



la Ligue des
familles

Life-long learning: Bringing the family perspective to the education field

Session 2 : The family perspective in education – country spotlights

COFACE Families Europe

16th April 2024 - Dublin, Ireland



la ligue des
familles

At the heart of parenthood issues

About us

A non-profit association.

In the French-speaking part of Belgium.

26 000 families - members.

70 employees.

3 offices : Brussels (north), Liège (south-east) ,
La Louvière (south-west).

60 local contact points run by volunteers.

Our aim ?

Create & maintain better
conditions for parents.

Our values

Pluralism & solidarity.



HOW ?

Benefits – Services

**Commercial benefits & exclusive services
for parent members**

Information

2 magazines

Advocacy

A research department

A social integration department

(including life-long learning for families)



Benefits

Only for members

- **A public transport discount card** for large families.
- **Hundreds of discounts** for shopping, exhibitions, amusement parks, concerts, holidays...
- **Temporary extra offers** negotiated with some partners.



Services

To help parents



Children's internship search platform

Small ads

Babysitting service for disabled children

Community volunteering to support single parents

Parent workshops

Workshops for HR *(coming soon)*

Our magazines

le ligueur

Monthly
100.000 readers
Only for members

- Information by age of children
- Focus on 1 important subject
- Sections dedicated



Our magazines

le ligueur et mon bébé

1 edition per month of the
baby
(36 months)

1 special pregnancy edition



Advocacy

Understand

Suggest

Recommend

Thanks to a research department

And a social integration department



Local actions

Our volunteers, close to parents



60 local contacts

Hundreds of volunteers

Activities throughout french-speaking community



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Life-long learning in French Speaking Belgium

A legal framework : the « life-long learning » Decree (17/07/2023)

274 organizations are recognized : 257 non-profit associations and 14 movements

The Ligue des familles, **A Movement** of Life-long learning

3 LINES OF ACTION



Participation, education and
civic training

Animation and Social Integration



Analyses, Studies and
Participatory Research

Studies and Political Action



Awareness-Raising and
information

Communication

Life-long learning

“

It's the work of culture in social and political transformation, in other words: *the cultural dimension of the social movement that transforms the power of submission into the power of action*

”

Christian Maurel (French philosopher and sociologist)
Terminology from FESEFA

Associative work in life-long learning focuses on **the question of rights**

- 1 Knowing your rights
- 2 Promoting new rights
- 3 Ensuring the effectiveness of existing rights



Freedom rights

Equality rights

Solidarity rights

(international action)

Rights linked to sustainable
development

Sexual and reproductive rights

Cultural rights

Minority rights

From I to Us...

Building knowledge and taking action together

Our methodology

Describe

Analyze

Position

Act

- Starting from an unsatisfactory individual experience
- Placing this experience in a broader context

No longer place "parental responsibility" solely on parents, systemic approach.

Meeting the needs of families : the self-assessment process

The Life-long learning Decree lays down an obligation for associations to carry out a self-assessment of its actions with its public (every 5 years).

**A look in the rear-view mirror:
what have we been through?**



Development of an animation to gather parents' views (in several stages)

What are our next action themes ?

diagnosis of the social issues addressed by the theme, aims and objectives of action, strategies and means implemented to carry out the activities.

Meeting the needs of families : the self-assessment process

THE WHY

- What was the main reason/motivation for joining the group?
- How do you feel today?

THE JOURNEY

- Tell me about the journey, the history of the group and of the project ?

THE RIGHTS

- Which rights did we target first in our project ?
- Which rights did we address in addition in our action?

Meeting the needs of families : the self-assessment process

ON THE PROJECT'S IMPACT

INFORMATION : what I didn't know and what I learned thanks to the project.

What did you not know and what did you learn?

CHANGES : what changes have I observed in my behavior, my outlook, my perspectives?

What has changed for you ?

COMMITMENT : what came out of our group?

What did the group do?

- What I still find unfair is...
- What I find revolting is...
- What makes me happy is...

WHAT'S NEXT ?

Self-assessment is a **collective intelligence process**. Reflect with the public on what has been experienced, adjust its action and (re)define its next action themes.

THEMES 2019-2025

- Housing
- Resources
- Feminism/Gender/Sexuality
- School
- Work-life balance



THEMES 2025-2030

- Parents, end of the world and end of the month (environmental and social justice)
- Parental equality and intersectionality
- Alloparentalities: it takes a village to support a parent
- Cultural rights

Self-assessment: a case study

The « School in question » project

The « School in question » project

In 2023, the Ligue des familles continued to question the school, alongside families from disadvantaged backgrounds. In collaboration with ASBL La Rue, we offered workshops twice a month in Brussels, to **decode the education system in French-speaking Belgium and enable parents to take their rightful place in it.** In 2023, a dozen parents taking part in the workshops decided to combine their energy and skills to form a parents' association. To support them in this project, they were able to count on the support of the FAPEO. Finally, the families taking part in the workshops actively participated in the Coalition des parents des milieux populaires, which meets 3 times a year. With a view to the forthcoming political elections, the parents collaborated on the Coalition's Manifesto.



The « School in question » project



The Manifesto sets out 3 key demands:

1. to consider parents from underprivileged backgrounds and those involved with schools as true partners who are part of the solution, rather than part of the problem
2. put more resources into schools that concentrate children from disadvantaged families (socio-economic index 1 to 5)
3. put an end to abusive referrals to 8-3-1 special education.

The parents presented this manifesto to the political authorities at the demonstration to change the school held on April 26, 2023 in front of the Federal Ministry of Education (FWB).

Meeting the needs of families : the self-assessment process

THE RIGHTS

- Which rights did we target first in our project ?
- Which rights did we address in addition in our action?

Freedom rights :

“We were able to create our parents' association knowing our rights. We'd heard that things were happening in other schools, but we weren't informed of what we could do until Annie and Rachida informed us. [...] Parents from another school met them to share their experiences and show that it was possible. [...] It almost didn't happen, and the school supervisor called in a local lawyer to really discourage us. Luckily you were there, so we called Zoé, who explained to us that there was no reason why it couldn't be done and that it was possible”.

Meeting the needs of families : the self-assessment process

THE RIGHTS

- Which rights did we target first in our project ?
- Which rights did we address in addition in our action?

The right to free education :

“My brother has been living in Laeken for years, and his children's school fees are all free. I thought it wasn't for us, that it was for the rich, for the best schools. Now I'm thinking, why are my kids paying? And now I know. Over there, it's been free for years.”

Meeting the needs of families : the self-assessment process

THE RIGHTS

- Which rights did we target first in our project ?
- Which rights did we address in addition in our action?

“It's unbelievable, we have to go to politicians to tell them what rights we should have when they're supposed to know, to lead us. Why do we elect them? We're obliged to take action to change things, it doesn't seem fair or logical”

Meeting the needs of families : the self-assessment process

ON THE PROJECT'S IMPACT

INFORMATION : what I didn't know and what I learned thanks to the project.

What did you not know and what did you learn?

- Information on school fees (hot meals, etc.): what I cannot legally be asked to pay (buying paper, etc.)
- Information on requests for assistance (for registration, etc.).

CHANGES : what changes have I observed in my behavior, my outlook, my perspectives?

What has changed for you ?

- New friendships, new bonds between parents, discovery of new cultures.
- We feel more listened to.
- I've discovered that I have a right to respect.

Meeting the needs of families : the self-assessment process

ON THE PROJECT'S IMPACT

COMMITMENT : what came out of our group?
What did the group do?

- We took part in a demonstration to change the school system
- We contributed to a Manifesto for politicians
- We created our parents' association

- What I find revolting is...

“My daughter was being harassed by two little girls who were tugging at her hair [...] I phoned them, and they got in touch with me three weeks later, when I told them that my daughter wasn't sleeping and was having nightmares. They took me seriously because my husband was there. **Either the parents have to speak French well, or there has to be a mother and a father**”.

WHAT'S NEXT ?

Meeting the needs of families : the self-assessment process

WHAT'S NEXT ?

What I find revolting is...

“When I arrived here at school, it was like a little family. After that, little by little, since the covid, there's no more talking. Before, we'd see the teachers and talk a bit. Now there's someone at the door, and that's no longer possible”.

What makes me happy is...

- We've gained confidence in ourselves.
- It's a place where we can express ourselves freely. We feel good, without being judged.
- It's nice to have someone listen to us, because we're here to defend our children. We're on the move!
- Above all, we realize that we're not alone: other parents are experiencing the same difficulties as we are. We're united!
- We're as close-knit as a little family.

Conclusion

“

A mother hesitates to enroll her children in another school. A second mother replied “why do you want to change schools? **We are going to change things here!** ”.

”

Conclusion

- From I to Us, a lighthouse in every project.
- Building on parents experience to create a shared narrative (mixing hot and cold knowledge)
- Deconstructing the concept of parental responsibility (systemic approach)
- Self-assessment is a collective intelligence process that takes time and courage (facing up to your own inconsistencies and contradictions)...
but its worth it !
- Don't think in the families' place, include them in the discussion.

Check-out

Who inspires you today to learn?

Thank you

