A high-angle photograph of a group of approximately 30 people, mostly adults, sitting in a circle on wooden chairs in an outdoor courtyard. They are engaged in a discussion or meeting. The courtyard is paved with stone tiles and has a brick building with a black door in the background. There are some plants and a black trash can on the right side. The text is overlaid on the center of the image.

Einbeziehung von Kindern und Jugendlichen in den Familienrat.  
Ein etwas anderer Ansatz im Kinderschutz.“

Monheim am Rhein 14 – 9 – 2017

Rob van Pagée

Eigen Kracht Centrale NL

[www.eigen-kracht.nl/en](http://www.eigen-kracht.nl/en)

# Eigen Kracht Centrale NL

- **Not for profit, with a vision**
  - Citizens are uniquely able to in their own situation and together with their own circle of people, discuss what is going on aimed at making a plan for a solution.
- **Independent organisation**
  - Implementing FGC in NL since 2001
  - Over 12.000 EK-c's
  - Over 60 studies in NL



# Orthodox Child Welfare Beliefs

- Agencies know best
- Professionals are experts
- Focus is on children and parents
- Professionals are key decision makers
- Families `fit in` to systems
- Compulsory plans
- Menu of agency services
- Worker specialisation

# Development System World



- Agrarian Revolution
- Industrial Revolution
- Urbanization
- Institutions
- The Welfare State
- Traditional methods overwhelmed

# Two worlds

*200 years distrust...Eva Fahlström*

## System world

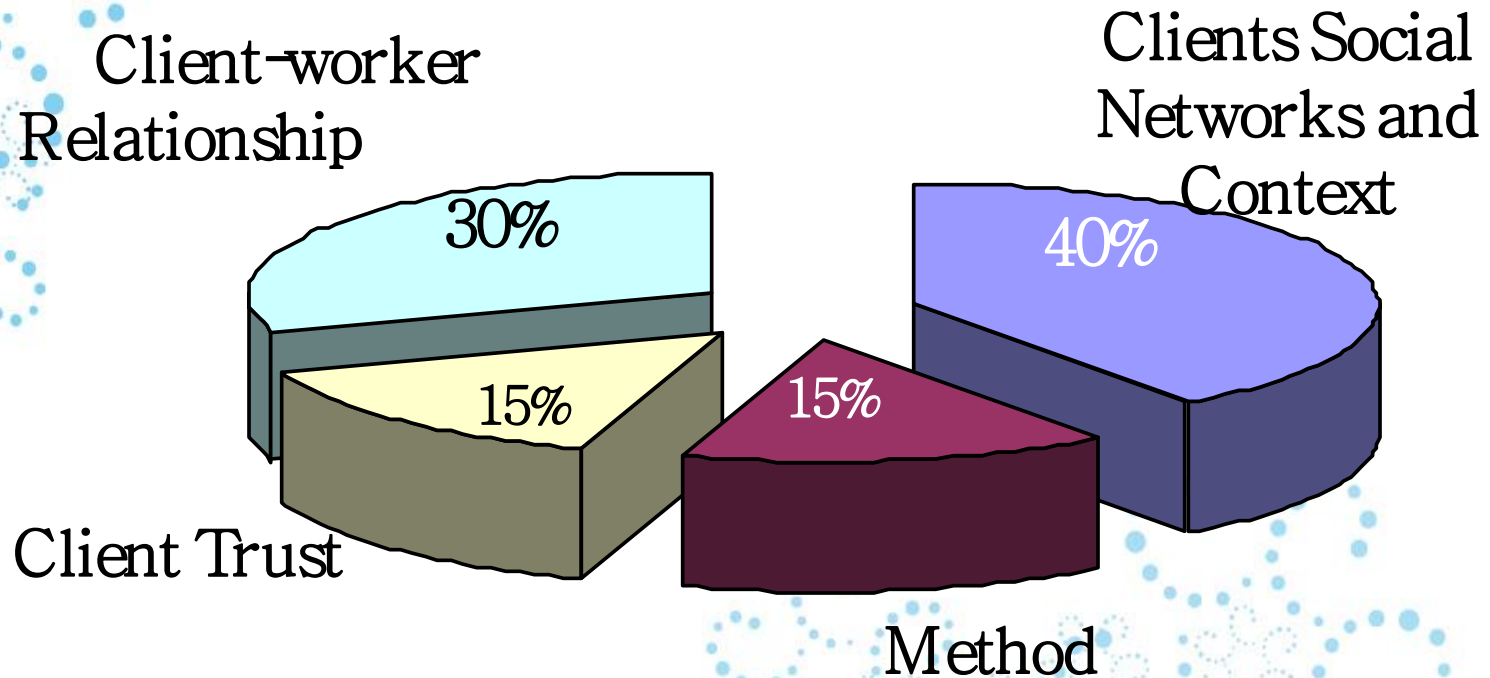
Structured  
Bureaucratic  
Formal  
Procedures  
Protocols  
Legal mandate  
Mo-Fri , 9 tot 5  
Employment driven



## Life world

Unique  
Dynamic  
Varying levels  
Historical knowledge  
Informal  
Unconditional love  
Free discussion

# SUPPORTING FAMILIES: *WHAT WORKS?* (McKeown, 2000/ DeVries, 2012)



# PUAO-TE-ATATU (DAY BREAK)



Ministerial Advisory Committee  
on a Maori Perspective  
for the Department of Social Welfare

Society is not aware of the extent to which  
The law has defeated ... The Maori way of  
life

Our institutions simply ignore and  
freeze out other cultures

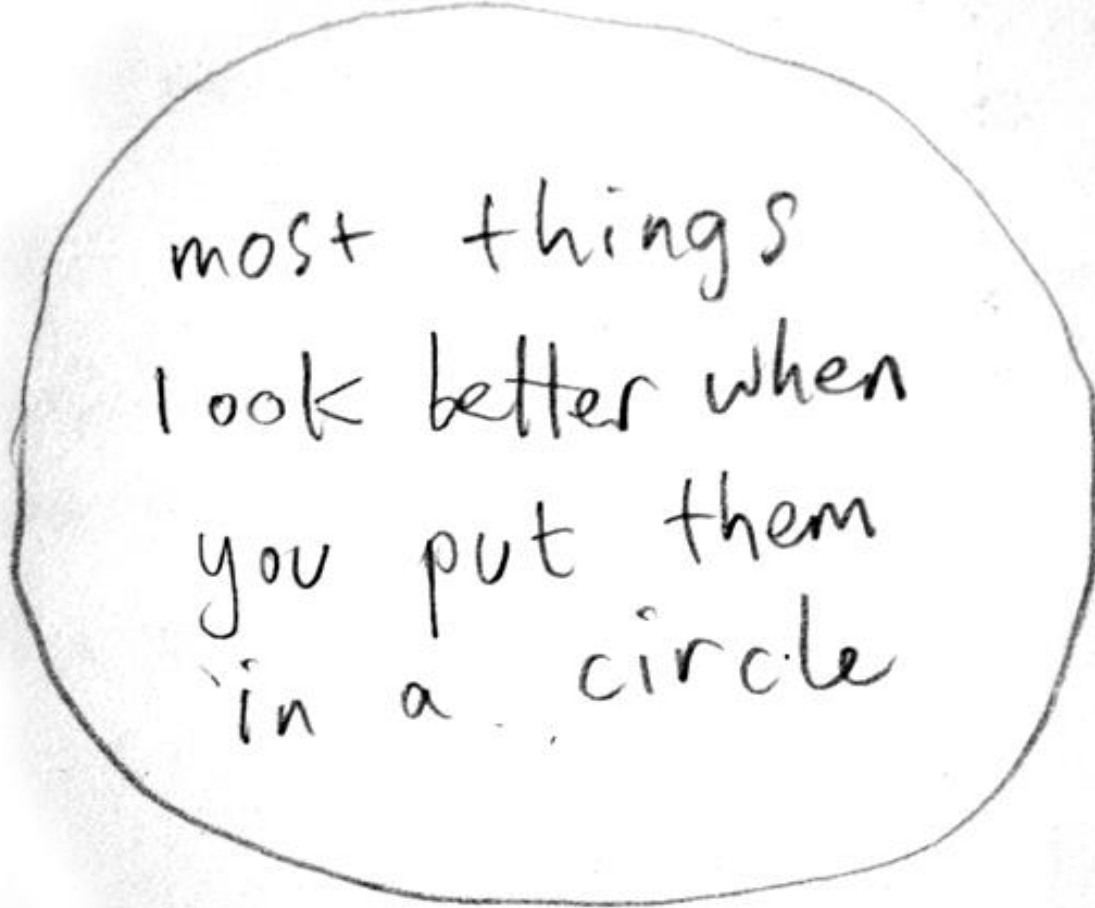
Social work is often a removal of  
responsibility and power from people  
to look after themselves



# Different thinking about Families

- Active family involvement essential for good outcomes;
- Families know themselves best;
- Families larger than parents and children;
- Children needs to maintain kinship and cultural connections wherever they live;
- Agencies must demonstrate respect for families;
- The state must defend kinship groups against unnecessary intrusion;
- Families capable of directing their own affairs;





most things  
look better when  
you put them  
in a circle

# Widening the circle

**Independent community  
coordinator**

In private time  
'own people'  
discuss what's  
going on, aimed at  
making a plan

**Health  
Welfare  
Justice  
Education  
Labour  
Housing**

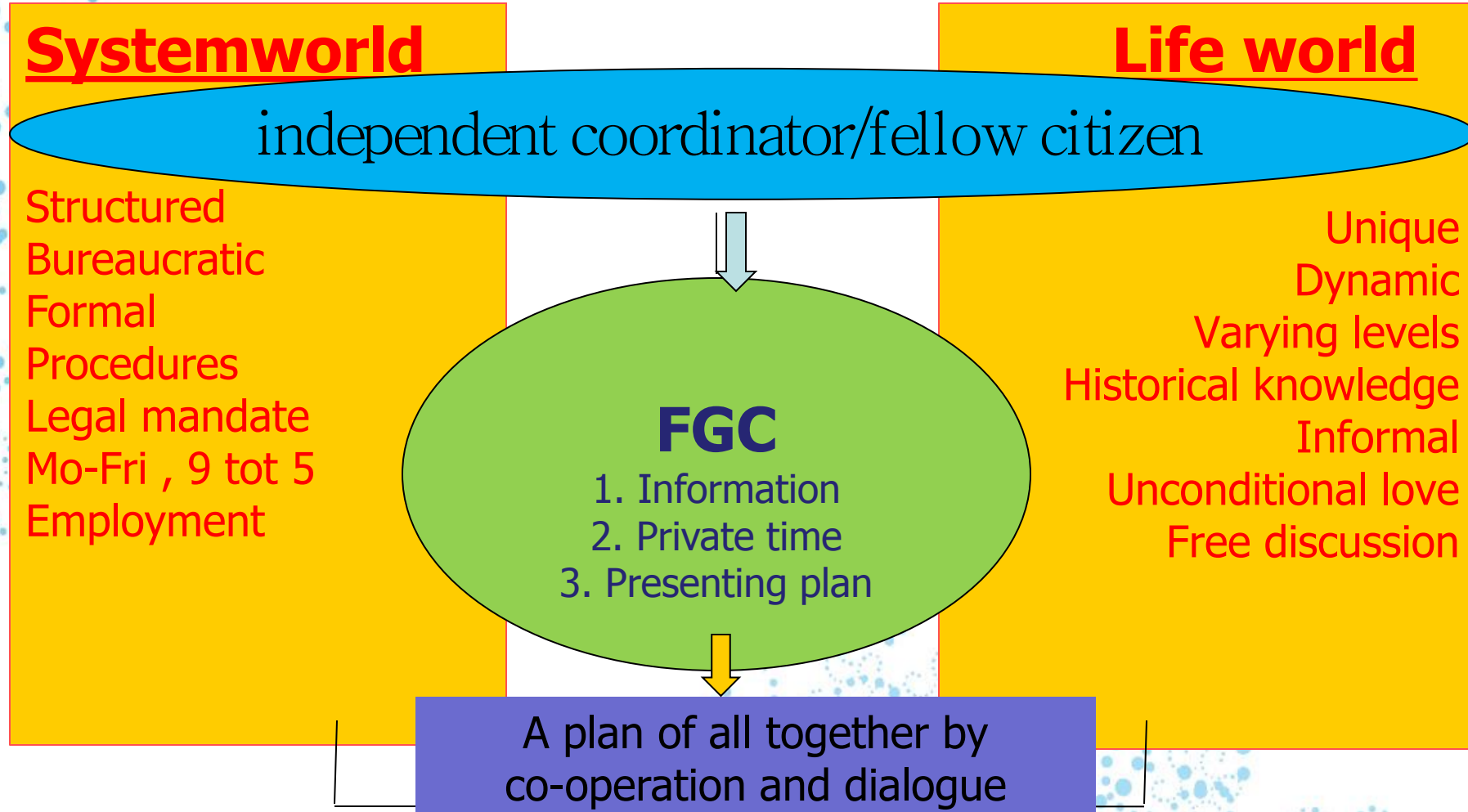
**Prof:**

- express concerns,
- offers knowledge/help,
- can set conditions

**Central  
person(s)**



# FGC is a bridge







# Independence is key

- **Control and direction with citizens**
  - Independent FGC organisation
  - Independent FGC coordinators
    - 800 community coordinators speaking 99 languages
  - CCI-staff: Connecting, Coaching, Implementation
- **Independence meaning:**
  - No interest in the outcome of the plan
  - No influence on the contents of the plan

# Fair process

- Professional leading and participating a decision making process, easily get into a split position
- Whether or not they use their power, it threatens confidence in the fairness of the decision making process
  - *Frieling (2008)*



# Community coordinator

- Recruited from community
- Different professions
- Different ethnicities (99 languages)
- Cultural respectful to families
- Preparation can start today
- Impact in communities in social system
- Access to different networks for implementation and recruitment

# FGC challenges professional system that...

- ...take over responsibilities that rightly belong with families,
- ...exclude wider family involvement in decision making,
- ...define service eligibility and need without reference to families;



# Discovery of FGC

- It is **not** about problems or conflicts or about people who can or cannot..
- It is all about **how** the circle can be *widened* and *addressed* with regards to their joint capacity to use their common 'social capital' and as first, come up with a plan.
- It is about a **right** for citizens to make a plan first





# NL: Outcomes...trends

- Average 13 participants
- Plans after referral:
  - 71 % formal conference plan
  - 15 % make informal plans
  - 14 % no plan
- No unsafe agreements
- Average FGC plan has 18 agreements
  - 80% family friends
  - 20% professional help

# Returns for citizens

- **More support** from their own people;
  - Rapid improvement of the situation
- **More care** by their own people;
- **More control** over their own lives;
- **Integral plan**
  - 4 areas of life
  - 18 agreements per plan
  - faster safety and decrease professional concerns;
- **Directorship over their life with citizens**

# Returns for Agencies & Society

- Increase social cohesion;
- Family groups taking responsibility;
- Less congested profs;
  - No undue burden on shoulders,
- Collaboration citizens & profs
- More resources available;

# Social returns

- Less demand for intensive care
- Less demand by substitution
  - *vanNaem 2010*
- Families prevented 22 of 24 threatening supervision orders (n-100)
  - *Schuurman/Mulder (2011)*
- 100 MPF's: at least € 4,8 million
  - *Jagtenberg (2011)*
- Savings CPS Amsterdam 21.000 euro per child
  - *Schuurman/Mulder (2012)*



# Social Model or Rights approach?

- FGC NZ: Rights inspiration - CYPFA 1989
- Internationally agencies and professionals most always turn FGC into a social model
  - *Empowerment can be weak and short lived unless it is embodied in institutions'*  
» Chambers 1997
- Legal mandate NL:
  - 2013 Amendment in CP & Youth Care Act
  - 2015 Family Group Plan

# Beyond Child Protection

- **Families and individuals,**
  - Youth, Family, Vulnerable people: poverty, homeless, unemployed, debt problems, DV, health, multi problem families, in and out jail, evictions, psychiatric hospitalisation;
- **After wrongdoing and crime,**
  - Justice, Education, workplace & organisations,
- **For groups, neighbourhood or district,**
  - Issues in neighbourhood,
- **Matters at school,**
  - Education, Restorative approaches

# Renewal position professional

- Different position of the professional in making plans.
  - Rely on strength of families and social networks, (bravery, courage)
  - Providing the requested services;
- Activating the resilience of society
- Professionalism measured by:
  - increase of solidarity in society rather than number of interventions.

# FGC is system change

*That it is going to be normal to gather a circle of people for..*

- Settlement conflict victim and offender,
- Solving neighborhood conflicts,
- In case of domestic violence in a family,
- To keep a young person in school,
- To countering the risks of obesity
- To fight unemployment, debts...
- ...



# The Netherlands

- Work in Progress
- Ebb and flow
- Rights approach
  - Family-Group -Plan
- In child/youth care
- Community approach
- FGC system change
- Responsive services

# Modern democratic approach

- A pathway for modern socialized citizens to recognize and shoulder the responsibility for the public matter;  
- Mijnhardt
- Conferencing is a crucial vehicle of empowerment where spaces are created for active responsibility to displace predominantly passive statist responsibility;  
- Braithwaite



# Family Group Conference

