



REPUBLIKA SLOVENIJA
SLUŽBA VLADE REPUBLIKE SLOVENIJE ZA RAZVOJ
IN EVROPSKO KOHEZIJSKO POLITIKO

Univerza v Ljubljani



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Action research project as an opportunity to co-create new knowledge with multi- challenged families

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 **LIFE**
Learning to innovate with families


Challenges

Families

- Financial and housing distress (poverty, low incomes for survival, job search with little possibility of employment etc.).
- Inability to help children with school matters, problems associated with raising children.
- Burdens of disease, mental health problems, violence, suicide attempts, drug addiction etc.

Researchers

- Not to be additional burden for the family.
- Families are not objects of the research, but collaborators in the process.
- To establish relationship of confidence with the family, so family members can share themes, relevant for them.
- Personal engagement in the processes of help and research (advantages/disadvantages).
- How to support family after the end of the project?



About the project *"Helping Families in the Community: The Co-creation of Desired Changes for Reducing Social Exclusion and Strengthening Health"*

- University of Ljubljana (Faculty of Social Work, Faculty of Sport and Faculty of Health Sciences)
- Norges Teknisk-Naturvitenskapelige Universitet from Trondheim (Norway)
- Association of Friends of Youth Ljubljana Moste-Polje (Slovenia).

The main objectives of the project were:

- Co-creating changes with family members in order to reduce health inequalities in forming help model for families in a community.
- Training of professionals for work in the areas of the cooperating faculties.
- Challenge the dichotomy between theory and practice.
- More about the project: <http://spdse.splet.arnes.si/>.

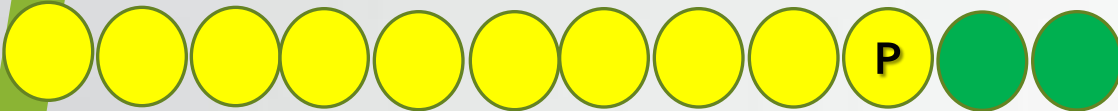
Involvement of the students

STUDENT -
FEMALE

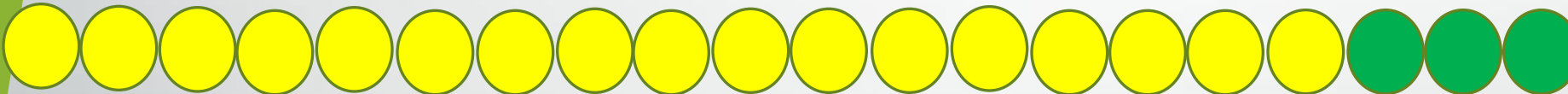
STUDENT - MALE

SW

- 2013/2014 – PILOT PROJECT



- 2014/2015 – FIRST YEAR OF IMPLEMENTING THE PROJECT



- 2015/2016 – SECOND YEAR OF IMPLEMENTING THE PROJECT



- 2016/2017 – WORK AFTER THE CONCLUSION OF THE PROJECT



- 2017/2018 – WORK AFTER THE CONCLUSION OF THE PROJECT: **???** + LIFE



Involvement of the families

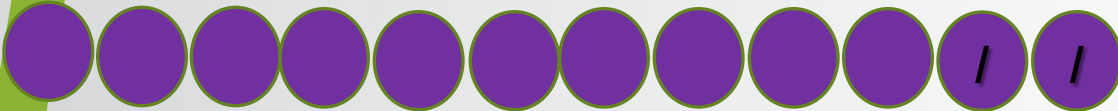
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CSW

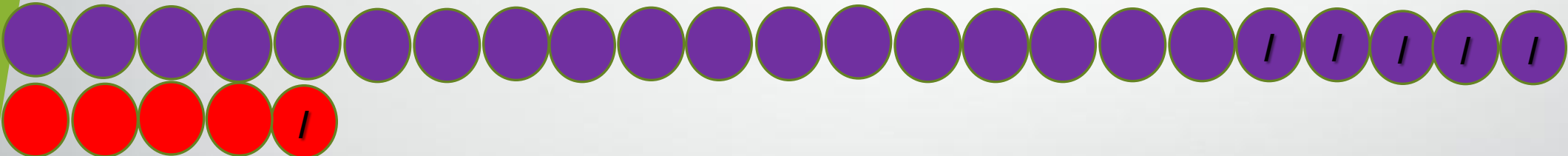
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SCHOOL

- 2013/2014 – PILOT PROJECT



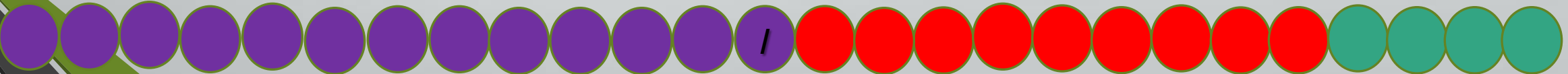
- 2014/2015 – FIRST YEAR OF IMPLEMENTING THE PROJECT



- 2015/2016 – SECOND YEAR OF IMPLEMENTING THE PROJECT



- 2016/2017 – WORK AFTER THE CONCLUSION OF THE PROJECT

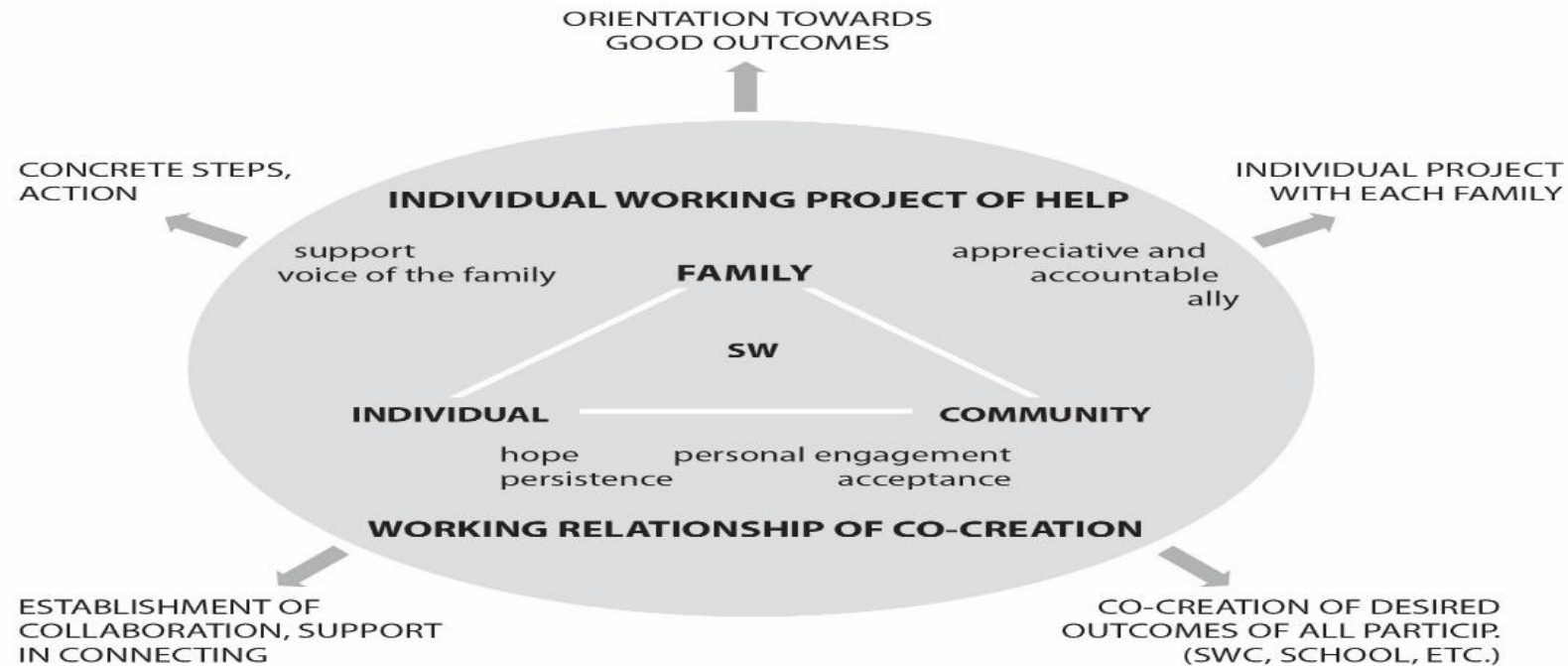


Starting points of the project (influencing the research?)

- Multi-challenged families are *resilient* (Walsh 2003, Madsen 2007) and are much more than the problems they face. In collaboration with them, we were not focused on „what is missing and what should be“, but in „what is and what could be“ (Madsen, 2007).
- The importance of *relational stance* (Madsen 2007).
- We have a developed actionable knowledge (working relationship concept, individual working project of help (IWPH), family social work (Čačinović Vogrinčić 2006)).

Model of collaboration with families in a community

Figure 1 Model of collaborative processes of social work with families in a community



Methodology

Action research project:

- [...]method of support and assistance to professionals and laymen in resolving problems of professional handling and social action through acquiring new empirical knowledge. At the same time, it is a way of organizing research of practical handling, lay or professional, to contribute to resolving the problems of practice and the theoretical knowledge of social work action science (Mesec 2006: 203).

Research objectives

- Explore the family experience of collaborating with the IWPH, through the Model of the Collaborative Processes of Social Work with Families in the Community.
- Explore the comparison between family experiences of collaborating with the IWPH in relation to other forms of received help.
- Explore factors, which according to families, have contributed to good outcomes.

Population and sampling

Multi-challenged families in Slovenia, *students of MA SW with Families:*

- 28 families
- *19 students*

Forms for recording work processes within the project - 1

All the meetings with families in the IWPH were recorded on pre-prepared forms to obtain data on the use of the working relationship of co-creating help in the IWPH based on three dimensions:

- the phase of conversation (agreement on collaboration and verification of the achievement of goals; definition of the problem and the desired outcomes; help plan and further agreements),
- concepts used in conversation (work from the strength perspective, ethics of participation and social work with families at the second level)
- personal reflection on a meeting.

Forms for recording work processes within the project - 2

- Expectations of the family members
- Interim evaluation
- Final evaluation
- Final in-depth interviews with the family
- Student's final paper
- Focus groups with the students

New Experience of Families' Collaboration in the Co-creative Working Relationship

- Dissatisfaction of the families with the help received within the institutional framework of CSW:

„The other approach is something quite different, yes, yes, yes, yes. You ask, you give your opinion, what shall we do, we could try this, but it is nevertheless a bureaucratic attitude.“ (I6.F20M.7)

“No, I cannot, it just cannot be done.“ (I6.F15M.3)

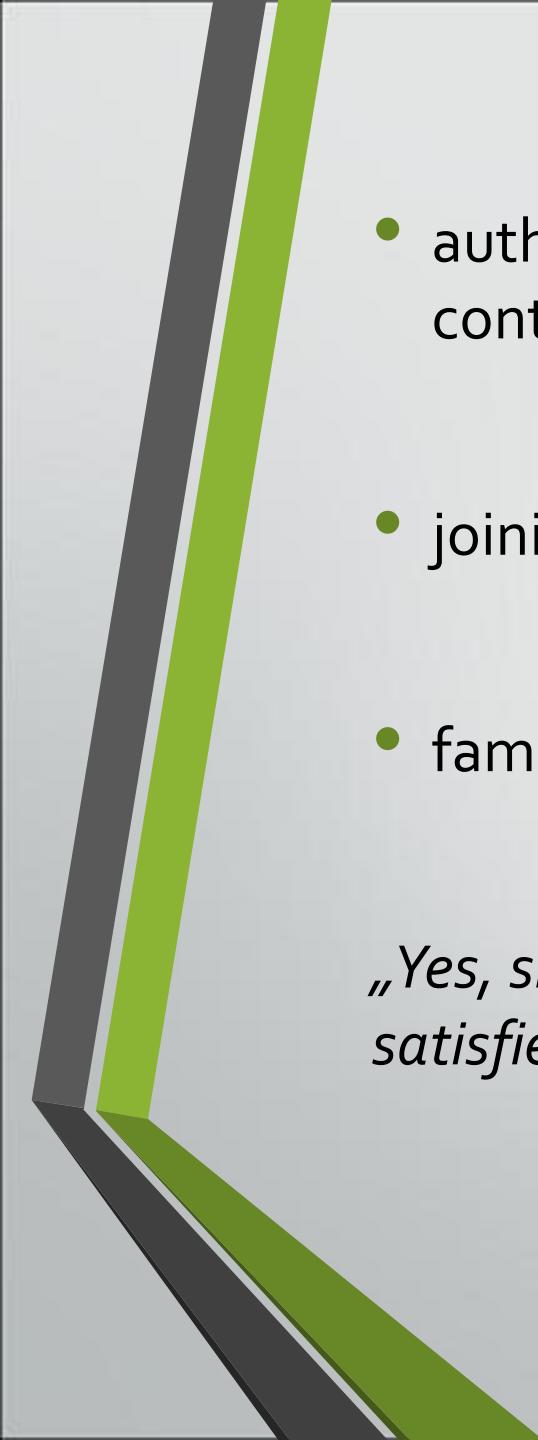


„Just the approach. She did everything to help me.“ (I6.F15M.1)

„Here it is just you, your problems and one who knows how to listen.“ (I6.F8M.2)

„I wish to have one person in my life who will not give up.“ (I6.F2M.18)

„She is able to work because she is that kind of person. It is not about what she has learned at the faculty, what you have taught her. Really, I cannot stress enough the element of humanity.“ (I6.F2M.5)

- 
- authenticity of the reactions, humanity, compassion and warmth as factors that contributed to success
 - joining the family
 - families also highlighted the importance of the social worker's professionalism

„Yes, she was really so professional. Yes. She was already as she should be. I was satisfied with her.“ (I6.D10M.6)

- new paradigm of co-creating

D12M: "Now, it was different," (Author's note: to visiting the child psychiatrist) D12H: "We worked alone; we did most of the work. XX (XX - child psychiatrist) kept saying to do this and that, and then come back and tell me how it turned out." (I6.D12H.1)

- collaboration with a family in the community where family lives

*„Because it creates more specific contact. I like this. This is what we miss.“
(I6.D10M.2)*

- help and support in concrete steps to achieve the desired changes

Conclusions

GOOD OUTCOMES OF THE PROJECT	FURTHER CHALLENGES
Development of new knowledge together with families.	To include families in the reflection of the results.
If we want to research family processes, we have to establish working relationship with the family (time!).	To include families also in the planning of the research.
We include family as a whole not an individual family member.	
Families were not the object of the research but experts on experiences.	
Action research leaves positive trails in the life of families.	