equality
- 7) The Network of Mother Centers has grown and been strengthened (Countries join other **mine** campaigns, we stay in contact and continue cooperation activities after project)
- 8) Overall Number of participants (including local groups)
- 9) Additional participating countries (countries participating despite negative decision of country Grundtvig agencies or who have joined the project on their own)
- 10) Visits to website
- 11) New partnerships have been built (with academia, local authorities, politicians, companies)

Tasks and Responsibilities

Summary of responsibilities of coordination

Collect reports and documentation, monitor process and evaluation, send out time line and requirements, put together overall report, function as contact for overall inquires, consult partners on demand, disseminate overall results and products. The coordination does not take over national responsibilities.

Summary partners responsibilities

The partnership is based on common responsibility. Partners are reminded by the coordinator of obligations, formal requirements and agreements between the partners, but have to keep their own commitments.

The common products and common end report are common responsibility.

Changes in national project plans need to be discussed and agreed by the national agencies of each partner.

Partners should carefully read their national requirements and details issued by their national agencies.

A Check List of the Tasks and Responsibilities for Partners (All) as a reminder:

Study Visits

- Building group of learners who will take part in visits and in hosting
- Conducting Group discussions: What do we want to learn from the visits (as visitors as well as as hosts)
- Developing the Learning Methods. What methods will we use to teach and to learn?
- Developing and implementing the Methods to reflect and document the learning (Diaries, Dialogs, Reflection Rounds)
- Preparing program of visit and hosting the visit and/or undertaking the visit
- Communicating with the visit partners as well as the learning partnership as a whole
- Conducting the thematic field work
- Including local authorities and other partners in the visit program
- Public Relations and media (newsletters, website, media articles)
- Writing Reports on the outcomes of the visits
- Implementing the monitoring and evaluation tools
- Giving feed back to the local group on the results of the mobilities and getting their support on the learning goals and methods
- Implementing the results of the visits (Creating a Mother Center, getting support from local authorities, developing activities on the partnership themes, building partnerships with academia etc)

GWIA

- Defining questions and learning objectives: What do we want to learn at the GWIA?
- Preparing presentations for the GWIA
- Preparing roles and responsibilities at GWIA
- Summary report on results of GWIA, what did we learn?
- Reporting back to local group at home
- Disseminating of results in network, newsletters, media
- Implementing the results of the GWIA in local work at home

Field Work

- Initiate discussion groups/interviews in local Mother Centers on one or several of the focus themes:
 - How do MC empower women and families?
 - How do MC contribute to integration and intercultural dialog?
 - How do MC activate women to create more child friendly cities and environment?
- Document the thematic field work (content, results, photos, stories, drawings, video)
- Contribute to creating Mother Center Training Material on the focus themes.

Coaching Visits

- Prepare goals, desired outcomes and questions for coaching visits and communicate to coaches beforehand
- Prepare program (discussions with local groups, meetings with local authorities, partners, media etc)

Overall Responsibilities

- Provide regular feedback to the project coordinators on findings and exchange information with other partners'
- Assure national project administration, local and trans-national mobilities, write end report to national agencies
- Engage in regular documentation and evaluation of the learning generated in the project (See tool box).
- Contribute to the commonly defined outputs

Extra Responsibilities of Partners without Established MCs

- Organise, coordinate, support and stimulate groups of women who intend to start Mother Centers
- Provide translation of materials, consulting and technical support to the local groups
- Provide Start up Funds to Mother Centers

Overall Project outcomes

- Creating new Mother Centers
- Compiling an end report on process and results: What did we learn from the partnership, how did the learning process unfold, what was difficult, what was successful, what have we put into practice in our local work?
- Creating Mother Center Start up Materials: translating and adapting to local use and conditions
- Creating and testing curricular elements on the themes: empowerment, integration and governance
- Detailed Plan of publishing and disseminating results
- Creating a structure for continuation of international networking and peer exchange: "Sister Mother Centers" Youth exchanges, joint campaigns and projects, International Task Forces in the MC etc.

Involvement Options of Non Grundtvig Partners

- Join Thematic Field Work
- Fundraising to participate in GWIA
- Join Study Visits
- Help with designing Curricular Elements
- Sister Mother Center Activities or Participation in other **mine** campaigns and projects.

Annex I. Evaluation Kick Off Meeting Amsterdam

A total of 29 evaluation forms were filled out of the meeting.

Generally the evaluation was very positive with very high scores given for

- Evidence of clear planning
- Appropriate selection of delegates
- Clarity of project coordination
- Quality of the management of monitoring and evaluation by the project coordinator

In all evaluation categories a clear majority was given to grades 3 and 4 (on a scale of 1 to 4, with 4 being the highest and 1 the lowest grade)

Some critical grades were given regarding time scheduling, mixture of activities and the social program, as well as regarding the quality of the partners agreement and the quality of the conference venue.

Suggestions for future meetings given in this respect referred to having more informal and free time to have informal exchange as well as to recuperate and rest, no working program after dinner, more time in working groups, more visual elements like films, more social program and meetings scheduled during week days. Venues with larger meeting space, more fresh air and more single and double rooms were recommended.

Regarding the quality of the partnership remarks commented that this was the beginning of a partnership that still needs to grow and that there are structural differences between the grassroots and the professional partners which need attention during the process. A recommendation was also to spend more time to explain the spirit of sharing and networking to support the cooperation between partners and the growing together beyond individual interests.

Regarding the content there were requests to give more information on Mother Centers as such.

Feedback

Many participants used the space for personal remarks to give positive feedback.

Some of the comments are repeated here to give an impression of the general atmosphere of the meeting:

- *"Thanks – the preparation was so good and the people now can do the good things, because you have been doing good work first"*
- *"I see that the partnership will be stronger after the conference since we met face to face and it made it more clear to me to understand the objectives of the other partners involved in the project."*
- *"This is the first international seminar where I really feel a connection between the partners, it is very clear how we can support each other."*
- *"The project is great, we have much work, but this is a good form to create a good future".*
- *"Thank you very much for putting so much effort and coordination you have provided for the meeting. It made a lot of points clear to me. I now better understand how the project is going to be implemented and what I exactly need to do. I look forward to getting more involved . I will be part of the learning process. Thank you!"*
- *"A very trustful meeting. The environment of the event led to positive attitudes and collaboration."*
- *"Very nice coffee breaks! And nice place for such an event."*
- *"The meeting was well prepared and in advance we were informed clearly with the objectives as well as we received time to review the materials used during the sessions."*
- *"The communication between the partners was satisfying, because we had time to talk and plan our common activities."*
- *"Very nice accommodation. Diet starts again next week..."*
- *"I really like the way the event was organized."*

Annex II: Guidelines for MC Start up Visits and Consultations

I. General Guidelines

The goal of the exchange visits and consultations is to understand the Mother Center concept as well as the context and cultural and socio-economic background of the communities in which Mother Centers are to be initiated and to examine how the Mother Center concept relates or needs to be adapted to this context.

A Exchange visits should include the following steps

- ✓ Explanation of the key elements of the MC concept
- ✓ Overview of activities and organisational structure of MC
- ✓ Experience of and participation in every day activities and life in the MC
- ✓ In depth questions and answers sessions
- ✓ Time for self reflection and monitoring the learning (diary writing/ group discussions)
- ✓ Shared debate between hosts and visitors how what has been learned can be implemented back home – what are the next steps
- ✓ Communication plan to keep in contact after the visit
- ✓ Meeting with local authorities and institutional actors who explain why they support Mother Centers

B Consultation visits should include the following steps:

- 1) Visit of MC premises as well as the surrounding neighborhoods
- 2) Interviews with Mother Center initiators and participants as well as other relevant stakeholders in the communities
- 3) Consultation and Feed back on process and steps of implementing Mother Centers in the community
- 4) Consultation and Support in use of evaluation tools
- 5) Planning and Agreements on next steps, work programs and time lines
- 6) Documentation of the lessons learned. Pilot projects are important learning experiences. In a pilot project there are no failures, because even mistakes and set backs contain valuable information and lessons to be learned. Therefore it is important to document all steps taken, everything that was tried out, what worked and what did not and why.
- 7) Collection of quotes and stories from mothers, fathers, children, neighbors ...
- 8) Collection of visual material
(flyers, drawings, posters, photographs, videos, cartoons)

Gathering Background Information

Who are the Mother Center initiative women?

- Family situation
- Age
- Education, talents, resources and skills
- Roles and activities in the community
- Community networks
- Everyday life schedule
- Life experiences

What is the situation in the community where MC are to be initiated?

- Where are the children during the day and who is caring for them?
- What childcare services are available and for which age groups
- Daily life schedule of children
- Attendance children in municipal childcare services
- Quantity and quality of the schools
- Attendance of children in schools and level of achievement
- Access to further education
- Activities and opportunities for youth
- Level of employment and unemployment
- Average family income
- Housing
- Basic services
- Situation of elderly
- Level of health and health services

Information on the Mother Center initiative

- What is the motivation to initiate a Mother Center?
- Why is a Mother Center attractive to the women and to the community?
- What needs are to be met through the Mother Center?
- What are ideas and visions for the Mother Center?
- What activities have been undertaken so far?
- Have rooms been found and how suitable are they?
- What obstacles were encountered and have they been overcome and how?
- Where has support come from?
- What are participants contributing to the center?
- What are other groups contributing to the center?
- What has been tried and failed, what has succeeded?
- What are plans, strategies and next steps?
- What groups have been reached with the center?
- How many women are active in the center, how many visitors and how many children?
- How many participate regularly? How many families are reached in all?
- Who is the initiating group and what has been their role in the initiating process? What skills and talents are represented in the initiator group?
- What are the opening hours and what is the weekly program in the Mother Center?
- What has been the response of the larger community?
- Who are (potential) allies and partners and how are they engaged?
- What funds are needed and what funds are available?
- How are available funds being spent in the Mother Center?
- What kind of support would make the most difference? And where could it come from?
- What PR and publicity activities have been developed and with what results?
- When is the Mother Center project considered a success?
Is it already a success and why? What needs to happen and be in place for Mother Centers to work and to be a success in the community?
- What have been the major lessons learned?
- What would be done the same again, what would be done differently, if there was a second chance?
- What would be major recommendations to new Mother Center initiatives?
- What has been the benefit for Roma Mother Centers to participate in the learning partnership in terms of Roma empowerment and integration?

Annex III: Guidelines for Thematic Exchange Visits

I General Guidelines

The goal of the exchange visits is to learn and share Mother Center approaches and experiences in regard to intercultural dialog and civic engagement/governance.

Exchange visits should include the following steps:

- 1) Explanation of the key elements of the MC approach and experience regarding these themes
- 2) Overview of activities developed in regard to these themes
- 3) Experience of and participation in every day activities and life in the MC that portray the MC approach in regard to these themes
- 4) Presentation of experiences and results of the field work conducted regarding intercultural dialog and civic engagement/governance
- 5) In depth questions and answers sessions
- 6) Time for self reflection and monitoring the learning (diary writing/group discussions)
- 7) Shared debate between hosts and visitors how what has been learned can be implemented back home – what are the next steps
- 8) Communication plan to keep in contact after the visit
- 9) Meeting with local authorities and institutional actors who explain why they support Mother Centers