

NGO

PROJECT'S DESCRIPTION - NEXT DOOR FAMILY

1) Description of the challenge/issue:

The immigration is currently one of the biggest social problems in the European Union. It has turned out that the attempts of states (even those with broad experience in this field) to find successful models of integration that would ensure quality coexistence of the majority society and immigrants have failed (see remarks by A. Merkel and T. Sarrazin). It is necessary to look for and create new ways of enhancing intercultural dialogue and apply new integration approaches that are more efficient and can shorten the distance between the majority and immigrants, as well as to prevent the emergence of bias against immigrants, extremist and hateful utterances. During the economic crisis these problems fully came in sight and seem to be very difficult to solve. The model/approach, which we apply in the project Next Door Family with significantly positive results, was firstly introduced in 2004. It derives from "inclusive neighborhoods concept", thus from the need to promote the emergence of individual friendship ties between the majority and immigrants and to remove barriers and mutual isolation. The project also responds to the issue of general public's perception on migration through individual contacts and large media campaign. The above described model of "how to live together and not just next to each other" has been used for several years within the "Next Door Family" project realized by NGO Word 21 in the whole Czech Republic.

2) Key aspects of the project – brief description of the method used:

The project takes the form of casual lunches whereby immigrant families living permanently in the Czech Republic meet up with Czech families from their neighborhood (village, town). The project presents an innovative and new approach of integrating immigrants into majority society. As mentioned above, every year on the same day and hour Czech and immigrant families enjoy these special informal get-togethers in their homes.

Slovo 21 has been running this project for 7 years. During this time it has enabled 884 Czech and immigrant families from 26 countries to interact. The project's effectiveness is evident in the high number of friendships, which exist and which are greatly valued by the families. Totally 6800 persons were involved (including coordinators, assistants, audience of additional events, experts etc.). We suppose that more than 3 million people were addressed through the media and propagation campaign. But the best proof of project effectiveness is high number of friendships, which persist for future and are considered as very important by families.

NGO

3) Main goals of the project:

- to support mutual communication and creation of individual positive relationships between immigrants and major society
- to improve the level of integration of immigrants and to help in building up of the tolerant society
- to inform general public in a positive way about the immigrants living in the Czech Republic and to increase society's esteem towards immigrants

4) Target group:

- Families of immigrants and from major society
- general public through media, propagation campaign and additional activities
- experts through additional activities (conferences, round tables)
- NGOs, institutions (e.g. local government) as cooperating parties

5) Project implementation:

The project is implemented by NGO Slovo 21 since 2004 and has involved in it around 6800 people. The main event of the project - a meeting of families during the joint lunches – is held once a year (in autumn) and presents the culmination of long-term preparations. Currently the project is implemented throughout the Czech Republic (the involvement of all 14 regions), but our plan is expand the project to the European level, in collaboration with six international partners.

The system of common lunches is very simple:

One meeting (joint casual lunch)

=

1 immigrant family + 1 family from majority society + 1 assistant from organization

Note: families are putting in pairs very carefully and with the aim they have something in common (age of children, jobs, interests etc.) what will facilitate their contacts

The project is often supplemented with special events - such as multi-cultural evenings with rich cultural programs, conferences on the topic of integration of foreigners, round tables, lectures at schools and others. The project is annually accompanied by extensive media campaign (in the form of audio spots, interviews, reports, articles, etc. on TV, radio and printed media) and it calls out high interest from public, media, politicians and institutions. The project is frequently

NGO

presented during conferences or meetings as “best practice” project. It is also important to note that in 2005, in cooperation with professional film crew, we released a documentary film depicting the first year of the project, which is with very good feedback use during multicultural education in schools and we are currently preparing the English version as well.

6) Achieved results:

As the most important result we see not just the number of people involved in the project or participating families, but what the academic research conducted by the Department of Social Geography and Regional Development, Faculty of Science (L. Lachmanová, D. Drbohlav: Family Next Door, Prague, 2005) showed: more than 52% of immigrant and 60% Czech families continue to meet each other after the project implementation. For some families these relationships are still an important element of integration and mutual understanding between foreigners and the majority today.

7) Financing:

The project works with the budget for calendar year (12 months).

In 2010 the project was realized with the total budget 748.800 CZK = apr. 30.830 EUR and was financed by these institutions: Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic (through European Integration Fund – 550.000 CZK), City of Prague (68.118 CZK), Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (100.682 CZK) and Region Zlín (30.000 CZK).

In 2011 the budget is planned as follows: total budget 874.000 CZK = apr. 35.980 EUR with financing of these particular institutions: Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic (through European Integration Fund – 655.000 CZK), City of Prague (150.000 CZK), Region Zlín (30.000 CZK) and other regions (39.000 CZK).

8) Organizational aspects:

The project is realized by well-experienced team. The team consists of the main coordinator in Prague, then we have totally 14 regional coordinators (in all 14 regions of Czech Republic) and the number of assistants equal to the number of family meetings.

The project is prepared during the whole year (ensuring of financial sources, PR activities, preparing of meetings of families – their pairing in a way they have something in common, preparation and organization of additional activities etc.).

During the realization we are trying to foster dialogue with other institutions and we regularly cooperate with e.g. local governments, NGOs from regions, initiatives and clubs of immigrants.