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Metaplan Protocol3

Experiences from the Tested ZKE-Questionnaire

A Metaplan-Session

1 Introduction

The Grundtvig-project application from spring 2013 contains the following passage: “We all try to answer the following questions: Are there differences in what is understood as domestic violence in the EU countries? From these differences which will be established through analysis we will formulate more reliable recommendations, how to avoid or to prevent or to reduce domestic violence. Added European value consists of best practices that we learn from project partners [...]”.

The ZKE already dealt with point number one, when the team gave a definition of “violence” in the kick off-meeting in Kiel 2012. The group started point number two, the analysis, with the introduction of the questionnaire in Stockholm 2013. The workshop in Paderborn (20th – 23th March 2014) dealt with point number three, the best practice. Dr. Julia Prieß-Buchheit gave an overview on a program against domestic violence. Afterwards a Metaplan-session on first experiences with the ZKE-questionnaire took place.

2 Metaplan-Session

2.1 The Concept

Metaplan is a method for collecting ideas when a group of people are working together. A Metaplan-discussion allows each member in a group of experts to express the own view of a certain problem and deliver personal ideas for a solution. The method was initiated by a think tank company (cf. Eberhard Schnelle (Hg.): „Neue Wege der Kommunikation. Spielregeln, Arbeitstechniken und Anwendungsfälle der Metaplan-Methode“. Königstein/Ts. 1978).

In Paderborn this method has been applied. In Stockholm the ZKE-team asked the Grundtvig-partners to test 10 persons with the questionnaire. Thus the project-members could gain experiences. “Experience” comprises knowledge gained through involvement in acting. The concept of experience generally refers to know-how rather than to book-learning. Experience plays an important role as basis for empirical research with a questionnaire.

2.2 The Session

The session was opened with an instruction: Now I ask you to write down the three most important experiences from the test with the questionnaire. That means: We do not deal with theories and methods now. We work at your test-experiences! Please

- note down your experiences, abbreviated, keywords only or very short sentences,
- use a separate sheet of paper for every idea,
- write in block letters.

With help of the participants the answers were grouped according to the categories

- similar
- different

Four categories resulted from the grouping. The contributions of the participants after grouping are cited literally in the following:

Experience group 1 “Appropriate?”:

- The women participating could not relate (based on their own experience) to the questionnaire, as not reflecting their experience.
- Questionnaire can’t be applied to the situation of women confronted with domestic violence.
- A surveyed person finds no connection between the questionnaire and the real life.
- The questions were considered rather strange and irrelevant for the women interviewed & their experience, despite differences in their background.
- Comments on the questionnaires from a small village Romania:
 - general feature: spontaneous, honest, no sophistications, no intension “to make cosmetics” upon some replies.
 - some questions do not match: why do you want not to participate, they have no social life in the village.
 - seems to notice traditional mentalities.
 - women accept their destiny, the family has to be not violated.
 - it is the cult of the family to preserve the unity.

Experience group 2 “Meaningfulness?”:

- Women understand in a wrong way the question “Do you live with someone?”. There are many ways of cohabitation. There are women who don’t live in the same house with a partner but they still have a life partner.
- A conclusion related to the interviewed women’s relations to the questionnaire was the fact that, should such questions actually occur, they would be most likely trigger an increased level of violence, rather than the opposite.
- A surveyed person says her experience is worse than what is in the questionnaire.
- The question “Do you have/had a child/children of school age” was bad understood because it is not clear
 - during relationship,
 - before the relationship.
- Difficulties in approaching educated women:
 - I used a personal relationship to complete the questionnaire,
 - Women refuse to accept that their personal problems are public known.

Experience group 3 “Technically”:

- Educational and occupational status of the violent partner.
- One ay for the person’s own comments.



- P. Because you irritated me.
- Q. You started.
- Two months' period too short (Finland).

Experience group 4 “New!”:

- Why the definition of violence by EU, UN and WHO was not taking in consideration?
- Why only one scientific institution to co-work on this particular project?
- Why pilot project? And to be send to all women, regardless of education?
- A partner withdraws from the project.

Because of lack of time the Metaplan-session had to be stopped at this point after short verbal exchanges. There was no opportunity for a moderated discussion to guide processes of reaching deepened understanding.

3 Interpretation

3.1 The Aspect of Group Dynamics

The term “group dynamics” is used to describe the forces within a group of people. The study of group dynamics can be useful for understanding decision-making acts.

A contribution in group number one reads: “The questions were considered rather strange and irrelevant for the women interviewed & their experience [...]”. In the short verbal exchange after the grouping a participant asked a question at the core of understanding the ZKE-questionnaire: “Is the ZKQ-questionnaire really designed to inquire severe violence like in case of a women’s shelter?” The answer was: “Of course not! The questionnaire refers to the lowest stages of escalation in the ZKE-program!”

The fact, that a central aspect is not part of the Metaplan-results, raises questions:

- Why was an important question not included in the Metaplan-results?
- Are different positions been adequately taken into account?
- Are all participants sufficiently come to word?
- Has been encouraged to different posts?
- Are opposites been weighed against each other?
- Has been considered, whether an opinion was provided unjustified in the foreground?

Has the dispute between the participants been developed

- with question and answer?
- with an exchange of words?
- with assertion and denial?
- with action and reaction?
- with attack and defense?
- with learning and teaching?

Are the questions of the participants been considered sufficiently

- about the instruction “Do you have/had a child/children of school age”?
- about the instruction “Do you live with somebody”?
- about the instruction “Please, think back to the past month”?



3.2 The ZKE-Experiences

Before the Paderborn workshop the ZKE-team has conducted tests to compare the ZKE-method with the methods of other surveys. The two most important results are described in the following.

ZKE-experience number 1: Not any bodily injury indicates violence. Depending on the partner's answer item 1 ("Why did you kick me?") in the ZKE-questionnaire can indicate bodily violence. In this case violence is indicated by choice of options from A to O except A, E and L. Counter-example: A couple works together in a very small kitchen. The man gives his wife a kick on the foot accidentally. The choice of option A or E or L indicates "no violence". A similar distinction is impossible in a widespread British questionnaire. One of the questions reads: "Has your partner ever hurt or threatened you or your children? YES/NO" (Source: Women's Aid Federation of England. Women's Aid, PO Box Bristol 391, BS99 7WS. helpline@womensaid.org.uk).

ZKE-experience number 2: It is not always violence when people perceive an utterance as violence. The ZKE-questionnaire is developed to indicate bodily and sexual violence and furthermore violence in the domestic sector, in the areas education, bodily proximity, communication, career and finances, living together and social contacts. The options from A to O allow a differentiation between "violence" and "no violence" in these eight sections.

Box 5.1: What the survey asked – stalking

You may have been in a situation where the same person has been repeatedly offensive or threatening towards you. For the next questions, I would like to ask you to think about both your current and previous partners as well as other people. Since you were 15 years old until now/in the past 12 months, has the same person repeatedly done one or more of the following things to you:

- sent you emails, text messages (SMS) or instant messages that were offensive or threatening?
- sent you letters or cards that were offensive or threatening?
- made offensive, threatening or silent phone calls to you?
- posted offensive comments about you on the internet?
- shared intimate photos or Videos of you, on the internet or by mobile phone?
- loitered or waited for you outside your home, workplace or school without a legitimate reason?
- deliberately followed you around?
- deliberately interfered with or damaged your property?

Table: Measurement of stalking by the FRA-study (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights: Violence against women: an EU-wide survey. Main results. Luxembourg 2014, p. 82).

On the 5th of March 2014 the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) presented the results of a study on violence against women. One aspect was the measurement of stalking (see the table). The only methodical advice reads: "The survey questions did not use the word 'stalking'. This was done to ensure that respondents consider all types of repeated



incidents and not only those which correspondent to any preconceived ideas of stalking” (FRA 2014, p. 82). The following situation may show that the cited methodical detail is insufficient to discriminate “violence” and “no violence” as is possible in the ZKE-questionnaire. In Germany many people sign a living will. In case of serious illness they do not want to be kept alive by medical devices. Engagement with medical devices they call violence. Medical doctors report that some patients revoke the living will, after they have recovered from serious illness. The situation is an example for persons who have unpredictably changed their minds about what they think violence.

3.3 Plea for a Science Based Solution

The two ZKE-experiences differ from the above results of the Metaplan-session. The reason is that the ZKE-team works on a scientific base that criticizes the shortcomings of both pre-scientific and traditional measurement-approaches.

The DVMEW-project is a learning partnership. A research-team must not but can participate in a Grundtvig-project.

The WHO report highlights violence against women as a “global health problem of epidemic proportions” (http://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/releases/2013/violence_against_women_20130620/en/index.html; 21.3.2013). Concerned with this problem in a Grundtvig-project a good power of judgment is desirable. On the one hand there is a danger of minimization. On the other hand there is a risk of losing control over facts. We can never be sure of knowing the dimensions of a problem well. But it is not necessary to rest on assumptions or on discussions on assumptions. The science supplies aid you can rely on in named borders.

Bertrand Russell (1872 – 1970) was a British philosopher, logician, mathematician, historian, and social critic. Inter alia he helped to establish the British women’s movement. Russell concludes his “History of Western Philosophy” as follows: “In the welter of conflicting fanaticisms, one of the few unifying forces is scientific truthfulness, by which I mean the habit of basing our beliefs upon observations and inferences as impersonal, and as much divested of local and temperamental bias, as is possible for human beings. To have insisted upon the introduction of this virtue into philosophy, and to have invented a powerful method by which it can be rendered fruitful, are the chief merits of the philosophical school of which I am a member. The habit of careful veracity acquired in the practice of this philosophical method can be extended to the whole sphere of human activity, producing, wherever it exists, a lessening of fanaticism with an increasing capacity of sympathy and mutual understanding. In abandoning a part of its dogmatic pretensions, philosophy does not cease to suggest and inspire a way of life” (Bertrand Russell: History of Western Philosophy. London 2004, 864).

4 Consequences

The ZKE-team offers Skype-meetings for interested Grundtvig-partners to answer open questions about the ZKE-questionnaire, about modifications of page 1 and about alternatives. The offer has two limitations. Firstly: The ZKE-questionnaire cannot be modified fundamentally, because it bases on a special theory and serves a certain purpose. Secondly: To construct a new instrument will take one year at least.

