

Annual Report



2007



Sweden Emilia Romagna Network

THE SERN MEMBERS IN 2007

AICCRE EMILIA-ROMAGNA
ASS. OF MUNICIPALITIES "BASSA ROMAGNA"
ASS. OF MUNICIPALITIES "IL TRICOLORE"
CITY OF STOCKHOLM
CITY OF MOLNDAL;
CITY OF TROLLHÄTTAN
COMUNITÀ MONTANA VALLI TARO E CENO;
COUNTY COUNCIL OF NORRBOTTEN;
KOMMUNFORBUNDET NORRBOTTEN ;
MUNICIPALITY OF ALE;
MUNICIPALITY OF ÄLVSBY;
MUNICIPALITY OF ARJEPLOG;
MUNICIPALITY OF ARVIDSJÄUR;
MUNICIPALITY OF BERTINORO;
MUNICIPALITY OF BODEN;
MUNICIPALITY OF BORGO VAL DI TARO;
MUNICIPALITY OF BRISIGHELLA;
MUNICIPALITY OF CANOSSA;
MUNICIPALITY OF CERVIA;
MUNICIPALITY OF FALKÖPING;
MUNICIPALITY OF FELINO;
MUNICIPALITY OF FORLÌ;
MUNICIPALITY OF IMOLA;
MUNICIPALITY OF JOKKMOKK;
MUNICIPALITY OF KALIX;
MUNICIPALITY OF MELDOLA ;
MUNICIPALITY OF MONTECCHIO EMILIA;
MUNICIPALITY OF MONTECHIARUGOLO;
MUNICIPALITY OF NORRKÖPING;
MUNICIPALITY OF PARMA ;
MUNICIPALITY OF PITEA;
MUNICIPALITY OF RAVENNA;
MUNICIPALITY OF RIMINI;
MUNICIPALITY OF SAN LAZZARO DI SAVENA;
MUNICIPALITY OF SAN POLO D'ENZA;
MUNICIPALITY OF SCANDIANO;
MUNICIPALITY OF SKÖVDE;
MUNICIPALITY OF SÖDERKÖPING;
MUNICIPALITY OF TRAVERSETOLO;
MUNICIPALITY OF VÄNESBORG;
PROVINCE OF PARMA;
PROVINCE OF REGGIO EMILIA;
REGIONAL GROWTH NORTH OF BOHUSLÄN;
UNIONE DI COMUNI "TERRE VERDIANE";
VÄSTRA GÖTALAND REGION;

ADSU PARMA
APINDUSTRIA PARMA;
COOP FANTASIA;
COOP PROGES;
INTUR FIPE RIMINI;
KOOPERATIVUTV. VÄSTRA GÖTALAND;
MAT PRODUCENTERNA I NORR;
OSTGÖTA COOP;
STRADA DEL PROSCIUTTO PARMA;
UNIONCAMERE EMILIA-ROMAGNA.

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The activities that took place in the network in 2007 are to a large extent the results of the project groups that started in occasion of the 2007 General Assembly. Below you will find a description of the activities divided according to the priority areas of the Network.

Education

Edu 1. Promotion of local food through exchanges among hotel and restaurant schools

The content of the workgroup is to develop an exchange among restaurant and hotel schools at upper secondary school level and promote locally produced food. Where the objectives in the project focus on:



- Improvement the knowledge about local products and their use in restaurants.
- Offer training opportunities to future chefs;
- Create opportunity to cooperation between different actors ; local institutions, hotel and restaurant schools and companies in the agri-food sector.

During 2007 Kalix municipality applied for a co- funding to the European Commission in the framework of the programme “Europe for Citizens” for the first part of the project. The project was approved and seminars, study visits and exchanges took place in Kalix municipality in the end of October 2007 among the members involved. Around 50 persons (students, teachers, chefs, entrepreneurs, civil servants) were involved ,30 from Italy and 20 from the municipalities of Kalix, Arvidsjaur, Pitea. The meeting resulted also in a proposal for the development of a business project between the actors of the areas involved.

The municipality of Brisighella submitted an application for the second part of the project that will be held in April 2008 in Brisighella.

Contact persons for the group are Helana Spets(Kalix) and Mario Schianchi. Members of the group are Salsomaggiore municipality, Piteå municipality, IPSSAR Rimini, Arvidsjaur municipality, Kalix municipality, Brisighella municipality, Piteå municipality, Unione Terre Verdiane and Strada del Prosciutto e dei Vini dei Colli di Parma.

Edu 2. Rethinking space and materials in schools

The main objectives is to modify the school environment from the point of view of the furnishing and the materials used both indoor and outdoor through a new approach to design and construction of the school buildings, the restructuring and the improvement of the existing ones.



The objectives aims make the environment didactic approached in line with the latest pedagogical guidelines. The group will focus on the exchange of documents, working materials and people among the involved partners and aim to have study visits in Italy and Sweden. A study visit of school principles to Reggio Emilia on the issue is foreseen for late September 2008.

Pre-school staff exchange agreement

The aim of the project is to offer pre-school staff the possibility of enhancing their skills through exchange. The exchanges of pre-school staff is planned in the context of an agreement signed by 12 SERN members for a three-year-period. Each session of exchange will last for two weeks during which Italian participants will be involved in job-shadowing activities in a Swedish pre-school and vice versa. During the two weeks the participant will follow a tutor from the hosting pre-school in her/his daily scheduled work with the aim of observing the various activities of the day both indoors and outdoors.

The specific objectives of the pre-school staff exchange are:
—To deepen the knowledge on the organizational settings in which the pre-schools operate and on the educational services they offer, with particular attention given to the value of the pedagogical environment both indoor and outdoor, to the process of interaction as well as to the values transmitted by the educators

—To analyze how the working schemes are organized for the benefit and growth of the “competent child”

—To examine how the pre-school family relation is organized.



Meetings among the Italian and Swedish members took place in 2007 where they discussed draft of proposals, implementation of agreement, preparation for future meetings and exchange(April and November 2008). In the early 2008 (January) the coordination group for pre-school staff exchange had their first meeting in Castelnovo di Sotto, where it decided about the exchange taking part in the Autumn 2008 and the evaluation days in November 2008.



Members involved in the project are Scandiano municipality, Rinkeby-Kista area in Stockholm, Norrköping municipality, Meldola municipality, Imola municipality, Vänernsborg municipality, Mölndal municipality, Ravenna municipality, Castelnovo di Sotto Municipality, Traversetolo municipality, the Parma Province and Trollhättan municipality.

More info available on the platform or at <http://pre-schools.sern.eu>

Comenius Partnership Integration and parenthood

The project is a result of the Paths of integration project and it involves Stockholm city (Rinkeby Kista) and Parma Municipality. The project is an experiment for the development of new pedagogical approaches and strategies which, in front of communication and social problems of foreign pupils, becomes didactic activities aimed both at acquiring competences and at developing relational dimension. The project, starting from previous similar local experiences, aims making parents active actors in the school activity; the process is planned as a two phases plan: first year focused on documentation and knowledge where intercultural contents are provided thanks to ideas and practical intervention of parents; second year focused on planning and realisation of didactical places and tools realised thanks to the intervention of parents and which will be made available for pupils for expressing their creativity (use, change and create new histories). The whole process will be implemented in the context of a continuous exchange between partners (meeting projects and project's website) and in the context of monitoring and evaluation activities based on common principles and tools. Project provides for the organisation of events and tools aimed at communicating and disseminating (newsletter, intercultural day) as well as common outcomes attesting backgrounds, achieved results and possible follow up of the whole project.



Welfare

Wel 1. Support to parenthood

The objectives of the work group support to parenthood are:

- Strengthening the role of parents (with parents and between parents), with the aim of giving value to the skills and abilities they already have.
- Finding a specific methodology to foster the integration of immigrant families, also in relation to the community
- To develop innovative methods to integrate at municipal level the areas and the levels of the (political, technical, civil society) interventions.

In order to achieve the above mentioned objective the group has decided to implement several activities like seminars, exchanges of information, common training of personnel.



The working group decided in 2007 to apply for a European grant with the programme Grundtvig in order to create a training programme for the target operators working in the framework of support to parenthood. The municipalities met in Imola at the October 23rd 2007 and the discussion focused on three aspects in the subject of “support to parenthood”, the tasks of the system operator, integration of prevention approaches and concerned system of decision making. The municipalities also planned the workshops of exchange together with the key steps of the future cooperation. The workgroup decided during 2007 to have exchanges of best practices and seminars/study visits in the Municipality of Vänersborg in mid June 2008 and in the Municipality of Ravenna in March 2009.

The member organisations involved to different extent in the support to parenthood are the municipalities of Ravenna, Mölndal, Vänersborg, Scandiano, Trollhättan, Forlì, Imola and Unione Terre Verdiene.

More information available on the platform or at <http://www.parnet.eu>

Wel 2. Elderly care, Training of personnel and methodological aspects

The workgroup was created to develop support and training to relatives to people dealing with dementia and methodology development related to a differentiation of treatment and approach for senile dementia through both voluntary organizations and professionals. The working group aim to focus on dementia when there is an increase of people with dementia and that also means that the costs for the care are increasing, and difficulties finding the right care forms.



Members of the work group are the municipalities of Forlì, Scandiano, Ravenna, Älvsbyn, Norra Bohuslän, Unione Terre Verdiane and Ass. "Il Tricolore".

Wel 3. Elderly care, best practices, actions and policy-making

The focus of the group will be on the exchange of good practices related to actions and policy-making aspects to interventions for service to elderly people in their homes. The workgroups aims to focus special attention to:

- Care services to relieve families which take care of a non-self-sufficient elderly person at home
- Community's support actions to the people affected by dementia
- New models of home assistance
- Acknowledgment of a family budget to support home assistance.

To be able to reach the objectives it's important to understand the needs of the elderly and improve the communications in both public services as in a network for exchange information. In Sptmber 2007 the Italian participants proposed to the Swedish members a development of the activities within a common framework with the Wel 2 and Ent 1 with a comprehensive approach to the theme of home services towards different typologies of non-self sufficient elderly. In the framework proposal could three pillars be found that are all connected to one other and to the three workgroups (wel 2, wel 3 and ent1), training, innovation and safety in the domicile and communication strategies aimed at bringing service closer to the citizens.

Organisations members of the work group Wel 3 are Parma municipality, Scandiano municipality, Ravenna municipality, Vänersborg municipality, Forlì municipality, Älvsbyn municipality and Unione Terre Verdiane.

Wel 4/5. Violence against women

The workgroup violence against women decided that the themes collaboration and prevention should be discussed. The themes discussed in the work group are:

Violence in close relationships; Trafficking; Sexual abuse; Honour related violence

The workgroup applied in 2006 for a grant in the European programme "Daphne" and in 2007 it was announced that the project was not accepted for the grant. The importance to develop exchange experiences and deeper knowledge of the project and what makes the project accepted in the future is one of the aims in the workgroup. Members of the workgroup met in Trollhättan in October 2007 for taking part of a conference in honour related violence. In November 2007 a European seminar was held in Brussels with the theme "Gender violence prevention and the role of men", attended by participants of the group after two meetings a Swedish delegation held an



study visit in Ravenna where it was discussed and decided to develop a new exchange of good practice on the subject. Ravenna and Trollhättan and Pitea and Forlì are planning to develop a Youth project on the issue of violence with the aim of raising awareness among young people involved in sport activities.

Contact persons for the workgroup are Raffaella Sutter(Ravenna) and Annike Sköld (Trollhättan). Member organisations are Forlì municipality, City of Trollhättan, Imola municipality, City of Mölndal, Rimini municipality, Scandiano municipality, Unione Terre Verdi and Regional Growth in the north of Bohuslän.

Wel 6. Services to persons with disabilities

The group on services to persons with disabilities aims four objectives:

- To deepen the knowledge on the Italian and Swedish local/regional policies on disabilities
- To deepen the knowledge about the integration in the educational context of the minors affected by disabilities
- To analyze the relations between family-disabled person-doctor
- To deepen the knowledge about the "care-giver"

The workgroup aims to create comparative analyses between Swedish and Italian systems in order to understand on what basis and on which themes a cooperation could be effective in this field. The first activities have been planned in 2008. The County Council of Norrbotten submitted in 2007 an application to the European Commission for organize seminars on the issue of local policies towards disabled citizens. The proposal has been approved. Seminars and exchanges are scheduled to take place in Luleå during September 2008.

Members of the group are Norrbotten County Council, Parma province, Falköping municipality, Ravenna municipality, Västra Götaland region and Unione Terre Verdi.



Entrepreneurship

Ent 1. Innovation and entrepreneurship in the Health Sector

For the workgroup innovation and entrepreneurship in the Health Sector are the objectives to stimulate innovation and entrepreneurship in the area of health, where it's possible to enhance the creation and the quality of new business. The group aims a development of dynamics of innovation with added value for the private and public sector, with a development of a multi- sector approach to health including sectors like constructions, bio- medical, food and e-health.

During 2007 the workgroup had meetings in both Italy and Sweden; one meeting was held in May in Salsomaggiore and another local meeting for Swedish members in the early October 2007.

Members in the workgroup are Norrköping municipality, Skövde municipality, Apindustria Parma, Norrbotten and Trollhättan City. The groups has developed a detailed outline for a project to be submitted at EU level that will be presented in mid 2008.

Young entrepreneurs

The work group young entrepreneurs had during 2007 several meetings both local and regional where they decided the content of the group. Two themes were pointed out: how to foster the start-up of new young entrepreneur's activities and how to manage the generation exchange in companies.

After the meeting in Ale (Västra Götaland region) in June 14th-15th 2007 the objective of the project has been on the creation of a model called Help Desk that was created to support young entrepreneurs . The project proposal that has been elaborated in late 2007 has the following objectives:

To foster the conditions for the development of human capital in Europe that expresses creativity
To increase European entrepreneurship through: 1) a more structured and active transfer of knowledge and 2) the dissemination of established and innovative best practices between public actors (including universities) and the private actors at local, regional, national and European level.

To support new and old enterprises with know-how and solutions during their life-cycle

To foster the transfer of knowledge and best practices through innovative services

Innovation means 1 To create a European one-door entrance 2) To offer standardised support applicable to the specific needs of the areas involved.



The expected results of the project that will be submitted at EU level for funding during 2008 are:

- Creation of a network of help desks at local, regional and European level
- Increased entrepreneurial thinking among the citizens
- Improved and more effective circulation of information and know-how on the services provided in the field
- Services for companies, citizens, local actors (schools, public authorities and NGOs)
- Guidelines for the development of local and regional policies aimed at boosting entrepreneurial skills and thinking in each area

The Italian coordinator is Roberto Dallavalle (APindustria Parma) and the Swedish contact person is Livio Benedetto (City of Trollhättan). The member organisations involved so far interested in the project are the Province of Reggio Emilia, the municipality of Reggio Emilia, the municipality of Scandiano and API Parma, Trollhättan City, Ale Municipality, Falköping Municipality and Vänersborg Municipality. The universities in Parma and Reggio Emilia have also shown their interest in participating in the project.

Environment

Env 1. Bio- Fuels

The B-UTILS project submitted in the 2006 was proposed by the Province of Reggio Emilia as a common platform for a possible re-submission in the context of the European Intelligent Energy or alternatively as a starting point of a project in the context of SERN.

The group aims to create local networks and analyses of productions system and consumers. Renewable energy sources (production and market development)



In occasion of the SERN Assembly 2007 a political meeting aiming at discussing possible areas of collaboration was organized in Salsomaggiore. The meeting focused on Energy efficiency including mobility; Attitude/lifestyle change among the citizens; Management and prevention of (local) environment-related conflicts.

The group also met in Salsomaggiore in May 2007 where they discussed about a possible project for the promotion of the local markets of bio-fuels for vehicles in the context of SERN or European Intelligent Energy(EIE) The workgroup planned study visits in Sweden.

Horizontal Issues

Quality in public services

The workgroup quality in public services aims to work with public service and its most successful methods for quality evaluation. In the group the discussed themes are:

- Advantages and disadvantages of outsourcing of services
- Evaluation and administration of complaints
- The correlation between the liable and the quality level on the service



The group decided to have an exchange of documents between partners, publication of a catalogue of experiences and identification and analysis of common indicators in the area of elderly care. Study visits in the various municipalities for best practices among the members are another activity planned together with the development of common quality indicators and the comparison of the local processes leading to a charter of services.

In November 2007 the municipality of Scandiano successfully submitted an application to the European Commission for the organization of two seminars to be held in June 2008 on the issue of quality in public services with special attention to elderly care services and pre- school educational services. The Scandiano seminar will be followed by a second seminar in 2009. The objective of the group is to create a common basis for benchmarking quality in the area of elderly care and pre-school education.

Members of the workgroup are Scandiano Municipality, Trollhättan City, Unione Terre Verdiane. For more information please visit the platform or <http://quality.sern.eu>

Leadership

The main themes in the workgroup “Leadership” will be analyzed according to three different points of view:

- Definition of the relation between the political representatives and the leaders. This subject will be approached through the presentation of the re-organization of Mölndal municipality and through the re-organization of the welfare policies in the Traversetolo area
- Evaluation of the leaders and of their results
- Training of the leaders



The participants decided to create regular exchanges of information through the SERN platform. Members are the Municipalities of Mölndal , Traversetolo and the Parma Province

Tourism

Tour 1. Wellness Industry

For the workgroup "Wellness Industry" have two objectives been identified by the participants:

- The deepening of the each other's experience in the field of wellness tourism
- The development of a project that could create a new way of approaching the spa treatments in the context of the wellness industry

The work group agreed to develop actions around three pillars, organize an "educational" in Emilia-Romagna with the participation of entrepreneurs and operators of the wellness industry as well as actors related to the health sector, organization of a meeting in Sweden aimed at favouring the interaction between Italian and Swedish doctors in order to make them discuss about the effectiveness from a medical perspective of spa treatments and gather statistical information about the annual expenditure in Sweden and Italy on wellness-related products.

Members of the working group are the Municipalities of Piteå, Salsomaggiore Terme, Brisighella, Falköping and Regional Growth in the North of Bohuslän.

Sustainable Tourism

The content of the group sustainable tourism is to analyse the idea of "intangible heritage" which is the link between local traditions, nature and typical food and handcraft productions.

The group's objective is to develop collaboration in the field of sustainable tourism and local development and compare their different ways to understand this concept.

During 2007 the project obtained a grant from the European Commission in the framework of the programme "Europe for Citizens" for study visits in the Municipality of Jokkmokk (January 2008).

More activities are planned in 2008. In particular, during the proposed meetings, three elements will be analysed: the interaction between nature and history, the interaction between local traditions and typical food and handicraft products and the interaction between cultural tourism and natural environment.

The project involves the municipalities of Norra Bohuslän, Montecchio Emilia, Traversetolo, Jokkmokk, Montechiarugolo, San Polo d'Enza, Felino, Canossa.



The 3rd General Assembly

The third General Assembly took place in Salsomaggiore Terme in Parma Province on May 9th-11th with around 200 delegates participating, which is 80% of the SERN members. During the Assembly days the participants had opportunities to discuss, meet and exchange ideas about future projects and develop existing projects. On Thursday 10th of May the 11 working groups met for discussions on different theme areas of the network.



On Friday the 11th of May the SERN members met for the General Assembly. The session was opened by a welcoming from the Italian politics followed by a speech of SERN chairman Kent Ögren and the Swedish ambassador in Rome Anders Bjurner. The last speech was held by the mayor in the Municipality of Traversetolo, Alberto Pazzoni .



The General Assembly approved several important documents like the SERN Strategy 2007-2009, the Annual report 2006, the Board of Auditors report on the financial year 2006 and the Budget 2006. Following the proposals from Gabriele Ferrari, Kent Ögren and Lars-Göran Ljungren for the new members of the Executive Board, the As-



sembly approved the proposal and election of the new Executive Board together with the proposed list of the Board of Auditors.

Kent Ögren was confirmed as Chairman of SERN and Roberta Mori, Associazione Intercomunale "Il Tricolore" as Vice Chairman. The Assembly also approved a proposal made by the Secretariat concerning some changes to the statute.

Finally, the Assembly agreed on having the next session in May and the host will be the Municipality of Norrköping.

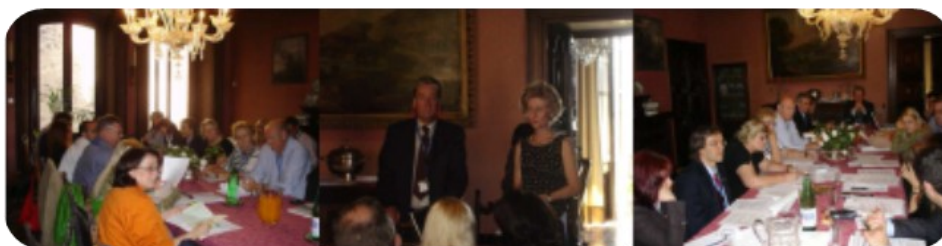
The SERN Executive Board

The Board has met three times in 2007: in Luleå (February) in Salsomaggiore (May) and in Falköping (November).



The work carried out during 2007 the Executive Board has been centered on creating the condition for the development of the network. The Board has elaborated the SERN Strategy 2007-2009 that also was approved by the General Assembly in May. The SERN Strategy underlined the importance of developing joint projects that are in line both with local priorities and the strategies set out at European level, i.e. the Lisbon and Gothenburg strategies. During 2007-2009 there will be two central themes that will be given priority according to the

Strategy, sustainable local and regional development and social inclusion. It also was pointed out that the network as a whole must have as its priority to provide added value for its members and a develop into a common platform for the elaboration of innovative common solutions. The Executive Board gave in Salsomaggiore the Secretariat together with an ad hoc group of civil servants the mandate to implement the Strategy through the elaboration of guidelines for the implementation of the strategy. At the Executive Board meeting in Falköping in November 2007 the Board approved the guidelines for implementation of SERN Strategy. The document outlines the responsibilities of the members and at the same time it has institutionalized some of the practices concerning the processes of cooperation among the members, furthermore it points out the importance of active participation in the activities of the network in order to obtain and improved quality of the relations among the members.



Two important innovations were introduced for implementation of the SERN strategy through the guidelines:

- The Board decided to create Rapporteurs for each area of the activities in the network with task of monitoring the progress made in each policy area with support of the Secretariat and the project group's contact persons.
- The creation of project groups coordinators, one from Sweden and one from Italy who have the responsibility of leading the process forward of cooperation and provide information about the progress and the activities to the Secretariat and the Rapporteurs.



An assessment of 2007

As pointed in the previous sections of the report, the network has been, and still is, undergoing important changes both in terms of working methods and quality in the implementation of the projects. The year 2007 has been crucial for setting the foundations and creating the conditions that have enabled change. The sign emerging from the second part of 2007 indicate that the network as a whole is dynamic and responding to the weaknesses that have emerged in the first two years of activity.

In terms of the overall organization of the network three elements have characterised the year 2007:

- 1) The approval of the strategy
- 2) The approval of the guidelines for its implementation;
- 3) The creation of project groups;

The SERN strategy is a political document that identifies long-term priorities that the network should focus on. Local/regional sustainable development and social inclusion are political objectives at the centre of the activities of the public actors that belong to SERN. With the adoption of the strategy the challenge for the network and especially for its members will be to turn the international dimension of the municipal/regional activities into an element that contributes effectively to create economic growth and contributes to social inclusion in their territories.

The strategies set out at European level (Lisbon and Gothenburg) can only be successfully implemented if there is a common ground to build on. SERN has been set up in order to be a context for its members where they have an opportunity of creating a deeper understanding of each other's approaches and solutions to common problems and challenges. At the same time SERN is emerging as a framework that creates the conditions for actively contributing to the identification of innovative answers to the challenges that local and regional authorities will have to face in the coming years.

Indeed the strategy is a political framework that needs to be filled with content through projects and exchanges in the five policy areas that have been identified in 2005. It is evident that the ambition of providing innovative results can be fulfilled only with a well planned and proactive approach in the context of the network of each member. The outcome and the gains that a member can have from its participation in the network are directly proportional to its capacity to be active and consistent in the projects and processes it decides to participate in.

The adoption of the strategy has been followed by the approval of another key document: the guidelines for its implementation. The importance of the guidelines rests largely in the identification of clearly set out procedures through which members should set up process of cooperation in the context of the network. At the same time the guidelines create the conditions for the evaluation of the progress that is made in the five thematic areas in which the network operates.

Clear operating procedures and tools for the evaluation are essential for a more effective work. Indeed the process of adaptation to the procedures set out in the guidelines will require time, after five months since the adoption the guidelines are not yet fully implemented as several members both in Italy and Sweden that have difficulties in adapting to the new mechanisms.

The creation of project groups that have been substituting the so called “working groups” of 2005 and 2006 have proved to be an important, and positive, decision for the development of long-term dynamics of collaboration among the members of the network. Indeed some of the procedures pertaining the preparation of the first meeting in occasion of the annual General Assembly and the follow up period need to be adjusted however as shown below more than half of the groups that met in 2007 has made progress in their processes of cooperation.

As pointed out in the guidelines, the project groups coordinators are going to play an important role in the future activities of the network since they will be key referent for the members that belong to each group. If, on the one hand, they will have the possibility to play the leading role in case the project groups decides to submit applications at EU level, on the other hand they will also have the responsibility of keeping the contacts among the organizations that belong to the group and play the roles of facilitators sharing the ownership of the process .

The choice of the persons acting as group coordinators is therefore essential for the development of successful projects. It is crucial that the launch of a proposal for the creation of a project group is well thought of especially in terms of commitment and “obligations” vis-a-vis the other members that decide to participated in the proposed group. This will be an essential and strategic step for the development of solid and long-terms relations that facilitate the “continuity” in the activities to the changes (political and in terms of human resources i.e. persons attending the groups) that affect the member organizations in a medium-term perspective.

In this light, and given the substantial number of processes currently unfolding, the role of the Secretariat will be developing more and more towards an initial support and assistance to the coordinators rather than, as it is today in some cases, playing a more central role by de facto substituting them in order to make the process going forward.

The current situation characterised by an increasing number of project groups and substantially unchanged amount of human and financial resources at disposal of the network does not allow the Secretariat to continue providing an the adequate support required by the development of the processes of cooperation within the network.

Coming to the activities, in general it can be argued that 2007 has been characterised by the launch of a many themes of collaboration. The choice made of allowing as many groups as possible to meet has been aimed at creating the wide basis for future work.

As the specified below about 65% of the 2007 groups have made substantial progresses, about 15% have made marginal progresses and 30% have made no progress at all.

This can be considered a positive result considering that a large of members (41 out of 55) are now actively engaged in at least one project group.

As the case of the pre-school staff exchange project has demonstrated ,if properly stimulated and supported, the members can build processes of cooperation quickly and effectively. The creation of the project in September 2007 and its implementation as from January 2008 shows that the network provides opportunities and can be a dynamic environment for project development. Two elements that have characterised the project from the start is the willingness of the members to invest on the process regardless of the EU funding (that has actually been obtained) and

therefore keeping the focus on the objectives of the project rather than on the possible means through which financing it. Secondly the project could and should be thought as a catalyst for further ideas and projects.

At the same time the difficulties in the management of the follow-up work outlined above are a clear sign of the need of approaching the creation of new groups more carefully and avoiding the stretching of several small and medium municipalities on too many groups.

As a matter of fact one the elements that needs to be improved when it comes to projects group concerns the definition of a clear time frame allowing for a proper planning of the activities and also for a measurement of the progress done. An aspect that has emerged in some of the groups is the excessively slow pace of cooperation, i.e. too long distance between meetings or activities planned in the context of the group. Indeed the nature of the collaboration is medium-term and in general the pace of the cooperation requires a longer term approach in order to evaluate effectively the results achieved. However, several groups have had difficulties in planning their activities and therefore in occasion of the first project group meeting, or soon after that, it is important that a work plan for the rest of the year is agreed among the participating institutions.

Finally, as far as the internal and external communication is concerned the situation is in line with what was pointed out in the 2006 report. If, on the one hand, the internal communication and contacts among the members has improved, still there is a too scarce use of the electronic platform. This raises questions about whether the employment of such an instrument should continue in the future or whether the platform should be substituted with of a more traditional website .

Indicators

The guidelines approved by the SERN Executive Board included a process of reporting and follow-up to be established in the context of the Network. The process of evaluation includes a report made by the project coordinators yearly and the Rapporteurs of the Board. Such instruments will be fully in place as from 2008 and will constitute an important instrument to evaluate progress in the areas of cooperation covered by the Network since they will add a qualitative character to the evaluation of the outcomes of the different groups.

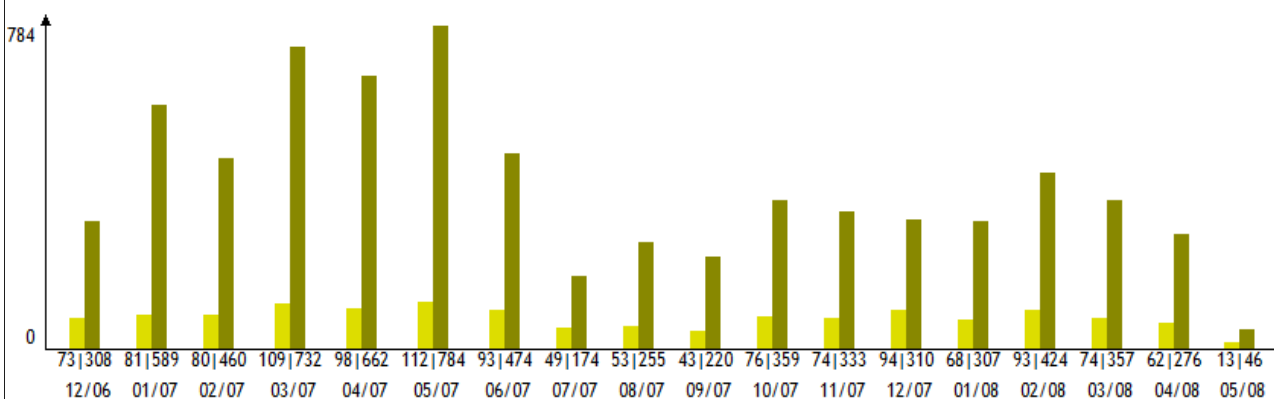
The guidelines include also some quantitative indicators, presented below, concerning the activities started in 2007 but actually unfolding in 2008 and 2009.



Number of project groups launched at the General Assembly 2007	11
Other groups (Young Entrepreneurs, Pre-schools staff exchange)	2
Number of groups that made progress through planning or implementation of activities in 2007 (Support to Parenthood, Violence Against Women, Policies towards Disabled, Hotel and Restaurant School exchanges, Quality in public services, Young Entrepreneurs, Sustainable Tourism, Pre-Schools Staff Exchange)	8
Number of EU projects submitted in 2007 by SERN members involving predominantly other SERN members.	8
Number of projects approved	7
Total EU grants requested in 2007 of which awarded in 2007 of which awarded in 2008	€ 157.194,05 € 22.932,98 € 124.699,07
Number of member organizations involved in the 2007 activities:	41 (28 from Italy and 13 from Sweden)

Logins the last 18 months : 7070
 Unique logins the last 18 months : 220
 Search engine visits in the last 30 days: 16638

Number of members logged in
 Number of times of logging in



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The report has been produced by the SERN Secretariat. The content has been elaborated by Nicola Catellani with the collaboration of Maria Lindell and Laura Avanzi.

Norrköping 19th May 2007

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