



Creation of a European space for
mediation for social inclusion

MANIFESTO

Projet ERASMUS+ n° 580448-EPP-1-2016-EPPKA3-IPI-SOC-IN

Adopted by the Steering Committee in Brussels on July 29, 2017

Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



The CreE.A project aims to create a European area of mediation for social inclusion

The European area for social mediation is based on the work carried out by 42 experts during the September 2000 Seminar in Créteil. It includes a definition that serves as common reference for the project:

« **Social mediation is defined as a process for creating and reconstructing social links and resolving everyday conflicts, where an independent and impartial third party seeks to improve a relationship or resolve a conflict through the organisation of discussions between individuals or institutions.**

Other practices that share the same objective have emerged; they are sometimes referred to as social mediation and also involve a third party. However, they do not satisfy the conditions of third-party impartiality or independence. Such practices should nonetheless be included in the overall review of social mediation. »

Mediation for social inclusion

The term social inclusion is used to reinforce the purpose of the diverse forms of social mediation: that of building or re-building social links between individuals and between citizens and institutions.

Social mediation implements a political vision of a participation of all in the construction of life in common. It is based on communication, dialogue and mutual understanding, and not solely on a norm and on the Law. It is based on values: openness to the Other, diversity and trust in people's ability to overcome their own interests. It promotes a culture of welcome, dialogue and encounter. It corresponds to a third-party posture offering spaces of welcome, encounter and trust that, beyond a positive resolution of conflicts, help build social links.

Social mediation thus takes place in different contexts: neighbourhoods, schools, transport, and the streets (...) with the purpose of implementing the general principles laid out above. It can also play a role in relationships between inhabitants and their relationships with institutions within a territory.

The area of mediation

The area of mediation is an area of acknowledgement. The know-how of a mediator is to equally acknowledge each of the parties involved in a conflict: acknowledgement of the person or of a group in their entirety,

acknowledgement of what they have experienced, of the legitimacy of their complaint and of their emotions. Acknowledgement is at stake from the very first stage, when persons are welcomed, a moment that is decisive for the rest of the process. Acknowledgement is free of charge, without any condition or obligation for the person in the process of mediation. Acknowledgement is essential to build trust and to ensure each person involved in a mediation has an open attitude towards the complaint of the other.

The only power of a mediator is to then allow people in the process of mediation to take over the power in the process and to take full responsibility for it. Within this safe area, protected from value judgements, speech can be freely expressed. A mediator's know-how is to provide to the persons involved a method for conducting the mediation process, and to apply an interpersonal and group model of communication so as to enable them to explore and express all the personal or collective dimensions that have contributed to the problem. A mediator knows how to find support from a multidisciplinary team and to draw on all available expertise and resources in order to offer the means to *the persons in a mediation* to give shape to the resolution of a problem in all of its complexity.

This acknowledgement and the knowledge acquired by people and groups involved of their ability to take in charge the resolution of their problems, whatever the problems, are a powerful factor for social inclusion through the development of their capacity to take effective action.

The European space

The ambition of the CreE.A project is to create a European area of social mediation.

It corresponds to a collective learning area which brings together and structures the sharing of practices and experiences, consolidates the ethical and professional profiles of practitioners and promotes study and research in the field of social mediation.

It thus constitutes an area for exchange, communication and dialogue between all actors involved: social mediation professionals, researchers, trainers and academics, territorial and national institutions.

Through its practice, it implements social mediation values: welcoming and fully embracing the diversity of practices and forms of social mediation.

It aims at promoting social mediation, which contributes to social inclusion, for adoption by institutions at national and European level.