

# European Crime Prevention Award (ECPA)

## Annex I

Approved by the EUCPN Management Board in 2018

Please complete the template in English in compliance with the ECPA criteria contained in the Rules and procedures for awarding and presenting the European Crime Prevention Award (Par.2 §3).

### General information

1. Please specify your country.

Finland

2. Is this your country's ECPA entry or an additional project?

ECPA entry.

3. What is the title of the project?

The Forssa approach: mediation of polarisation and inter-group conflicts

4. Who is responsible for the project? Contact details.

Häme Police Department (contact person [Ilkka.koskimaki@poliisi.fi](mailto:Ilkka.koskimaki@poliisi.fi); [jukka.kastikainen@poliisi.fi](mailto:jukka.kastikainen@poliisi.fi)) and Community Mediation Centre (in Finnish, Naapurussovittelun keskus) ([miriam.attias@naapurussovittelu.fi](mailto:miriam.attias@naapurussovittelu.fi); [hanna.vuorinen@naapurussovittelu.fi](mailto:hanna.vuorinen@naapurussovittelu.fi))

5. Start date of the project (dd/mm/yyyy)? Is the project still running (Yes/No)? If not, please provide the end date of the project.

16/08/2016 the multidisciplinary team convened for the first time. The community mediation activities started on September 2016. The dialogue between the parties continued until spring 2017.

The project was partially completed on 22/11/2016 when the youth media project implemented at schools was completed.

The Forssa Approach has been implemented in two other locations as well.

6. Where can we find more information about the project? Please provide links to the project's website or online reports or publications (preferably in English).

Community Mediation Centre

<https://www.naapuruussovittelu.fi/in-english/>

<https://www.naapuruussovittelu.fi/@Bin/183411/Esite+englanti+2016.pdf> (in English)

<https://www.gutsy.fi/may-the-forssa-be-with-you> (an example of activities with local youth to improve the feeling of safety, in English)

A description of the Forssa Approach and best practices of community/intergroup mediation

[https://oikeusministerio.fi/documents/1410853/4816126/Trust\\_esite.pdf/b5cd38a3-4969-482e-92a6-d339f59cff77](https://oikeusministerio.fi/documents/1410853/4816126/Trust_esite.pdf/b5cd38a3-4969-482e-92a6-d339f59cff77) page 14

Study on the implementation of intergroup conflict mediation carried out in collaboration with the police based on the Forssa Approach; researcher Inka Lilja's (HEUNI) streamed presentation <https://tem.videosync.fi/vastakkainasettelun-purkaminen> (starts at 1:44:35).

Mediation in refugee-receiving neighborhoods: a legal sociological study based on interviews and questionnaires. Tuuli Salmela's (2018) Master of Laws thesis <http://www.utupub.fi/handle/10024/145251>

Häme Police Department, Forssa Police Station

[https://www.poliisi.fi/map\\_en?search=Forssa](https://www.poliisi.fi/map_en?search=Forssa)

Examples of media publicity:

<https://www.is.fi/kotimaa/art-2000001246342.html>

<https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-9117654>

<https://www.ess.fi/uutiset/kotimaa/art2297072>

7. Please give a **one page** description of the project (**Max. 600 words**)

“The Forssa Approach: mediation in polarisation and inter-group conflicts” aimed at reduction of violent crimes between locals and residents of a reception centre in Forssa in 2016. It also aimed at restoring a sense of security, to defuse the polarised situation and to prevent further clashes in the town. Inhabitants of the community at large were also addressed, as the brawls resulted in a polarisation typical of intergroup conflicts; the tense atmosphere was visible in the town.

Based on the thorough study (incident reports, community policing and patrolling in the streets) the police formed an analysis of the situation. Out-of-town agitators had also arrived in Forssa to stir up the conflict. Criminal investigations did not remove the polarised

“us against them” setting. The police and the city’s multidisciplinary team noticed that extensive multidisciplinary collaboration was needed to stop the escalation of violence, and to defuse the polarised situation.

“The Forssa approach”- best practice was based on three core areas: 1) Neutral and transparent communication; 2) Collaboration between the authorities, enabling a shared view of the situation, exchange of information and coordination of activities; 3) Solution-oriented community mediation.

Community mediation was the method used for reducing polarisation and reconciling conflicts. It differed from the traditional victim-offender-mediation; the conflict was seen as an opportunity for learning and dialogue. Dialogue allowed professional mediators to recognise the interests and needs of the conflicting parties and to seek a solution to stop violence. An essential part was to identify key people (authorities, schools, reception centre), to build trust with parties and to provide services when required. Discussions of the conflict in the community at large continued, and a media project in which students sought ways to resolve the conflict was funded by the city (See links 6).

Results: Community mediation calmed down the situation in the town. Adolescents who had been involved in the clashes or who had been bystanders were heard and were given the opportunity to reflect on how the reception centre and the mass brawls had affected their lives and what was needed to eliminate the uneasiness and insecurity. Adolescents also learned about the part played by the out-of-town agitators. Crimes committed by juveniles in connection with this conflict came to an end.

The Forssa Approach was an excellent model for cooperation between the police, the municipal multidisciplinary team and professional mediators. It enabled a quick response time and fast exchange of information between the participants. Seamless cooperation between the police and mediators who understood dynamics of intergroup conflicts and polarisation helped to shift the operational focus where it was needed the most, i.e. inside the community, where the confusion and the feeling of insecurity created by the conflict affected all the parties involved. The influence of agitators who were inciting violence either directly or indirectly was eliminated when the needs and concerns of all parties were heard.

The same model has been subsequently applied to similar conflicts in other towns.

One of the lessons learned was that dialogue will not just happen by itself, but talking about the situation helps people to put things into perspective and makes problems easier to approach.

**I. The project shall focus on prevention and/or reduction of everyday crime and fear of crime within the theme.**

8. How does the project contribute to crime prevention and/or the reduction of crime or the fear of crime? Does it focus on raising citizens' awareness or does it apply other mechanisms? (**Max. 200 words**)

The Forssa Approach perfectly matches the theme of the contest and is a model for crime prevention and collaboration in a residential area initiated by the police and local actors and neutral mediators.

It reduced crime and the fear of crime and prevented intergroup conflicts and polarisation in the local level in the future.

“The Forssa approach” was launched as a response to violent and hate crimes reported to the police. The police and the city’s multidisciplinary team called Community Mediation Centre to resolve the ongoing conflict.

To achieve the aims community mediation was applied (see 7 above.) It provided concrete means (see 7 above) for making the conflicting parties meet and residents more involved in solving their problems and enhancing the sense of security, which are key objectives of the National Crime Prevention programme implemented in Finland.

The project also includes indirect proactive elements. After mediation, the local residents felt that they have been heard and have been given the opportunity to participate in the resolution of the conflict.

**II. The project shall have been evaluated and have achieved most or all of its objectives.<sup>1</sup>**

9. What were the reasons for setting up the project? Was this context analysed before the project was initiated and in what way (How, and by whom? Which data were used)? In what way did this analysis inform the set-up of the project? (**Max. 150 words**)

Reasons: Prior to the start of the project, Finland had received a large number of asylum seekers, some of whom had moved to Forssa. Violent clashes between the local youth and asylum-seekers resulted in a criminal investigation. Out-of-town agitators had also arrived in the town to incite violence either directly or indirectly. At the beginning of the project, the police and the staff of the reception centre (run by the Finnish Red Cross) noted a general sense of insecurity among the residents of the city and the asylum-seekers at the reception centre.

Context: The context was analysed thoroughly on the basis of reported crime and the data

---

<sup>1</sup> For more information on evaluation, see Guidelines on the evaluation of crime prevention initiatives (EUCPN Toolbox No.3): <http://www.eucpn.org/library/results.asp?category=32&pubdate>

obtained from the neighbourhood police patrols and the authorities. It resulted on the project and inviting the neutral mediators to join. (See also 7.)

10. What were the objective(s) of the project? Please, if applicable, distinguish between main and secondary objectives. (**Max. 150 words**)

The objectives of the project were:

- To stop the vicious circle of violence, i.e. violent crimes between the local youth and asylum-seekers.
- To restore a sense of safety and security in the city.
- To apply community/intergroup mediation, i.e. solution-seeking measures that promote interaction and view the conflict as an opportunity for learning and solution-oriented dialogue. Community mediation enables defusing the conflict while at the same time allowing the parties to mitigate the polarised notion of “us against them”. The cornerstone of community mediation is to discover the interests and needs of the conflicting parties, stop the conflict (violence) and promote peaceful coexistence and relationships between the population groups.
- To launch comprehensive collaboration in order to restore a sense of security and to stop the escalation of the conflict.

11. Has there been a process evaluation? Who conducted the evaluation (internally or externally?) and what were the main results? Which indicators were used to measure the process? Did you make changes accordingly? (**max. 300 words**) - for more information on process evaluation, see *EUCPN Toolbox No.3, p.9-10 & part 2 - section 2A*

Yes. The team carried out internal process evaluation on a continuous basis (contains confidential information on the parties involved, not public) on the progress of community mediation, collaboration, dialogue and the building of trust. Community mediation is sensitive work in which the mediator must be prepared to listen to the parties and respond to their needs. Evaluation and monitoring are always an integral part of the community mediation process. The Forssa Approach was modelled into best practices that have been successfully applied in other localities as well.

The Forssa Approach to community mediation has subsequently been implemented in another major locality and evaluated in a qualitative case study, based on seven semi-structured interviews, at the European Institute for Crime Prevention and Control, affiliated with the United Nations (HEUNI) (Lilja Inka 2018, forthcoming). According to preliminary findings, the Forssa Approach has a number of socioeconomic impacts (reductions in security personnel at the reception centre, spared police resources, improved sense of security in the area). In terms of social impacts, the parties noted that the process was

important to them from the point of view of empowerment and a sense of belonging to the community.

12. Has there been an outcome or impact evaluation? Who conducted the evaluation (internally or externally?), which data and evaluation method were used and what were the main results? Which indicators were used to measure the impact? (**Max. 300 words**) - for more information on outcome or impact evaluation, see *EUCPN Toolbox No.3, p.7-9 & part 2 - section 2A*

Yes. An outcome evaluation was carried out too. At the start of the project, the police was aware of the violent crimes and clashes. The police monitored the situation and statistics. Outcomes of the project can be noticed on the basis of the police data (crimes reported to the police, information obtained from street patrols) and by using pre-post design. The goal of the project was to stop the violent confrontations between the local youth and asylum-seekers and to defuse the situation. Violent clashes between the two groups ceased completely and the situation in the area calmed down.

**III. The project shall, as far as possible, be innovative, involving new methods or new approaches.**

13. How is the project innovative in its methods and/or approaches? (**Max. 150 words**)

The Forssa approach is innovative in that an external actor is involved at the local level as a neutral party with the task of hearing out the conflicting parties, guiding them towards a mutually respectful dialogue and solving the root cause of the problem in parallel with the criminal investigation carried out by the police.

The project also involves comprehensive multidisciplinary cooperation.

In addition, the project utilises a new method called community/intergroup mediation for transforming the conflict but also, in a broader sense, to defuse polarisation. The Forssa approach is based on the Polarization Strategy Model of Bart Brandsma (NL) <https://www.polarisatie.nl/eng-home/what-is-polarisation/>

**IV. The project shall be based on cooperation between partners, where possible.**

14. Which partners or stakeholders were involved in the project and what was their involvement? (**Max. 200 words**)

The project started with the city of Forssa setting up a multidisciplinary team, including the police. The community mediation was conducted by professional mediators at the Community Mediation Centre and the community police adhering to their professional secrecy and confidentiality obligations. Other actors in the network carried out supporting

tasks, such as arranging access to schools for discussions with the local youth. The representatives of the city also supported the project financially by funding a media campaign as part of the project (the media campaign was carried out by “Gutsy Go” in collaboration with the local youth)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cww-0-DNNVO&list=PL5uqj4uLsMpPi8gudyI8s5jWayfu\\_ru0S&index=1](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cww-0-DNNVO&list=PL5uqj4uLsMpPi8gudyI8s5jWayfu_ru0S&index=1)

Cooperation at the local level was extensive; it involved the police, youth services, educational and social services, as well as other municipal branches. Also involved in the project was a person with a criminal background, currently working as a support person for young people with problems, who played an important part in winning the trust of the local youth.

**V. The project shall be capable of replication in other Member States.**

15. How and by whom is the project funded? (**Max. 150 words**)

The Community Mediation Centre receives its funding primarily from the Funding Centre for Social Welfare and Health Organisations (STEA). As far as the police and municipal employees are concerned, the project was part of their normal duties.

16. What were the costs of the project in terms of finances, material and human resources? (**Max. 150 words**)

The police participated in the project as part of their normal duties. The police conducted the preventive activities and the criminal investigation in parallel. The multidisciplinary team also participated as part of their normal duties.

Two trained professional mediators from the Community Mediation Centre participated in the project for approximately three months (amounting to 15 working days), available 24/7, also outside office hours. The total number of field operations, meetings and phone calls was 134.

The direct expenses of the city of Forssa amounted to EUR 10,000 (youth media workshop).

17. Has a cost-benefit analysis been carried out? If so, describe the analysis, including how and by whom it was carried out and list the main findings of the analysis. (**Max. 150 words**)

No.

18. Are there adjustments to be made to the project to ensure a successful replication in another Member State?

A manual and clear process diagram prepared by the Community Mediation Centre facilitate the replication of the project.

To be successful, the project requires committed people willing to collaborate on a local level (stakeholder network), as well as a party that trains the mediators who have an understanding of the concepts pertaining to respectful dialogue and depolarisation. The Forssa approach is based on the Polarization Strategy Model of Bart Brandsma (NL) <https://www.polarisatie.nl/eng-home/what-is-polarisation/>

19. How is the project relevant for other Member States? Please explain the European dimension of your project.

It is relevant. In Europe, polarisation between different groups is increasing, and not only between the local population and asylum seekers. Similar situations may arise in connection with the many “not in my backyard” phenomena (ethnic and religious groups, substance abusers, homeless etc.). The need for fast-responding multidisciplinary cooperation in crime prevention is common to all European countries.

Please provide a short general description of the project (abstract for inclusion in the conference booklet – **max. 150 words**).

“The Forssa Approach: mediation in polarisation and inter-group conflicts” is a project based on the thorough study in a Finnish town Forssa in 2016. The project aimed at reducing violent crimes and conflicts between local youth and residents of a reception centre. The project also targeted the inhabitants of the community at large because people noticed the tense atmosphere. The project aimed at restoring a sense of security, to defuse the polarised situation and to prevent further clashes in the town.

“The Forssa approach” was established on neutral and transparent communication and multidisciplinary collaboration enabling exchange of information and coordination of activities. Community mediation and dialogue was the method used by professional mediators and police for recognising the interests and needs of conflicting parties. Discussions of the conflict in the community at large continued and a media project for students was initiated and completed.

The project calmed down the situation in Forssa and defused intergroup conflicts and polarisation between locals and asylum seekers. Violent crimes ceased completely.