

**TAMPEP International  
Foundation**

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**Cultural Mediators in the  
Area of Prostitution/  
Transnational Training**

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**LEONARDO DA VINCI PROGRAMME**

Action Programme for the  
Implementation of a European  
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## **Cultural Mediators in the Area of Prostitution, transnational training**

### **INTRODUCTION**

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The manual is centred on training linguistic-cultural mediatrices and male/female social operatives who will come into contact with migrant sex workers. Special attention of this training is focussed on migrants who are victims of trafficking and have set out to free themselves from this reality. This manual presents a model of vocational training carried out in the framework of outreach projects in four countries: the Netherlands, Germany, Italy and Austria. Due to time limitation of the project, this training cannot be considered as a full and complete educational process but its methodology and base model can be broaden up and multiplied by other agencies and adapted to the local context and situation. We consider this model to be specially suitable for outreach organisations and social and medical services who need to give base forming to their field workers and personnel which comes in contact with migrant sex workers and (migrant) sex workers in position of dependency and vulnerability.

The project's principal scope is to carry out the training in such a way that those trained may become consultants and promoters of self-empowerment in their confrontations with the target, thereby favouring the target's acquirement of knowledge and capacity and making the target's very own effort at self-determination conspicuous. Techniques of field work and of arousing of trust of the target group also constitute a part of the training.

The other part of the training is to give the basic knowledge concerning the need to facilitate contacts between service providers and the target group. The training includes also the transfer of knowledge concerning health in prostitution and the prostitution work itself. The trainers have different ethnical and professional background and might have had been involved or not in prostitution themselves. Therefore we can talk about a very specific context of the training and the specific context of the phenomenon of migrant prostitution. The training itself is far from traditional approach of vocational training. It concerns also a new comer in the field of outreach and social work: cultural mediator. In the present reality of existence of great numbers of migrants working in prostitution and strong social marginalization and vulnerability of these groups there is a necessity to create an innovative approach in order to reduce the vulnerability of these persons and to create an offer of adequate services. For this new approach we need interdisciplinary activities and new professional figures who are able to reach the target group. This new working method involving interdisciplinary strategies, the new professionals and the fact that cultural mediators are being integrated in project activities of international network, have been recognised by national and international

policy makers as an efficient measure against social exclusion of certain groups of the society. This way this experimental project of trainings has been integrated within the execution of many programmes.

Trainings have been carried out in the four countries: the Netherlands, Germany, Italy and Austria. Co-ordination centre is situated in the Netherlands. Project partners have had a long experience in developing and carrying out of health promotion and social assistance projects targeting (migrant) sex workers. In their countries they co-operate closely with local agencies and service providers and have a broad experience in educating medical and social establishment and appropriate expertise in spreading out of knowledge and skills. The project partners have an experience in transnational co-operation in the field of health and social promotion, empowerment, mediation with services for mobile and migrant sex workers. The working methodology is applied simultaneously in the four countries. In spite of the fact that this training made use of existing structures and experience, we hope that this manual will offer some new methodological instruments for agencies that have basic necessities to adapt their field work activities to the reality in the sex industry. These basic necessities are:

**Firstly:** to increase the capacity and vocational skills of future staff members of the intervention teams in various countries. The fieldwork activities and the extension of working area require human resources who have a basic training.

**Secondly:** to define all common principles of cultural mediation in the field of prostitution and to apply them in a different social and cultural context.

**Thirdly:** to sensitize various social sectors towards the necessity of using cultural mediation and work out common methods of application of cultural mediation.

**Fourthly:** to standardise working methods emerging from the empirical experience and to create one common model for training and qualitative guidelines for employing of cultural mediation in the direct work with the target group and within the structures of service providers.

These above mentioned objectives form the framework of this transnational training programme.

In the first phase of the project we worked conform the above mentioned goals and employed the common strategy in order to achieve the needed standardisation of the experience of training and monitoring of effects. This standardisation forms the base for the manual. The manual encloses the theoretical part describing the main principles of the training, guidelines for practical application of cultural mediation and for service providers who might be confronted with migrant prostitution.

This manual also includes the description of the results of the common work amongst the project partners regarding systematisation of different aspects of cultural mediation. It contains also the guidelines for interventions for migrant sex workers and the assessment of the practical experience in the application of cultural mediation in the field. This common framework has been carried out as the result of bilateral contacts among the partners and as the result of co-ordination meetings that had a form of small seminars. This general part gives practical guidelines for application of cultural mediation in the field work.

This manual also contains training modules carried out in the four countries. Next to these structured vocational training we integrated examples of short trainings directed

towards other target groups than the selected trainees. This was done in order to sensitise these groups towards the situation of migrant sex workers and towards the mechanisms of trafficking and to offer the model of cooperation between outreach projects/NGOs and various state institutions.

Next to the presentation of specific training modules we integrated the description of the partners' activities concerning the organisation and carrying out of trainings. These were directed towards various groups as a response to the needs of every particular country. The choice of the audiences, target groups and the working methods had been discussed and approved at the meetings of co-ordination centre so that within the common framework, different experiences could serve as an example of possible application. These different aspects of the training modules will be useful for future implementation of the experience in other countries and in a different context. Due to the fact that it was only a pilot project with limited financial resources, the scale of the activities had to be limited. It concerned the number of trainings, the number of persons participating in trainings and the choice of locations. Taking into account the fact that this project could not cover all area of necessity regarding needs of target groups (migrant and trafficked women), the needs of various agencies working in the field of migrant prostitution, the demand for adequate personnel who would carry out outreach activities, we were forced to use only some empirical experiences in order to create a model for replication and dissemination.

One of the parts of our activities concerned dissemination of experience. It happened during various meetings among the 21 members of international of TAMPEP and with various delegations of organisations involved in the field of international prostitution and combat against trafficking. The spread of information was important part of the implementation of the method and useful for the assessment and evaluation of the needs of various organisations in Europe. This way we could identify the main themes and strategies which are presented in the manual.

The complete version of the training modules is in Italian language (specifically for the training carried out in Italy) and in German (for the training carried out in Germany and Austria). The shorter English version presents an outline of the training modules applied in the four countries.

### **Description of the training**

The basic aims of the training are the same for every country. The detailed description of the method and of the specific context of every country can be found in the presentation of the training programmes in the four partner countries. Taking into account that the trainees had different professional and ethnic background, we had to observe these differences.

Mixed group training (both indigenous and migrant persons) was aimed at furnishing various instruments of intervention, each of which was to be integrated into the mind-set (subjectivity) of each participant, and was articulated on more than one level, with the following training objectives:

- training that serves as a complement to the reality of self-help;
- training on counselling;
- training on the development of networked operations;

- training relative to the elaboration of ways and means adapted to the needs or special circumstances of each individual.
- training of techniques of field work
- training on health promotion activities in the context of prostitution

The training project envisions those who undergo the training as direct beneficiaries and those subjects and structures on which one expects an impact deriving from the work exercised by those who have been trained as indirect beneficiaries, with the most tangible benefits enumerated below:

- the target which, to the extent possible, will be accompanied and directed along a pathway in articulated fashion;
- the local community which, through networked operations, can become a co-protagonist in dealing with and overcoming the difficult situations which exist therein;
- the services and institutions that can come into contact with the target's reality through the mediation of a trained work group; and
- the European reality which, through the spread of information and knowledge and the exchange of experience, can learn and draw from the experiences relative to a problematic area of life (the trafficking of persons and the escape therefrom) that is common to various countries throughout the European Union.

The main goal of the training was to prepare the migrant women and local social assistances for the key contextual role played by cultural mediatrices who stand in the forefront as intermediaries between the relative persons and institutions of the host country and the tenant migrants.

### **Description of the basic methodology**

Under the guiding presence of a tutor, the training have taken place in groups while, at the same time, self-instruction have also been stimulated by the occasions of daily life. At the start of the project, time had been given to exploring the training needs which emerged from the subjects, needs that may eventually be integrated with those issues and arguments raised beforehand. The training methods comprise all that which is traditional, such as lessons on specific arguments, and the so-called active methods, such as the formulation of work groups, simulation of real-life situations (for example, role-playing), and the case-study method. Psychosocial training was attuned to the degree of knowledge and capacity and the attitudes of the subjects. As suggested above, the subjects who were trained thus become facilitators in the development of the process of empowerment of the target group which is understood to be enabling the possibility of controlling in greater measure one's own life through the development of individual, interpersonal, and social competencies of migrant sex workers.

At the end of the training an evaluation of the training experience was carried out through individual interviews on the various areas of the training conducted and through group discussions that offer the possibility of expressing, sharing and reflecting on the results achieved. This evaluation was at the same time a balance sheet of the activity and represented a possibility for self-appraisal of the emotive-cognitive-behavioural reactions to the coursework fulfilled by the subjects. Moreover, the evaluation then by itself became a moment and means of training.

At the level of plan of action the training was subdivided into various operative phases:

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**First Phase**

Discussion of the contents of the projects, analysis of the training demand from the participants (with the eventual definition of the training needs), lessons on the phenomenon of trafficking

*2 meetings*

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**Second Phase**

Counselling training

*2 meetings*

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**Third Phase**

Self-help training

*2 meetings*

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**Fourth Phase**

Training on the development of networked operations and on the elaboration of ways and means adapted to the needs or special circumstances of each individual

*3 meetings*

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**Fifth Phase**

Final evaluation

*2 meetings*

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**Sixth Phase**

Insertion into a work environment, monitoring and supervision for a duration of six months

*6 encounters*

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**Seventh Phase**

European seminar

*1 encounter*

The ordinary meetings of the training were intended to last a day (morning and afternoon, a net 8 hours of work). At the conclusion of the project, the meeting relative to the European seminar lasted 1 work day. The overall duration of the project was 24 months.

The methods used varied according to the applicable operative phases, however, with the work group which lasts throughout all phases as a unifying method. While carrying out the project, new training needs emerged which called for ad hoc training programmes to be implemented as new training needs/problems should arise. Therefore this method demanded some flexibility from the side of the responsible training organisation. Especially fruitful collaborative exchanges have been started up with associations that operate and deal with migrants, social assistance agencies that work within the ambit of prostitution, public socio-health service agencies, and public/private agencies that provide training or instruction.



## **The context of migrant prostitution and the need of cultural mediation**

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Results of the activities carried out by the project partners concerning the implementation of the experience of cultural mediation in the field of migrant prostitution.

One of the parts of the programme was to create theoretical basis for comparing experiences in the four countries and to identify the conditions for implementation of qualitative guidelines for intervention policies in the field of migrant prostitution. The cultural mediation is one of the instruments of this interdisciplinary approach.

Prostitution in Europe should be seen as an international phenomenon, involving an increasing number of women and men, from other European countries and from other continents. There has been, since the 1970s, a noticeable influx of sex workers from Asia, Africa and Latin America. In addition, from the early 90s, the industry has seen a steady increase in the number of Central and Eastern Europeans who have crossed into Northern, Southern and Western Europe, and who have started or continued to work in the sex industry.

Interviews conducted by the project partners within the TAMPEP network have made it clear that many of the individuals we have targeted had no previous experience of sex work in their country of origin, and had no intention of engaging in it when they moved to Western Europe. They also knew little or nothing about the organisation of prostitution in this part of the world. We should point out that many of those involved in the sex industry do not identify themselves as prostitutes, and think of their work as only temporary.

In the prostitution female and transsexual sex workers are active. It is important in the field work, to respect the gender that transsexual sex workers have chosen, and not consider them a third gender. Therefore we refer to transsexuals as women, since the majority presents themselves in this way. This group has specific medical and social needs requiring special attention.

Prostitution involving migrant sex workers occurs throughout the European Union (EU). Groups are becoming increasingly mobile, within both individual member states and the larger community. This mobility has triggered what could be called serial or chain migration, whereby an individual who has already found employment in Europe arranges for friends from her or his native country to follow. It should be emphasised that migrant prostitution is not a temporary or a static phenomenon, and that there are parallels with the experience of other groups who migrate to Europe in search of employment.

In many parts of the EU, the number of migrant prostitutes active within the sex industry is greater than that of local sex workers. However, migrant sex workers are frequently excluded from legal, social and medical structures, and therefore have

enormous difficulty gaining access to information and resources that could improve their quality of life. This marginalised position also leads to the victimisation of migrant prostitutes by criminals to illegal trafficking of women and men, to isolation and dependency. Existing services in the European Union do little for the members of this target group, which is why the TAMPEP project was launched in 1993, in the Netherlands, Italy, Germany and Austria. Here below one will find a short description of the project TAMPEP which gave the framework for the training programme for cultural mediators, within which the cultural mediation is being widely applied and within which the trainees will be integrated in the field activities.

TAMPEP's objective is to develop, in collaboration with migrant sex workers, more effective strategies for contacting the target group, as well as new materials. The four organisations involved in the project were already active in the field of prostitution in their respective countries, and functioned as a point of reference for migrant prostitutes. They were also a part of local, national and international networks in this field. The field experience that these organisations had gained determined the approach and conduct of the project and facilitated contact with our target group.

The creation of TAMPEP was motivated by three considerations.

- First, there was a lack of HIV/STD information available in the native languages of the target group. This lack impedes the development of educational and preventive programmes concerning risks linked to the professional activities of the sex workers. In addition, it makes it difficult to improve their working conditions and, consequently, poses an obstacle to the improvement of their mental and physical well being.
- The second consideration was the poor living and working conditions of migrant sex workers
- The need to facilitate direct contact between migrant sex workers and institutions active in the social and medical fields was the third consideration. This contact is designed to take cultural difference into account without compromising the efficacy of the services themselves.

In the first six years of its history, TAMPEP has conducted experimental outreach work in highly divergent regions. These regions differ in immigration policies, application of laws with respect to prostitution, and the ways in which sex work is organised and practised. They also vary with respect to health care, and to public health programmes, especially those intended to prevent HIV/STD among sex workers. We wish to emphasise that TAMPEP set out not to create a network of services capable of meeting the needs of entire countries, but rather to complement existing network of service providers in order to carry out an efficient model of intervention.

The following basic elements and considerations have to be taken account of in the field/cultural mediation activities:

There are many different forms of prostitution. The forms in which migrant prostitutes most often work are: street prostitution, sex clubs, bars, windows and private apartments. Each of these has its own specific working conditions, but what they all share is the fact that the population of sex workers is very international, and that the concentration of any specific nationality varies from one host country to another. There are a total of twenty-five to thirty different nationalities in our target group, from Latin

America, North and West Africa, Southeast Asia, and from Central and Eastern Europe and the Balkan countries.

TAMPEP's fieldwork has shown that wherever the project is active, there is a stratified population of migrant sex workers. One distinct category resides in the host country for at least five years and moves about very little, working in other parts of Europe, if at all, for very brief periods of time. A second category is transient, namely sex workers who constantly move between countries, and whose presence in each is always short. There is a difference, then, between sex workers who choose to emigrate more or less permanently to one of the four countries where TAMPEP is active who constitute a rather stable group, and those who represent a new flux of trans-European migration. Migrant sex work is characterised by constant changes in the make-up of the target group, with frequent variations in the concentration and number of such workers in any of the four countries, in the nationalities represented, and in the degree of their mobility.

The variety of immigration policies throughout the European Union affects the living and working conditions of migrant sex workers. The policy differences also tend to increase their marginalisation and their vulnerability to exploitation. In particular, the severity of recent regulations against non-Europeans has serious consequences for migrant sex workers. Those who are clandestine and work in closed prostitution (apartments, window brothels, sex clubs) never leave their milieu. Their lifestyle is therefore highly detrimental to their physical and mental well being.

### **Strategies of cultural mediation, description of tasks**

The TAMPEP method which is applied in all four partner countries is characterised by direct contact with the target group. The members of the target group are approached on a regular basis by TAMPEP's team members/cultural mediators. Our methods field work are developed through a constant cycle of gathering information, organising activities based on the data gathered, creating new materials, and evaluating results. The project team members are trained in order to carry out these activities. The provisional results of the evaluations are translated into new activities. This continuous process permits the development of grassroots activities tailored to each group and allows us to improve the health and well being of sex workers.

The teams conduct interviews in order to gather general information concerning migrant prostitution in Europe, conduct an initial needs assessment, test and adapt existing materials, develop new materials in collaboration with the target group, carry out workshops and individual consultations, encourage the development of adequate services by governmental institutions, mediate, refer and accompany sex workers to service providers, train peer educators, continuously evaluate the effects of our activities, focusing on levels of knowledge, attitudes towards health promotion, and behavioural changes in the direction of safer sex and other health behaviours and identified structural impediments to achieving the above. One of the central tasks of the cultural mediator is to support the development of self esteem of the members of the target group and to create conditions for empowerment and acquiring of autonomy of sex workers.

The target group of our project is notoriously difficult to reach. As in the case of other marginalised populations within society, there is an increasing recognition of the

influential role of informal peer educators and supporters in facilitating access to information for their community. Interventions have thus been developed through the use of these two types of intermediaries, cultural mediators and peer educators. The pilot project of training has been developed on the basis of this above mentioned model.

## **Cultural mediation and public health and social services**

*‘Cultural mediators are a go-between who know the motivations, the customs and the codes of the dominant culture in the host country, as well as the conditions, social ethics and the scene in which a minority group finds itself.’  
(Brussa, 1995)<sup>1</sup>*

Cultural and linguistic mediation can lead to new models of intervention. It may also serve as an example for integrating immigrants into a particularly important arena, that of public health and social services. This is the reason why these both professional figures (cultural mediators and social workers of the public services) have to be integrated in the training process.

In their mediation between clients and service providers, cultural mediators serve as a bridge, demonstrating the need for raising awareness, and verifying the perceptions of both sides. Their goal is to eliminate the obstacles between a migrant group and those who provide services for international clients. At the same time, they can facilitate contact with a group that is perceived to be problematic and burdensome.

### **Description of skills and the role of cultural mediators**

Cultural mediators are not social workers, health assistants or translators only. According to our model and experience they should be individuals capable of eliciting trust of the target group, and should be of the same ethnic group or nationality as the sex workers, which enables them to recognise and appreciate the cultural and social mechanisms that influence their behaviour and choices. Cultural mediators should also be educators and trainers, with a mandate to pass on knowledge and experience in the field of STD/AIDS prevention among sex workers. They should be recognised as such by the target group. Cultural mediators belong to a ‘different’ culture, interacting with, and reacting to, the dominant culture of the host country. They facilitate communication between members of an immigrant community and those of the dominant culture, as well as with other individuals or groups who in some way have contact with the migrant sex worker. They serve as a point of reference since they themselves have experienced migration and, in some instances the sex industry. In their work linking migrant sex workers and service providers, cultural mediators seek to explain host country health and social systems to people whose ideas and experience with public services in their own countries may be quite different or inexistent. They illuminate a variety of non-verbal means whereby the clients communicate with service providers. They counteract the many factors that hinder the access of migrant sex workers to health systems. These factors go beyond the obvious linguistic obstacles to the general life of the migrant sex

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<sup>1</sup> Brussa, L (1995) TAMPEP: Analyses, the first year 1993/1994, Amsterdam, Mr A. de Graaf Stichting

worker in the host country, taking the education and to the sexuality of the worker into account.

Mediators must be able to maintain a position of autonomy, of neutrality. Their responsibilities go far beyond linguistic interpretation: in the course of their work they translate cultural concepts rather than mere words. The role of cultural mediators in the TAMPEP project is thus very complex. On the one hand, mediators may be perceived by sex workers as healers. On the other, they may be seen as advocates of the services rather than the target group. Cultural and linguistic mediators may thus be perceived as accomplices of the services and therefore partly responsible for behaviour that alienates the target group. Mediators inevitably find themselves trapped between the service providers who may have unrealistic expectations of the effects of cultural mediation, and the sex workers, who may have unrealistic expectations of the mediators' ability to improve the quality of health and social services. Both parties must understand from the outset that cultural mediators cannot provide guarantees for positive response from the services concerning expectations and needs of clients.

These difficulties concerning the position of the cultural mediator have to be managed and monitored in the practice of the work during the continuous communication among the responsible of the services and special agencies supplying field workers.

Taking into account the attitude and the context within which the cultural mediation is being applied, we have to conclude that not every migrant is able to exercise this function. The basic selection is very important as far as screening of the character and attitude of the trainees are concerned. For this reason, much attention is given to emotive-cognitive-behavioural reaction of the trainees and the evaluation of the attitude of the trainees should be the basis of the standardisation of the indicators for the selection procedure. The time when the trainees are active as cultural mediator will be scrupulously monitored and supervised by the tutor in order to evaluate how these persons function in the environment of prostitution and how they fulfil their tasks regarding mediation with public services. The same applies to the monitoring of trainees with regard to local social assistants and problems concerning the relation with migrant clients. Taking into account the above mentioned requirements concerning the qualifications of the cultural mediators, we have to admit that this pilot project of training cannot provide the complete training module but forms only the basis for the future training programme which will include the transfer of more specialistic knowledge.

# Guidelines regarding a basic methodology in the work with migrant sex workers

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These guidelines have been developed by the project partner in order to create the framework for practical implementation of the activities of cultural mediators in the field of migrant prostitution and for the reapplication of the model in various contexts. These guidelines had been used as the common base for the transnational training. The practical implementation of the training modules in the various countries had some variations according to the specificity of the groups and the context of a given country.

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A migrant sex worker is a person who is born in a country with the nationality of that country and who is, voluntarily or forced, working in prostitution in another country.

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## Migration and mobility

The presence of migrant sex workers in the European sex industry constitutes a reality which has changed all aspects of the market. This international phenomenon involves an increasing number of women coming from Africa, Asia, Latin America and, more recently, from East European countries.

In many areas within the EU, the number of migrant prostitutes is superior of that of local sex workers. But, migrant sex workers frequently remain extraneous to legal, social and medical structures and therefore face enormous difficulties in accessing information about the different possibilities which could improve their quality of life and work. This marginalised position leads to the victimization of migrant prostitutes into criminal activities, illegal trafficking of women, isolation and dependency, factors which do not serve for the improving of either safer sex or of public health policies.

The possibilities for migrant sex workers to have optimal control over their sexual services and the promotion of their health in general, is determined more by the control they have over their working and living conditions (which are some of the consequences of their legal status in Europe) than by their cultural and national background.

The great majority of women that come to Europe (voluntarily or forced) have economic motives to migrate, which is the reason why this specific situation has been described as *female-working-migration phenomenon*.

This type of migration has different forms, there are persons who:

- come voluntarily, through personal contacts, with the aim of working in the sex industry and might end up working for themselves or being obliged to share their earnings with others
- come through agencies, with artists visas, to work as dancers in cabarets and end up, voluntarily or forced, working as prostitutes,
- come through marriage and again, voluntarily or forced, end up working in prostitution, and

- come through false promises and are clearly forced into prostitution which means that they are victims of trafficking in women.

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No matter whether they work in prostitution voluntarily or not, the main problem is that the majority do not know about the living and working conditions which they are going to be exposed to.

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Most of migrant sex workers have had no previous experience as prostitutes in their country of origin and had no intention, upon migration, of engaging in this trade. It should also be made clear that most of those involved in the sex industry do not identify themselves as prostitutes and consider their work only as temporary.

## **Cultural mediators**

Because of the specificity of that target group, one of the main principles of outreach work is the use of *cultural mediation*, i.e. those who work with migrant sex workers should ideally be of the same nationality and culture as the migrant sex workers themselves. Cultural mediation allows not only a more effective and direct dialogue with the target group, but cultural mediators can and should function also as intermediates between the sex workers and all possible service providers.

Continuous collaboration between cultural mediators and health services is crucial in ensuring that information on safer sexual behaviour reaches migrant sex workers. One of the roles of cultural mediators is that of shaping and gaining official backing for co-operative models to be adapted to local circumstances in each country.

## **Prevention work**

Interventions promoting safer sex practices alone are not sufficient. Informing migrant sex workers about the right brand of condom, instructing them in its proper use, and teaching negotiating skills, need to be supplemented by direct fieldwork. Similarly, informing sex workers of the value of regular preventive medical attention must be complemented with referral to addresses of empathic doctors and health care services.

## **Peer educators/supporters**

The mobility of migrant sex workers within Europe requires that concepts of *peer education* be adapted. This mobility can be used in a positive way: when peer educators/supporters are trained in the fundamentals of safer sex and health promotion, they can function as *health messengers* as they move through Europe.

Ideally, they should be supported by an international network of intervention projects, because the possibilities for non-European sex workers to create an autonomous organisation and to work together in a community based model focussing on human rights and advocacy, is limited by the legal status of foreign sex workers.

## **Methodology**

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To be able to develop effective and efficient work for migrant sex workers it is necessary to take account of the fact that women from totally different backgrounds (cultural, religious, health and sexual values) need totally different approaches, strategies and information materials.

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But it is not only the diversity of cultural backgrounds which determine a diversity in attitudes, but also:

- the particular context of the sex industry in which these women are employed,
- the structural factors regarding policies on prostitution and migration in the host country where they are temporarily residing, and
- health policies which influence the social and working conditions of a marginalised population.

These observations lead to four main items which should be considered when working with migrant sex workers.

## 1. An on-going process of investigation

Migrant sex work is characterized by constant changes in the make-up of the target group, with frequent variations in the concentration and number of sex workers in each country as well as in the nationalities represented and their degree of mobility. Therefore the need to follow and observe these constant changes within the groups in order to be able to adapt and develop the right activity for each different group:

- continuous assessment of their living and working conditions,
- continuous observation of their migratory flux within and throughout the EU countries,
- continuous analysis of the influence of the different European legislation and policies concerning migration and prostitution on migrant sex worker's living and working conditions.

## 2. Continuous fieldwork

The need of regular and intensive outreach activities (streetwork/fieldwork) is essential to build up direct contact with the target group. Because of their marginalised situation, isolation and mobility, fieldwork is of crucial importance in order to build up a trustful relationship between the target group and service providers. It will serve to have a better overview of each specific reality, to promote safer sex practices, carry out STD and HIV/AIDS prevention activities in an efficient way, influence behavioural changes, boost group cohesion and build up migrant sex workers self-confidence, self-efficacy and self-esteem.

## 3. The direct involvement of sex workers

Sex worker's collaboration and participation must be constant and active, because through the creation of a base community structure, there will exist the possibility to reinforce the group's unity. This way a space is created which allows them to define their own needs and priorities; and by using their mobility as a network of contacts, information can be disseminated with a snowball effect.

## 4. Development of specific information material



Many projects employ strategies and materials designed for *Western* eyes. Unfortunately many project workers do not take into account the fact that women from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds need totally different approaches. The production and use of information materials should be considered as a tool for the work and not as an end in itself. The materials should be created and developed together with the target group during workshops, streetwork and other kinds of regular meetings. This way they become an important didactic material during the training of peer educators/supporters. This involvement of sex workers in production of information materials is done in order to:

- improve the learning process as it is done for and with migrant sex workers,
- observe and incorporate the specific cultural differences within the group, and
- increase awareness on HIV/STD and safer sex practices.

The materials:

- should be international (can be used in any country)
- should be simultaneously developed in every country
- are continuously adapted and developed
- their production should be cheap, which means that their contents can be changed and adapted without big costs
- are easy recognisable and have a proper size (they cannot be too big, as it might be too difficult to store them in the pocket)

# Cultural Mediation

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As with other marginalised populations which are hard to reach, there is an overall recognition of the need of specialised staff to deal with a multicultural population. These persons should be employed during fieldwork and inside (health and social) institutions. They are key-persons for the work with migrant sex workers as well as fundamental references for both sex workers and institutions (NGOs and/or GOs).

The definitions vary but the aim is one and the same:

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it is the need of a person who is a go-between, who knows the customs and the codes of the host country as well as those of the minority group, the conditions, the social ethics and the scene in which this specific minority group finds itself.

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## Cultural mediator

*TAMPEP's definition*

- It is a person belonging to the same ethnic group or nationality as the sex workers and therefore capable of recognising and appreciating the cultural and social mechanisms influencing their behaviour and choices. This person doesn't work in the sex industry, at least not at that moment.
- She/he mediates and intervenes between two different cultures to facilitate communication and understanding, being able to translate and transmit, both sides, language (including non-verbal signs) and the different cultural, health and sexual values. Therefore she/he has a very important role regarding health care services, as she/he is able to call attention and formulate needs and expectations for both - sex workers and medical personnel.
- A cultural mediator is capable of eliciting the trust of the target group and facilitate contact with them. As a recognised supporter, she/he is

- required to promote and facilitate empowerment and counselling, as well as behaviour changes and self-esteem.
- A cultural mediator has a very clear autonomous, neutral and defined position inside this triangular situation, position that has to be clarified for both sides from the beginning. For one, not to build dependency from the side of the target group as well as false expectations as *healers*. For the other, not to be invested with the role of *advocate* for the services themselves, as she/he can be viewed as an accomplice of the service.
- Cultural mediators should be considered as co-workers in a team of specialised persons (medical doctors, health assistants, social workers, lawyers, psychologists, etc.). Although they are neither social workers, nor health assistants, nor exclusively translators, they have basic knowledge about HIV/STD prevention, the legal and social rights and situation of migrants in the host country.

## Peer educator

### *TAMPEP's definition*

■ In contrast with the cultural mediator, a peer educator is a member of the target group and therefore identifies herself/himself completely with the group.

■ She/he has to be recognised as a leader by the community base while representing a particular project. Therefore, she has to be clear about her role within the group and the project itself.

■ Peer education implies a didactic role and an influence in the behaviour change. A peer educator should be able to organise and conduct a series of lessons on various themes tied to prevention and safer sex practices, as well as assist in raising awareness among her/his colleagues about STDs and HIV/AIDS.

■ Besides the role in increasing self-responsibility, knowledge and self-esteem, the peer educator should, at the same time, make distinction what concerns her tasks within the community and her own and other sex workers private and professional life.

■ Peer educators have to be able to apply the concept of peer education within a situation of great mobility.

■ The peer educator should be at equal level with other team workers of the project. She/he should be able to exercise influence on decisions concerning strategies and activities of the project.

■ The peer educator should receive financial compensation for her/his services. However, one should take into consideration that the payment might be carried out in an unofficial way.

## Peer supporter

### *Definition according to self help organisation of sex workers*

■ She/he is a member of the sex worker's community. While working as a peer supporter, she/he can be working in the sex industry or not.

■ A peer supporter identifies herself/himself with the group and is recognised by that group.

■ She/he collaborates with health professionals and sex workers concerning health issues, civil rights and prevention for the whole community.

■ She/he can either receive a salary for her/his work or be part of the decision makers.

This combination of origins and, consequently, skills, must respect the balance in the number of persons from each group, not only to build up the field work team but also in instances of decision authorities.

■ She/he can give her opinion in order to define the needs of the community and elaborate the working aims and frame of the work.

■ A peer supporter can be a cultural mediator as she/he is considered a bridge between the community and the health care system.

# Training of cultural mediators and peer educators/supporters

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- The fact of being a migrant is not sufficient to become a cultural mediator and/or a peer educator/supporter. She/he has to undergo a professional training, which includes a theoretical part and a practical one.
- The training has to be officially recognised by the public health authorities and the person of the cultural mediator and/or peer educator/supporter should be recognised by them as a professional.

## Immigration legislation

There are no specific laws concerning migrant sex workers in the EU member countries. They are ruled by the Alien (Immigration) Laws of each country, i.e., every country applies the law according to its own interpretation. In some countries, there are even differentiations between states in the application of the law.

The migrant sex workers position is therefore quite similar in all countries:

- As long as they do not have legal status, they cannot get a work permit, what forbids them to perform work, no matter what kind of work. That means that, when chased by official authorities, it is not due to the fact that they are working in prostitution (as it is not recognized as work), but because they do not have a residence/work permit. In those cases, they can be deported.
- An *artist visa* gives a migrant woman a limited residence and work permit, but does not allow her to work in prostitution. If she is caught doing so, she can also be deported. This type of visa is quite tricky: on the one hand, the woman has a legal status for a determined time but, on the other hand, she finds herself in a position of complete dependency on the bar, cabaret or club owner with whom she made the contract, as any moment he/she can dismiss her. Consequence: she loses immediately her status and becomes „illegal“. In such a situation she can get another contract in another entertainment place or she has to go back to her home country and apply for a new visa.
- In most countries, a migrant woman obtains, automatically, a work permit if she marries a local citizen, which allows her to work anywhere, including in prostitution. But marriage makes a woman very dependent and vulnerable too. The law offers her little protection before her getting a definitive residence permit, what can take from 3 to 5 years, depending on the country. If she wants, for example, to divorce before having obtained her definitive papers, she risks to lose her permit and might be obliged to leave the country.

The working situation of migrant sex workers varies a lot from country to country:

- In some countries women can only work as sex workers if they have a legal status and are registered as such. (Austria)
- In others, prostitutes do not have to register but must have a legal status in order to be able to work (Netherlands)
- In others, again, there are some appointed areas in each town where they can work, no matter if they have a legal status or not. (Germany/*Sperrgebiete*)

## **Consequences**

The actual immigration legislation regarding migrant sex workers has very severe consequences for their living and working conditions:

### **1. The illegal situation**

- dependency on pimps, bars/cabarets/clubs owners, husbands and other people involved in the sex industry, debts bondage.
- exploitation through underpayment, costs of services offered, long working hours, unprotected and unsafe working conditions.
- isolation because of cultural differences, language problems, lack of information on social and legal rights.
- mobility, because they may be in an illegal social situation, because their temporary visa is expired or because they are forced and taken by their pimps to another place.
- insecurity and fear, which might cause physical and psychological problems (alcohol, drugs and medicine addiction, self-medication, depression, etc.).
- frequent exposure to dominating and exploiting clients who force them to accept any offer: low prices, unprotected sex, unsafe working places. This leads to further dependency and protection of pimps and makes them vulnerable to all kinds of other exploiters, including police.

### **2. No access to health and social care services**

- Because of their illegal status they do not have a valid health insurance, and consequently, they have no access to the health care system and health prevention measures.
- Because of their precarious, insecure and marginalised situation, they have no access to information about their rights and possibilities of getting HIV/AIDS/STD prevention and treatment, even if they are insured. Under those conditions, safe sex practices are not a priority any more.
- Because of the repressive policy towards migrant sex workers, these women distrust all kinds of authorities, including health and social care services (including specific services for migrant sex workers), which means that they do not make use of those services.
- Because most of the health and social care services are not prepared to deal with a multicultural population, i.e. they do not make use of cultural mediators, migrant women/sex workers are usually discriminated and misunderstood.

## Health services for non-insured persons

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A non-insured person is a person who has no valid health insurance for the country she/he is living at that moment and therefore, has no access to the general medical care system of that country, unless she/he pays for the usually very expensive health services.

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As a logical result of the restrictive laws towards migrant sex workers, the access to basic health care services is insufficient for non-insured women. And if they do show out themselves as (migrant) sex workers, they know they will have to deal with discrimination and prejudicial attitudes.

Their high mobility and instability influences negatively their well being and causes physical and psychological problems. All these unfavourable circumstances lead to an increasing number of infectious diseases and unplanned pregnancies.

*A lot of these women turn out to work seven days a week, 10 to 15 hours a day. As they have incurred large debts to be able to come to Western Europe, there is a strong competition among them. If a client is willing to pay more for sexual contact without a condom, some prostitutes might accept this. As a STD prevention, they often take antibiotics, which can be bought at the black market or which are sent from their home countries.*

### Conclusions and points of attention

Facing these above mentioned problems and also knowing that perception of well being varies according to the person, her/his background and the situation in which a given person finds herself/himself varies, it is important to create the conditions for:

- Anonymous and free of charge checkups and treatment of infectious diseases.
- General medical care services for non-insured migrants/sex workers and if non-existent, prepare corrective proposals to national and /or municipal health authorities
- The inclusion of cultural mediators in the health and social care system aimed at migrant sex workers, i.e. as streetworkers/fieldworkers and as co-workers inside health clinics and social services.
- The creation and development of specific information materials on health promotion aimed at migrants/sex workers while considering the different cultural, health, sexual, ethnic and lingual backgrounds of these sex workers.
- The inclusion of social workers inside health care services that are charged with the dealing with migrants' problematic (Aliens Laws, residence and work permits, marriage, divorce, asylum, adoption, etc.), and establishing contacts with professionals like lawyers, psychologists, medical specialists, workers in womens' shelters, etc.
- The establishment of co-operation between health and social service functionaries, cultural mediators and peer educators/supporters.
- Service providers should be aware of the fact that while working with members of minority groups, they should be very flexible in dealings with them. They should

understand that not all activities can take place according to established rules and guidelines.

- Spreading health promotion and social support messages alone is not enough: these activities should be supported by concrete offers of assistance by service providers supported by national policy and programme.
- There should be a close cooperation between the various service providers. They should form a network of support services for the target group.
- To establish working contacts with local medical social care personnel which originate from the countries of target group members and actively use their knowledge and expertise.

## Outreach Work

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Not every agency dealing with the phenomenon of prostitution applies outreach work. However, the general experience of projects in Europe shows that regular field work is the basis of interventions targeting migrant sex workers. In order to reach the group and because of the large mobility of sex workers and the resulting high turnover, the different prostitution areas need to be visited in all countries in a regular, intensive and repetitive way. Cultural mediators and social care assistants have to be trained in the techniques of outreach work and to be able to establish a network of projects for exchange of information and co-operation on local, regional, national and transnational levels.

### Aims of outreach work

- to contact women who are usually extremely isolated and marginalised.
- to gain insight into the state of health, working and living conditions of migrant sex workers.
- to make them aware of the social and health services that are available and to improve their access to them.
- to encourage and support them in reporting cases on trafficking in women and any other kind of exploitative or abusive occurrence.
- to inform migrant sex workers, especially the group without work and residence permit, about their rights and legal situation during their stay in the country.
- to support and encourage them to develop self-confidence, self-awareness and self-esteem.
- to inform the politicians and policy makers about the problems migrant sex workers are confronted with, while staying in a given city/country

### Role of an outreach worker

Outreach work is often considered to be a difficult job:

- Going out in certain prostitution areas that are considered to be dangerous,
- The initial hesitation in contacting sex workers and the possible rejection of the sex worker to speak with an outreach worker,
- Social and cultural barriers and personal inhibitions in contacting sex workers.

Points to watch during the work with migrant sex workers:

- The outreach worker should speak the same language as the target group or carry out field work in company of cultural mediator. This person will have to be able to make the first contact and, afterwards, develops a trust relationship that is fundamental in this type of work.
- Cultural mediator cannot be seen merely as an „interpreter“, but rather one should be recognised as a qualified field worker.
- It is very important to be as neutral as possible, open, and not to undertake a discriminatory, arrogant, paternalistic or charity (pity) like attitude,
- To demonstrate that you respect her/him and her/his job and that you do not want to take her/him away from it (salvage her/him) but that you only want to inform her/him about how and why to protect herself/himself better from diseases, infections, etc.



- By doing that, the outreach worker will be giving the sex workers, automatically means of negotiation techniques and self-esteem.
- Because of the insecure social and legal status of the migrant sex workers, it is important to make it very clear from the beginning whom the field work represents (organisation, project, etc.), i.e. not the police or any other type of control institution.
- For efficiency reasons, an outreach worker should preferably work in the fieldwork unit formed by different street-workers and/or cultural mediators of various nationalities, a peer supporter, a medical doctor, a social worker, etc.
- The outreach worker should always be well prepared for a crisis situation or urgency. She/he should be able to show flexibility in dealing with acute problems occurring during her/his work.

### **The practise of outreach work**

The fact that migrant sex workers are an extremely mobile group and that it is a population which constantly changes its profile (nationalities), makes that outreach work is a fundamental means of reaching this specific target group. Nevertheless, there are no fixed rules concerning the number of times one should do outreach work. It depends on various factors:

- the size of the prostitution area one will work in (one street, several streets, several different areas of the town)
- the number of active sex workers (full-time, part-time)
- the number of different cultural groups in the area one is going to work in
- in type of prostitution (street, roads, bars, cabarets, clubs, brothels, window brothels, private apartments, houses, massage parlours, cinemas, escort agencies, saunas, peep shows, sex shows, etc.)

Taking into consideration those differences:

- There are some working places where women are easier accessible to an outreach worker, just because they have more time available and are not under the pressure of pimps, sex business owners or the in-and-out of client.
- On the other hand, there are places where women are not so willing to loose time chatting around with an outreach worker, but are more interested in the clients' movement. In this case, the work of the outreach worker has to be very concise and effective.
- Outreach work should be done once a week or at least every two weeks for each cultural/ethnic group. Preferably, the outreach worker should be accompanied by a cultural mediator or a peer supporter/educator. They should spend an afternoon or an evening visiting the sex workers in the different prostitution areas.
- The high turnover among migrant sex workers requires that all basic information on health and social matters should be given to them right away at the first meeting. Otherwise one risks that by the second visit the woman may already have gone and have been replaced by another one.
- The educational/information materials should be distributed in the languages of the target groups. They should include addresses where the migrant sex workers can obtain immediate, free and anonymous social and/or health assistance, which is supported by qualified interpreters.
- The street worker has to have a good knowledge of the prostitution scene in a given place. Preferably she/he should be (personally) acquainted with the owners of sex clubs, window brothels, bars etc.

- During outreach work, a field reconnaissance concerning the activities of pimps should be carried out. It might happen that the contact with a prostitute may only be possible through the intermediation of her pimp. In such a case it is advisable to establish (friendly) relations with the pimps of the sex workers.
- During outreach work it is recommendable to show and distribute information materials and products used in prostitution. The information materials should have a form of a ready to use packages including information on health, social and juridical matters with the reference addresses
- In the absence of a drop-in centre, the project should have at its disposition a place or a room where meetings and workshops with sex workers who cannot be approached at their working places take place. This premises should be situated in the vicinity of the place where the prostitutes work or live.

Example of combination of field work and creation of meeting place for the target group in Germany and Italy:

#### **Language courses In Hamburg (Germany)**

There is a very positive experience with German courses aimed specially for migrant sex workers inside their working area. The course is given by a cultural mediator who teaches the host country's language with a methodology that represents migrant sex workers' reality. Parallel to their German classes, she performs workshops on health promotion and social matters, distributes condoms and information materials. The course has become a

meeting point for migrant sex workers who seek also counselling and support.

#### **Cooperation between a mobile unit and the drop-in centre**

In Italy the workers of mobile units initiate contacts with prostitutes working on streets. The sex workers are invited and encouraged to visit a drop-in centre. The drop-in centre is then a counselling centre for sex workers and the place where all kinds of activities are carried out such as workshops, training of peer educators, contacts with residents interested in the project itself.

Nevertheless, one point has to be very clear: while **working with migrant sex workers one should keep in mind that it is often difficult for the members of the target group to keep up to appointments, dates or any planning in advance** (workshops, visits to the doctor, etc.). This is due to their unstable living and working conditions, which makes them choose different priorities every other moment, even if it concerns their own health in the first place.

# Trafficking and Exploitation

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In the last two decades, trafficking in women has become more visible within European countries.

The illegal nature of prostitution and the illegal situation of migrant sex workers place those women in an extremely difficult position, which facilitates the activities of criminal organizations and traffickers in women. The lack of access to social and health care makes the women vulnerable to all kinds of violence and/or abuse. Therefore a field worker/cultural mediator should have a knowledge about the international context which determines trafficking mechanisms and about the effects of policies applied in various countries have on the phenomenon of trafficking in order to be able to supply adequate information and to develop help strategies. They should be able to identify and recognise the positive and negative effects of these policies and be able to make recommendations for policy makers concerning the effects of the implementation of these policies on the situation of migrant sex workers. They should be able to identify those elements of the policy which can be applied in the strategies of the protection of rights of the women.

The central elements of this policy are the measures in the special programmes based on:

- Protection of basic rights of women with special attention to gender rights problem i.e., the right of women to have control over their own life and body, protection of migration rights.
- Measures which would first and foremost address violence and abuse, as these constitute the central issue for the women involved.
- Measures which would address the root causes, including the international unjust economic order, restrictive immigration policies and racist and sexist culture
- Measures which would develop social and juridical protection programme
- It is important to find co-operation possibilities with responsible bodies which would be responsible for implementing these measures, such as IOM, embassies, women rights organisations, etc

In order to establish the full picture of different aspects of coercion and exploitation it is important that field workers/cultural mediators are trained to recognise different forms and levels of trafficking:

- *Trafficking* **within** and **across** national borders
- *Trafficking* in all spheres of women's lives and work, including marriage, domestic labour, prostitution and other (in)formal work.
- *Trafficking* in the sense of abusive recruitment and brokerage practices related to migration as well as *forced labour and slavery like practices*, in the sense of abusive living and working conditions
- To identify the indicators of various forms of coercion and gender-specific violence: direct act of violence or threat of violence, physical and mental abuse, deprivation of freedom of movement, fraud and deceit regarding conditions or nature of work, blackmail, abuse of authority or dominant position, confiscation of passports, debt bondage and practices amounting to debt bondage, appropriation of the legal identity and/or physical person of any individual.

In order to guarantee basic legal protection and possibilities for redress to victims of *trafficking*, the measures must include:

- Access to adequate, confidential and affordable health, social and psychological care.
- Access to competent translators in social and legal advice institutions (GOs and NGOs) and health care services.
- Monitoring of deportation practices for women in who find themselves in above mentioned situation.
- Encouragement, adequate financial resources and legal protection for self-help organizations of the women affected, as well as for NGOs who work in the field of support of trafficked women.
- Legal protection for women who are in dependence situation.

# Network

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It is fundamental that field workers/cultural mediators, project co-ordinators and other members of services are able of initiate, build up and develop a network among organizations inside the cities, regions, countries and between the EU member countries and organizations the countries of origin of migrant sex workers.

The goals of networking activities which have to be clear and applicable are:

- To have points of references of different service providers (social support and health care services) for the women while they are on the move within and across the European countries.
- Create and distribute an address directory with the different service providers.
- To exchange information and knowledge about the variations and dynamics of migration and migrant prostitution.

Networking with the organisations in the home countries of the members of the target group can have the following goals:

- To inform the women which and what kind of support they can expect when returning to their home countries.
- To exchange information in advance on the level of knowledge (health and social promotion, care, etc.) which women bring with themselves when coming to the host country.
- To inform the different international organisations in the home countries about the realistic social and political situation of the different European host countries, about the difficult social and living conditions for migrant women/migrant sex workers, about racism and discrimination. This will serve to take away any kind of illusion, so that the women get a correct idea about what they should expect, and be properly prepared to act and react to the different situations they will have to face during migration.

The above mentioned framework of the working methodology and intervention programme are essential aspects of the practical work, project design and strategies which the team members are confronted.

# What is TAMPEP

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TAMPEP (Transnational AIDS/STD Prevention among Migrant Prostitutes in Europe/project) is a European project of research and action which was born with the scope of implementing and spreading new strategies and methodologies for AIDS/STD prevention work with migrant prostitutes in Europe.

The target groups are women and transvestites/transsexuals (man to woman) from Central and Eastern Europe, Southeast Asia, Africa and Latin America. From 1993 until now, some 70.000 prostitutes of 25 nationalities have been approached and contacted by TAMPEP workers.

The focus of TAMPEP on prostitutes from outside the EU, has given the Project varied means of developing materials and methods of intervention which might serve as a model for related projects in other countries.

TAMPEP started in 1993. The first and second phases were carried in three years thereafter. From 1996 onwards, the project implements a model of intervention for use throughout Europe. The present network of TAMPEP is formed by 14 EU and 7 Central and Eastern European countries.

In the countries where the project is active, international working groups are composed of personnel from multiple disciplines which include amongst others the two TAMPEP-trained professional figures: the cultural mediator and the peer educator.

The work is carried out simultaneously in all participating countries as one overall project, which includes:

- production of materials and the unfolding of didactic and educational activities in commonality,
- the exchange of materials and results. This allows us to work with great efficiency in implementation of the TAMPEP method on a European level. The common gathering of statistics allows us to become a European observatory of the variations and dynamics of the phenomenon of prostitution and migration.
- we are a point of reference for prostitutes on the move across nations. We are capable of following these movements in several European countries, which allows us to use these channels of mobility of persons and groups as an internal means of information and application of the TAMPEP method for transnational peer education.

## **Main principles of TAMPEP's activity: research and action**

The analysis of the statistical data and the evaluation of the findings and results are gathered from within a methodology of continuous evaluation. This allows us to redefine and to perfect programmes of intervention in the field in order to render them evermore adequate to:

- the reality of prostitution, which is in continual change, and
- to make precise analyses in the movements of the target groups

A continuous cycle of data collection, evaluation and implementation of the work dynamic for the practice of prevention is a method which is being implemented in various European countries. A fundamental characteristic of this methodology is the fact that it continually places risk factors into relationship with the possibility of promoting health and social well being of the target group.

This basic trait means that we tailor a programme of intervention so that it fits several cultural groups which have common elements of a damage as:

- coercive work conditions which affect the majority of the groups.
- the degree of control on the groups on the part of criminal organisations, or
- the influence of repressive practices of control on the part of certain organs of the police.

The continuous singling out of risk factors along with the effort to inform and to educate the target groups permits us:

- to increase the levels of awareness and consciousness of risk regarding their health and well being of the target group, and
- to increase the resistance of the target groups towards accepting risk situations which are being singled out as barriers to the actual practices of prevention and health promotion and personal safety.

European Commission  
Directorate-General XXII  
Education, Training and Youth

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**LEONARDO DA VINCI PROGRAMME**

**Cultural Mediators  
in the Area of Prostitution/  
Transnational Training**

**MANUAL**

December 1998  
April 2001

**THE NETHERLANDS**



This chapter contains the description of activities concerning the training programme for cultural mediators in the area of prostitution in the Netherlands. In order to clarify the framework within which the training programme is integrated, first we present the context of migrant prostitution in the Netherlands, then the activities and the goals of TAMPEP network, which is the executing organisation of the training, afterwards the general activities of TAMPEP in the Netherlands and finally the training programme for this pilot project. In this manual we presented widely the methodology of TAMPEP activities in the Netherlands because the training programme consisted of two parts: the training itself and the period of probation during which the trained persons are being accompanied in the field work and participate in the regular activities of our organisation. If this model of short vocational training is based on organisation employing multi-disciplinary methodology it is possible to continue this vocational forming within the structures and activities of an outreach project. This gives an ideal opportunity for integration of the trainee in the staff of the project.

### **Prostitution in the Netherlands**

According to rough estimations, there are about 25, 000 persons working in prostitution in The Netherlands. 90% of them are women, 5% are men and another 5% are transgender. 45% of them work in sex clubs, 20% in the “windows”, 15% in escort service, 5% on street, 5% at home and 10% in other forms of prostitution such as hotels, bars and discotheques. The authorities estimate that two thirds of them are migrants, however TAMPEP estimates that in the four towns where TAMPEP conducts its outreach activities among prostitutes working in the windows, the number of migrant sex workers is more likely 90% to 95 % of all prostitutes. In most cases these migrants are “illegal” – this is the term the official authorities apply to persons who do not have a residence permit or any other document that would authorise them to work in the Netherlands. For the sake of clarity this term will be used in this report when talking about migrants without a residence permit.

In the Netherlands there are various sorts of migrants. Their position within the society depends on whether they have a legal status or not.

Most of the migrant prostitutes work in “windows” and this constitutes a lower category of prostitution. This “window prostitution” is to be found almost exclusively in the large and medium-sized cities of the Netherlands. The women working in window prostitution sit waiting for their clients in a room with a big (shop) window which looks at the street. Usually the room just contains a bed and a sink but it sometimes also functions as a place to live. The sex workers pay a daily (or sometimes weekly) rent for the window in the amount of about 150 guilders per day, although this varies according to the city and the window’s location within it. In principle the women are independent of their landlords: they pay their rent and they keep everything that they earn above this. They are also free to choose their clients and working hours.

Migrant women also work in sex clubs, usually situated in a rural area. The conditions of work in the windows and in clubs are quite different: this has to do with the fact that the club owner actually is her employer. He/she determines her working environment,

obliges her to socialise with and entertain her clients, shares her earnings and stipulates all other requirements.

The increasing numbers of (migrant) prostitutes who are competing by offering lower prices and a wider range of “services” and introduction and implementation of severe policies against the presence of migrant sex workers in the Netherlands, have created the situation of precarity and deterioration of working environment of prostitutes. These women live in constant fear of being deported and this leads them to try and earn “quick” money by lowering their fees and increasing their turnover. This way they hope to earn as much as possible before being caught and sent away. The fear of prosecution and the feeling of insecurity and tension are such that prostitutes lose control over their working and living conditions.

The flow of migrants willing to work in prostitution in the Netherlands started in the seventies when women from Southeast Asia (Thailand, Philippines) started arriving in Dutch towns. They were followed in the eighties by women from Latin America and the Caribbean (Colombia, Dominican Republic) and Africa (Ghana, Nigeria).

The fall of communism in the late eighties and early nineties triggered an influx of women from Central and Eastern Europe. Composition of this group of sex workers has been changing over the past six years. In the early nineties, the biggest group of Eastern European prostitutes were women from Poland and the Czech Republic. There were also small groups of women from the former Soviet Union, Yugoslavia and Slovakia. Later, women from former Soviet Union (Russia, Ukraine and to a lesser extend from Lithuania and Belarus) started arriving in big numbers. Now, as a result of a new law on prostitution, this last group has been diminishing and is being replaced by the women from so-called associate countries: Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania and recently from Lithuania.

### **General activities of TAMPEP in the Netherlands**

According to the general working methodology of TAMPEP, TAMPEP-Netherlands carries out the following activities:

By carrying out intensive field work within the diverse circuits of prostitution, in order to gain complete information and to enable in-depth prevention activity, TAMPEP:

- provides migrant sex workers with culturally appropriate health education and social support. It has developed specific information materials in 10 different languages.
- seeks to increase empowerment and self-esteem among migrant sex workers.
- educates social and medical establishments to better respond to the health and social needs of migrant sex workers.
- is a reference point for migrant sex workers and refers its clients to the local service providers.
- investigates the social, legal and working conditions of migrant sex workers and prepares recommendations and advice for policy makers.

The project works with two TAMPEP-trained professionals:

- the cultural mediator: a person from the migrant community who acts as a bridge between members of that community and the institutions
- and the peer educator: a sex worker who receives training to pass on information and increase empowerment among her peers.

Further activities of TAMPEP are:

- Training courses for female peer educators of several nationalities and, equally, as a final objective, the production of educational and didactic materials.
- Implementation of the peer education method within field activity and integrating peer educators into project's work teams.
- Utilisation of cultural mediation as a fundamental part of the methodology of the intervention.
- Training and formation of cultural mediators and street workers operating within the social and health services sector.
- Offering a technical support and training to local authorities who are starting a prevention project aimed at migrant prostitutes.
- Bridging between the target groups and the providers of services with the help of linguistic/cultural mediation, in order to facilitate the access to the services of marginalised groups which are either unaware of the existence of these services or do not have any access to them.
- Construction of a socio-health care services network, formation of a European services address directory, and the establishment of formal relationships and contacts with these networked services through preferential lines of communication.
- Production of training modules for cultural mediators and street workers.

## **Training programme within the framework of the Leonardo da Vinci programme**

### **Choice of the target group**

In order to carry out the training and to create the possibilities for the trainees in the project activities we have selected trainees from three groups of audience:

- volunteers who partially participated in the execution of TAMPEP project
- key figures in the prostitution environment: police functionaries, service providers for health and social support for migrant sex workers, owners of sex business
- delegations from organisations belonging to international networks which are dealing with prostitution and trafficking in women

For these three groups we employed different training modules and methodology.

- Training module for volunteers was structured as a series of meetings as described below.
- Training for the key figures consisted of one day meeting programme based on transfer of knowledge in the form of discussions, expert reports, explanation of the role of cultural mediation, agreement concerning the line of conduct of different bodies, exercise in co-operation procedures with respect of different interests
- Half day training for foreign participants who are representatives of different organisations from the mother countries of the members of the target group.

### **Contents of the training for cultural mediators**

#### Methodology

The training consisted of 9 theme sessions designed for a group of 15 participants. It was carried out once a month and consisted of one day training. The participants were migrants representing the nationalities of prostitutes working in the Netherlands. They

were candidates for the team of cultural mediators. It was important that the group wouldn't be too numerous, otherwise the trainees wouldn't be able to participate actively and continuously in the lessons and the workshop. It was also very important that the training was held in a confidential and relaxed atmosphere.

The training consisted of a number of exercises which made use of the technique of micro-teaching. This form of teaching requires an active, constant and full involvement of the participants. It allows the transfer of knowledge in a dynamic and active way. Also, the participants are encouraged to ask questions and share their experiences with their fellow participants. After each exercise the participants are asked for their feedback and conclusions are drawn either by the facilitator/tutor or by one of the participants.

The training was divided in two parts: theoretical part: consisting of the lesson in a form of a lecture given by a guest teacher (specialist in a given subject) and the practical part: consisting of a workshop/exercise/role play/discussion.

At the beginning of every training, the programme of the day was presented, didactical material was distributed and the opening session was effectuated which included:

- presentation of the trainers/teachers and special guests
- welcome words by the special guests
- presentation of the training and its objectives
- agreeing on ground rules
- presentation of participants and their expectations

Every training meeting was closed with an evaluation session. Every participant was requested to express orally her/his opinion about the training and to state whether it has fulfilled her/his expectations. The participants were also requested to fill up a special questionnaire.

On the basis of the data enclosed in the above-mentioned questionnaire, the final evaluation was carried out during the last session. At the same time the identification of new topics for the future training and for monitoring took place.

In the second phase of the training programme, the participants had a possibility of a probation period which consisted of working in the field, accompanied and supervised by the team members/cultural mediators who are the staff members of TAMPEP, visit the (public) health and social services and participate in TAMPEP team meetings. The supervision of the trainees was carried out at the individual level (during the carrying out of the outreach work) and at the group level (during the monthly team meetings). The goal of the supervision was to transfer the knowledge concerning the carrying out of practical work of cultural mediation, to integrate the trainees in the team and to test their attitude and the capacity for this role.

## **Infectious diseases in prostitution**

### **Lessons:**

- Epidemiological data in the Netherlands presented by a worker of the STD clinic. Presentation of general data on STDs in prostitution.
- The second part of the lesson described the most common symptoms of STDs and treatment procedures with the stress on the differences between viral and bacterial infections. Risk behaviour in prostitution, perception of risk by sex workers. Perception of individual risk versus global risk.
- The third part was dedicated to AIDS/HIV, ways of infection, testing procedures, possibilities of treatment, and conditions for receiving treatment. The lesson was given by the epidemiologist from the academic medical centre.
- Counselling on HIV testing, pre- and post- counselling, HIV perception and culture, prejudices and obstacles, experience in counselling with multi cultural population.
- Discussion and questions.

**Workshop:** (anonymous) questionnaire on HIV/AIDS and STD, anatomy and reproductive health.

Participants are requested to answer questionnaires on HIV/STD and safe sex. During the second part of the session, the answers are reviewed by and commented by the special guest who is a medical doctor. Revision of the answers, commented by the invited specialists. Myths and misunderstandings regarding STDs and HIV were clarified and explained, with the help of photos and slides the explanation about the diseases and the female reproductive system was given as the completion of the points of the questionnaire.

**Exercise in counselling: role play.** The participants were requested to play in turns the role of the counsellor and the patient. On basis of the situation description they were supposed to imagine possible interaction between counsellor and the patient. After this exercise the trainees described their feeling they experienced during the playing of the role of counsellor and the patient. Comparing of experiences, stating difficulties and common feelings, summarizing procedure of counselling and defining the role and tasks of the counsellor. The result of this exercise was that through the role-play the trainees expressed their own fears, prejudices, expectations and experienced the feeling how sensitive and important is the moment of counselling.

**Evaluation of the day:** the objective of the questionnaire was to check the general knowledge concerning STDs and HIV; one of the results was group perception that the participants had different levels of knowledge as a starting point. The participants appreciated the input of the experts which was effectuated in a very understandable and accessible form and which was adapted to these different levels of knowledge. The trainees reported that their level of knowledge became more even and formed good base for further deepening of this specific knowledge.

## Session 2

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### **Prostitution policies and contradictions of interests**

#### **Lessons:**

- Review of administration rules applied in prostitution, history of prostitution systems and present forms of application.
- Morality and public order: the constant presence of these issues in legislation concerning prostitution.
- Consequences of new legislation in the Netherlands for sex workers and in particular for illegal migrant sex workers.

**Discussion and the exercise** in stipulating good and bad sides of the new legislation. As a conclusion of these negative and positive aspects, the panel of teachers react to the statements concerning prostitution and supplies background information about the legislative context.

#### **Workshop, role play:** public debate

A public hearing to discuss female prostitution in the neighbourhood. This role play is an exercise in order to understand how prostitution in this society is an object of all sorts of stigma, prejudice and it illustrates how working conditions of prostitutes are determined by various social interests and groups.

Aims: to allow participants to practice communication skills in presenting and defending a creation of a prostitution zone in a given part of the town and of an outreach project and to teach how you can mediate between parties of different interests.

Participants' roles include: chairman, 3 persons from the neighbourhood, 2 workers of an outreach project, 2 persons from the municipality, 2 from the police.

10 persons play key roles. The rest is public (divided among different parties) and may contribute to the discussion. The role players get 15 minutes to read and discuss their roles with their own pressure groups. 30 minutes for the situation play, 30 minutes plenary discussion.

**Evaluation of the day:** the trainees experienced the topics of this training session as very complex and not easy to deal with. However there came a common perception that the outreach work had to take into account all social and juridical aspects of prostitution and to understand that prostitution is an element of the society even if it is marginalized and repressed.

## Session 3

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### Health promotion for sex workers and specialised services

#### Lessons:

- Different approaches of health promotion for sex workers.
- Strategies of prevention. Organisation of the care, policies employed by the various sectors of social and medical services.
- Offer of the services, diagnostic and curative possibilities in the Netherlands.
- Practices of the services and review of specialist services for sex workers.
- Relation between sexual health and prostitution practices.

A broad space is given to the discussion, points of analysis: general health situation of sex workers versus STD prevention, qualities of services and their accessibility to prostitutes, illegal status as a obstacle to health protection, importance of cooperation between outreach workers and public services, relation between primary prevention carried out by outreach workers and medical public system.

**Exercise:** role-play: accompanying a sex worker to the medical centre. Three persons: outreach worker, sex worker and an employee of STD clinic (played by one of the guest medical doctors who gives the lesson). Situation: sex worker describes different symptoms of disease to the outreach worker and expresses the need to consult a specialist. Outreach worker clarifies with the women the symptoms and the nature of her complaints and examines the possibilities which are accessible for the prostitute. She arranges the appointment and prepares the visit with the doctor. She translates and mediates between the sex worker and the doctor. In spite of expectations of the sex worker the doctor states that there is no need for medical treatment. The sex worker expresses her deep disappointment about the outcome of the visit. The outreach workers mediates between the doctor and sex worker while explaining to the doctor the needs of the prostitute and at the same time explaining to the sex worker what are the reasons for decision of the doctor (no antibiotics without testing). Compromise is: the sex worker undergoes testing, waits for the results and makes a new appointment with the doctor. This way various situations can be played: need for abortion, a need for consultation by a specialist, etc.

**Workshop:** mandatory testing versus voluntary testing

Pluses and minuses of mandatory testing of sex workers in relation with voluntary testing. List of arguments and points of discussion. Participants defend their points of view: for and against mandatory testing.

**Evaluation of the day:** the participants found this session very informative and stated that it broaden up their knowledge about the possibilities of health promotion in prostitution. They understood that health promotion does not include only the promotion of condom and spreading of information materials. The participants expressed a wish to visit one or more clinics in order to receive a practical probation within various health institutions. The tutor responded positively towards their request and arranged their visits with employees of different medical services who were present at this training session.

## Session 4

### Sexual behaviour

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#### Lessons:

- Perception of sexual codes within various cultures.
- Changes in sexual behaviour in relation to knowledge concerning sexuality.
- Perception of risks of sexual behaviour in different circumstances.
- Individual experience in sexuality and professional attitude of a prostitute versus private sexual behaviour.
- Various grades of perception of risks, hierarchy of risks, relation between knowledge and actual behaviour, global context of risk in prostitution versus private risk.
- Perception of the risk from the side of the client of a prostitute, attitude of the clients of prostitutes towards the use of condoms: fact, myths and expectations in a commercial sexual contact.

These lessons give the backgrounds of perception of sexuality in various cultural contexts. These contexts determine the sexual behaviour of the migrant sex workers.

Discussion about above mentioned topics led by the moderator.

#### Workshop: hierarchy of sexual behaviour

The participants are requested to situate a given sexual behaviour in a scale ranging between “safe sexual behaviour” and “risky sexual behaviour”. Every participant is provided with a piece of paper stating one type of sexual behaviour.

The participants have realised that there are various sexual behaviours, varying from completely safe towards partially safe until unsafe behaviour. The result of this workshop is the acquiring of perception that sexual act does not always mean a sexual intercourse with penetration, and to prepare outreach workers for promotion of safe sex behaviour.

#### Workshop: sexual behaviour

The participants are requested to fill out an anonymous questionnaire about their private sexual behaviour. During the second part of the session, the trainer reviews the answers and comments the results.

This exercise helped the participants to realise that there is no “one normal sexual behaviour” and that commercial sex does not explicitly varies from the “normal human sexual behaviour”. The only difference is that in prostitution there is always a moment of negotiation and payment for services.

Evaluation of the day: the participants stated that this session helped them to have a different approach towards sex work and to understand the complexity of sexuality and sex work. The exercise was evaluated as difficult because it touched private sphere where participants had to reflect on their sexual behaviour. But on the other side they felt it contributed to their understanding of work in prostitution, helped them to clarify their role as outreach workers and helped them to talk about sex.



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## Project design

### Lessons:

- Organisation of an outreach project for sex workers. It includes the following items: methodology, assessment, mapping, evaluation methods, registration of data, monitoring of activities and of results, evaluation of working progress.

This theoretical lesson regarding acquiring basic knowledge concerning the set up of a project and techniques of mapping of the situation, describes all steps of organisation of an outreach activity and underlines the necessity to guarantee the proper execution of the project. The aim is to give the guidelines regarding the setting up of the project and monitoring of the results and evaluation of the effects.

**Workshop:** designing of an outreach project within a given situation. Stipulating the various phases of the project, discussion of the different models of approach and projects. Participants divided in two groups receive a sketch of the situation and key elements that have to be employed if one wants to set up an outreach project for migrant sex workers. During this exercise the trainees use the knowledge acquired during the theoretical lesson and are helped by written material describing the methodological steps of setting up and organisation of a project activity. Every group has a tutor who guides the process of the designing of the project, monitors the proceedings and facilitates the group's discussion. After two hours the both groups present their project design and the methodological choice is discussed with the teacher and both tutors. The result of this exercise is the completion of one correct model of project planning which comprises all elements of the methodology and the timetable and division of tasks and functions.

**Evaluation of the day:** the participants underlined the importance of the exercise where theoretical lesson was transformed into practice. It was a practical way of testing their knowledge regarding this specific topic. Also the trainees who have experience in managing stated that this session contributed to their capacity building in organisation of a project for sex workers. They also expressed their need to receive more vocational training in some of the parts of the methodology, such as mapping and evaluation. This knowledge will be supplied during the practical probation period.

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## Principles of outreach work

### Lessons:

- Contents of fieldwork.
- Tasks of field workers and cultural mediators transfer of knowledge concerning work in prostitution.
- All aspects of outreach work, roles and tasks of cultural mediators are being treated:
  - theoretical definition of cultural mediation and experience of using of cultural mediation in various sectors;
  - the relation of cultural mediation and outreach activities in prostitution; possibilities of integration of health promotion and social support activities;
  - presentation of different ethnic and cultural groups in prostitution and their characteristics and techniques of approach of these groups;
  - risk of losing a professional position due to a too deep involvement in the situation of the client and too strong identification with the role of savior: feeling of empathy and the need to keep distance

**Workshop:** condom use, safe sex tricks in prostitution, techniques of approach and of trust winning. The participants are instructed about the proper way of putting on a condom and they exercise among each other with the help of dildos. Products used in prostitution (different sorts of condoms, lubricants, sponges, latex sheets, etc) are demonstrated and their qualities and application discussed.

**Workshop, role-play:** Situation on the street during fieldwork

Participants are requested to play the role of an outreach worker/cultural mediator and of sex worker and a pimp. Under the supervision of the tutor, the trainees express their feelings they had while playing the above-mentioned persons.

**Workshop:** attitude exercise

The participants are requested to take a standpoint concerning statements on controversial themes, such as: “Prostitution is morally not acceptable”, or: “All prostitutes are victims” and to defend her/his point of view.

**Workshop:** case study. The teacher sketches a situation of two migrant sex workers of two different nationalities in two different working situations. He presents possible strategies and the relation between the needs of these women and the possible solutions. On the base of this guidelines two separate groups work out intervention techniques and describe the process of carrying out of activities for these persons. Under the supervision of the teacher both strategies are reviewed and corrections are applied.

**Evaluation of the day:** due to different professional backgrounds of the participants (some of the participants were social workers, some had experience in outreach work for prostitutes, some in working with migrants), their basic knowledge and experience was different therefore the input of the participants varied according to their vocational experience and backgrounds. The participants found that this variety worked inspiring, led to deepening of their knowledge and helped them to see different aspects of (migrant) prostitution. Their knowledge concerning practical work in the field will be trained during the probation period while accompanying outreach workers in the field.

## Session 7

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### Trafficking mechanisms and strategies of support

#### Lessons:

- The reality of (migrant) prostitution and of migration,
- European data concerning (migrant) prostitution,
- Offer of support and services for the victims, different approach policies towards the victims,
- Communication skills in the contact with affected women,
- Prevention and support organisations in mother countries
- Typology of the situation of different groups in the mother countries, factors which have influence on decision about migration, bondage elements,
- Perception of risks bound to migration and perspectives offered by the trafficker,
- Gender context and exploitation,

This session gives the complete picture of the reality of migration and prostitution in different settings and aspects. The data concerning migrant prostitution in Europe gives the framework of the mobility patterns and the general context of prostitution

#### Workshop: case study: "Silvia: a prostitute working for a pimp"

The participants divided in four groups have to find a solution to the problems presented in the case study; afterwards the trainer adds her/his comment.

#### Workshop: identification of moments of dependency in the life of participants

Discussion concerning the circumstances and mechanisms of dependency from the perspective of the personal life of the trainees, reflection on the reasons of the dependency, resources for solution: self help, help from outside, etc.

Evaluation of the day: the participants reported that this session has given them more knowledge of different aspects of trafficking and about the backgrounds and perception of the women concerning their life and future perspectives. They admitted that this will influence their attitude towards migrant sex workers because it helped them to place the these persons in an individual context. They expressed the need for acquiring more knowledge about the practices of support services in the Netherlands and in the home countries. Therefore they were supplied by the organisers with the updated documents, reports and case studies of these services. During the probation they will be able to visit some of these services.

## **Study of dependency and presentation of strategies of empowerment**

### **Lessons:**

- Typology of the situation of dependency, dependency mechanisms, various levels of dependency, mechanisms of violence.
- Description of various situations of migrant women in the Netherlands and of escape mechanisms, definition of empowerment, process of acquirement of autonomy.
- Relation between health promotion activities and empowerment.
- Techniques of starting of a process of empowerment and self-determination.
- The need of close supervision and additional expertise in the case management.

This part forms a completion of the former session.

### **Workshop:** pimping/trafficking

The participants are presented sketches of 2 categories of pimps (owner of a sex business and a trafficker) and are asked to complete the image of a third kind of pimp- a classical pimp and describe the relation between a prostitute and her pimp.

In the group discussion, the stereotypes of pimps are described. The various relationships with different types of persons who have influence on women or direct exploiters are defined. The different levels of influences and pressures coming from different actors in the prostitution scene are discussed and the cases when the intervention is necessary in order to protect the woman are stipulated. Contacts of the outreach worker with brothel owners, code of conduct and attitude, situation of contacts with pimps present in the field, code of conduct and attitude of the outreach worker.

### **Case study:** Dorota, Polish prostitute trafficked to the Netherlands.

On the base of this case study, the participants have to design the strategy of support to the trafficked woman, describe the role of outreach worker, state which services have to be involved, describe the phases of the process of empowerment, and step by step policy.

### **Discussion** about the presented solutions.

**Evaluation of the day:** the participants positively evaluated learning process, however many questions stayed open particularly concerning the position of the outreach worker in the (criminal) field. Some of them expressed their fear of entering the field where pimps are operating, of making mistakes in the perception of real danger and in assessment of real needs of the women.

## Session 9

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### **Review of the interdisciplinary methods of outreach work**

**Lessons:** communication within the multi-cultural team, relation between health promotion and social support activities, changes of behaviour in the perspective of self help, importance of tailor made strategies, techniques of production of multilingual information materials, techniques of networking

**Workshop, exercise:** the participants play the role of the team members of the street unit. Tutor plays the role of the co-ordinator and presents the draft of the tasks of the street unit. The trainees prepare detailed working plan, describe concrete tasks of the members and present the ideas how the activities will complement each other. Another goal of the exercise is to identify the problems concerning communication amongst members of various nationalities working as cultural mediators and to identify the barriers of communication among the members of the team.

**Discussion** and the identification of key problems.

**Evaluation of the day:** the participants expressed their wish to continue with this session of training and to deepen their skills in the relationship within and multicultural and multidisciplinary team and in organisation of these activities. Probation period will offer the continuation of the training.

**Presentation and discussion concerning probation period:** programme, rules, timetable of the probation period.

**General evaluation** with the participants with the help of a questionnaire

The tools of evaluation were two questionnaires, one administrated at the start of the course and one after the completion of the training and the daily evaluation. From these evaluation questionnaires we can conclude that the degree of learning in relation to key arguments of the training was homogenous and significantly higher. The reaction of the participants was enthusiastic and a need of continuation of the training in the form of probation has emerged. Due to the time limitation, this form of base training could not cover all aspects of this vocational training because the some of the contents of the theoretical part of the training were much broader than the framework of the course and could not be treated in a separate session. Therefore this model of a short training should be complemented by a more structural and monothematic training sessions. The probation period should therefore be accompanied by extra theoretical support and supplement.

## **Other forms of short training**

Hereunder follow two examples of vocational training carried out within this programme aimed at sensibilisation of other targets than the group of trainees who took part in the above-mentioned training. This sort of trainings and/or workshop were given to more audiences, such as medical staff of public health services, social assistants and the staff of other NGOs. These models of short training can give an idea about the possibilities of transfer of information and about dissemination of results in another forms than structured vocational training. It is especially important for some of NGOs, such as services for sex workers or other vulnerable populations to take account of the necessity of providing concise and tailor made trainings in order to involve and activate the key figures in prostitution environment.

Contents of the training for key figures in prostitution environment

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### **Training for members of vice police team for the region of Noord Holland**

This specially created team of police is charged with investigation concerning trafficking in women and criminality lied to prostitution. They also carry out regular controls in the prostitution zone.

We chose this audience because this police unit visits often the prostitution scene and because it is essential to transfer the knowledge concerning the backgrounds of the migrant sex workers, perception of the phenomenon of dependency and of migration patterns and internationalisation of prostitution. Another goal was to sensitise the police members towards the presence and the role of the cultural mediators in the field of prostitution and to identify the common and different interests in the field of protection of safety of migrant sex workers. One of the tasks of cultural mediators is to accompany the migrant sex workers who decided to press the charges against the trafficker and negotiate with the police concerning the form and the protection of the testimony. Therefore it is important to clarify the work and position of cultural mediators towards police. This training was a good opportunity for achieving of this goal.

This one day training was carried out at the training centre of Noord Holland Police. There were 30 participants of various ranks.

It included the following lessons:

- presentation of European data and backgrounds of migrant prostitution
- description of situation of different nationalities in prostitution
- organisation and mechanisms of trafficking, bondage of dependency, transnational character of trafficking,
- situation of trafficked women who consider the denunciation of the trafficker
- description of the role and the tasks of cultural mediators

**Workshop**: case study of the trafficked woman. The participants received the description of the case and had to design the strategy for help that would be acceptable for the woman involved. They had to state which agencies would be involved and to coordinate the tasks of various bodies.

The same training was given to a selected group of 10 service providers active in the social and medical care for prostitutes.

This training module was repeated with the group of 10 sex business owners. The goals of these training are the same as described above.

## **Contents of the training for foreign delegations**

In the period of the project we received four delegations and gave a half day training in Amsterdam

### **Participants**

- Delegation of 20 participants from different European countries representing NGOs active in the field of combat against trafficking in women.
- Delegation of 15 participants from Eastern Europe representing various women organisations
- Delegation of 20 participants from former Soviet Union and Central Asia active in the field of health promotion for women
- Delegation of 18 participants from Central Europe and Balkan countries active in the field of protection human rights of women and shelters for victims of violence
- Delegation of 20 civil servants of Ukrainian ministerial organisations who visited the Netherlands for forming in the field of human rights, prostitution and anti-trafficking policies

The training was held in form of lectures. The goal was to inform the participants about different aspects of trafficking, methodology of interventions, need of transnational co-operation. Another goal was to prepare the basis for the future co-operation and for the evaluation of the need of training in various countries. The training was also a good opportunity to inform the participants about the aims of the training programme for cultural mediators within Leonardo da Vinci programme.

## The Team in the Netherlands

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- Licia Brussa TAMPEP General co-ordination and International Networking
- Hanka Mongard Cultural mediator for Central and Eastern European women and International Networking
- Miek de Jong Cultural mediator for Latin American women and Health issues
- Ellen Verbruggen Finances
- Hansje Verbeek Office Assistance
- Trainers, experts, volunteers





European Commission  
Directorate-General XXII  
Education, Training and Youth

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**LEONARDO DA VINCI PROGRAMME**

**Cultural Mediators  
in the Area of Prostitution/  
Transnational Training**

**MANUAL**

December 1998  
April 2001

**ITALY**

## Setting up the course: its methodology, its objectives, and its trainees

### Methodology

Dependent upon training variables, during the course, we adopted various methods of training that may be categorised in more than one way but the methods that we adopted are able to be grouped into three conventional groups of training categories: *traditional*, *active*, and *reflective thought*.

The lecture, inclusive of critical analysis and topical discussion, constituted *traditional* training methodology. For various reasons, however, we decided to rely on it on a very limited and selective basis. First of all, given that the lecture represents the training method that, very often, is the only one that the trainees face. Secondly, given the weight and importance assigned to lecture topics, we decided to rely on lectures only when they were deemed to be the best training option. Therefore, we used them for such topics as the Italian Legislation on Prostitution, Counselling, Communication, Target Mobility, and Constituting and Running Self Help or Mutual-Help Groups.

Training exercises, study and discussion of cases with egocentric focus, which involved critical examination of the personal/professional experience of singular participant trainees; role-playing simulations, and analogous practical exercises constituted *active* training methodology that we adopted. The critical examination of cases involving self-experience involved those instances wherein a trainee had personally asked for or had received help.

In this course, we deemed it essential to abundantly draw from classroom reports of the trainees, with the most notable example being those that examined the self-experience that came from the participants' personal/professional lives. We included these reports as course content, which were presented for the edification of the other trainees, to provoke reflective thought that would compare another person's reported individual behaviour and actions with someone's own proven experience in analogous, or as yet inexperienced, professional situations.

As a reflective-thought stimulus, we relied on personal drawings that depicted each participant in a past aid-dispensing vignette. This training concept is known as the "Drawings of Life's Stories", or in Italian, (*Disegni sulle Storie di Vita*). Or we relied on practical exercises dealing with feedback and interpersonal relationships. In an attempt to bring the trainees to partial self-discovery or to provoke reflective thought "here and now" about their way of handling interpersonal relationships, all reflective thought training concepts were deliberately devised to stimulate introspection.

With the work group as the cornerstone of training, all three conventional training methodologies were employed. However, the *active* training methodology was most widely employed because:

- It reveals the range of experience of all the trainees.
- It allows each trainee to learn about the experiences of the other trainees, in order to promote internalisation of whatever useful things that are learned, which can be incorporated into a trainee's approach to his or her work.
- It creates a vital link between training and the workplace, given that what is learned in the seminars might be utilised in the workplace, and vice versa.

In addition to their actual professions and interests, the trainees were chosen because they possessed wide-ranging work experience, which permitted inserting a greater core of real experience within the work groups.

A final consideration regarded the formation of the mixed group, which comprised both, female and male social operators and linguistic/cultural mediatrixes. The training methods that we applied were offshoots of two pre-set objectives.

The first objective was to stimulate interaction among persons of diverse cultures and professions. Therefore, we carried out many training exercises, with the trainees intentionally divided into groups or subgroups, not only to re-create situations similar to real ones, but also *not* to create unintended subgroup division that, especially at the start, could have proven to be traumatising. Besides these aims, doing things together, along with the schemes that we devised to stimulate socialisation, all had the scope of encouraging the participants' common acquaintance with the study topics. This strategy permitted our ultimately introducing the trainees to diversely structured training exercises.

The second objective was to learn the perceptions/thoughts of specific subgroups, with particular emphasis on one's own professional role, as well as the role of other players, and how the target and the client are perceived from these two these professional roles. So, at times, training was carried out in professionally homogeneous subgroups. At other times, a trainee with an individual assignment was required to indicate the relevant professional role and to anonymously submit his/her thoughts in writing. Of course, to allow interplay and to stimulate vibrant discussion among the members of the groups, mixed-group representation was always the rule for plenary sessions.

### Objectives

The principal learning objective was acquisition of knowledge and capability concerning counselling and to efficaciously carrying out assigned tasks and duties within a constituted work group. In order to achieve benefit from these dual learning objectives, attuning one's acquired knowledge and improved capability with one's personality and personal style of work performance was a corollary learning objective. Achieving this harmonisation would then fully enable each subject to serve most and to do best in all his or her future work endeavours. Acquiring knowledge and capability is a complex objective, which constitute cognitive, emotional, and affective factors, that interface with the tripod of training methods that we have already mentioned. For those who work in the social sector, emotions and affects are not only "internal states of being" but they also are important working tools that directly relate to efficaciously dispensing aid to others and to operating efficiently within a duly constituted work group.

Although work methodology and techniques are at times routinely put into practice, this course proposes increasing knowledge that focuses on an individual's style of job

performance, while underscoring that increased and an overall improved capability concerning work methodology, work techniques, and individual styles of job performance are all deemed important.

The following tables itemise the topics to the work group and its aid-dispensing functions. Some of these topics were taught in depth, whereas, others were not, in consonance with available time and established training priorities.

### The Work Group

- Individual and Group Needs
- Work Group Members
- Goals
- Methods
- Roles
- Leadership
- Communication
- Climate
- **Cultural Values, Rules and Use of Language**

### Counselling

- The Counselling Environment (How it differs from psychotherapy, routine interventions)
- The Counsellor's Style of Communication
- The Counsellor's Function
- Requisite Counselling Abilities and Skills
- Communication and Relationships
- Affects and Emotions
- The Right Balance: Involvement or Detachment
- Building Friendship - The Theme of Trust
- Paying Attention: Observing and Listening
- Questions and Answers
- Initiatives and Actions
- The Experience of Debilitating Illnesses

Another training objective was to introduce the trainees to the concept of the reflective pause. During this course, we took the time out for a reflective pause, which enabled the trainees to discuss their personal experience to compare it with that of other trainees, which enabled discovering new or enlightening aspects that could be used to solve work-related problems. In order to derive maximum benefit from this learning objective, the reflective pause was also indicated as an easily learned and practised work technique that can be conscientiously introduced into and applied in everyday job performance and life styles.

During this course, yet another training objective was our attempt to paint a portrait, which would depict the requisite propaedeutics, competencies and capabilities, that would constitute the "identikit" for the linguistic/cultural mediatrix and the social assistant (whether man or woman). We drew from the experience of persons who actually do these jobs. However, we wish to point out that the linguistic/cultural mediatrix remains a rather murky professional figure, whose professional role is often mentioned but whose merits, purpose and function are not truly well known.

Given that each professional figure's existence is not an abstraction, but is one that is real, which is in direct relationship with the other, finding out how the linguistic/cultural mediatrix perceives the social assistant, and vice versa, was also a parallel learning objective, in tandem with identi-kit training objective. Especially within a culturally and

professionally diverse group, each trainee’s getting to learn these common perceptions (or misconceptions) firsthand was considered an indispensable learning objective.

In consonance with available time and established training priorities, lesser time and attention were given to the course content that is listed in the following table, which articulates the basic elements of “social work”:

**Social Work:** The Professional Role and Work Experience

- The Sense of Social Work
- Characteristics and Abilities of the Professional Figures
- Appreciated/Non-Appreciated Aspects of the Job
- Comparison and Exchange among Different Territorial Organisations
- Motivations and Desires
- The Lack of Professionalism
- Specific Professional Situations
- External Relations (Institutions, Health and Social Services, etc)

**The trainees**

The trainees were both men and women social assistants, or linguistic/cultural mediatrixes, who nearly all deal with prostitution, with the level of experience and job tenure varying from one trainee to the other. They came from diverse operative and territorial organisations that were born under diverse matrixes. All of them are situated in the North of Italy, with some tracing back to the “Third Sector”, and with others tracing back to local institutions. Of the sixteen trainees, 13 were women and three were men. The following table indicates the participant organisations and the number of trainees each organisation sent to attend the course:

<u>Organisation</u>	<u>Number of Participants</u>
<b>Project TAMPEP</b> , Turin	6
<b>Ufficio Stranieri</b> (Services Office for Foreigners), Commune of Turin	2
<b>Project TAMPEP</b> , Novara	2
<b>Lila</b> (Italian League for the Fight Against AIDS), Milan	2
<b>The City and Prostitution Project</b> , Venice/Mestre	2
<b>Comitato per i Diritti Civili delle Prostitute</b> , Pordenone (National Committee for the Civil Rights of Prostitutes)	1
<b>Servizio Tossicodipendenza/Sert</b> (Drug Addiction Health Service), Gorizia	1

As indicated by its title, this project is focused upon the linguistic/cultural mediatrix. To maintain this focus, we decided to constitute “mixed groups”, comprising both men and women social assistants, and linguistic/cultural mediatrixes, who are the backbone of the social work that deals principally with prostitution. It is through the interaction of these two figures that intervention efforts get successfully accomplished on the streets and in offices and accompaniment and shelter services get successfully carried out.

## Seminar

December 1999

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### Presentation of the seminar programme

#### **Group discussion of the fundamental counselling characteristics that emerged from the training seminar**

##### **Theory lecture on counselling**

This lecture focussed on the first phase of the aid-dispensing relationship, in which the helper (the person giving help) first devotes time and attention to the aid-seeker, in order to get her out of a problematical situation through mutual involvement in the empowerment process. The empowerment process evaluates the helpee's potential for helping herself or for increasing her capacities and competencies to stand on her own.

Another discussion point were three of the qualities that the ideal helper should possess or put into practice, in order to be effective. The ideal help provider should be **knowledgeable** and should be able to react in a way that is both **controlled** and **purposeful**. In other words, the helper must know what he or she is doing, do whatever that has to be done, while remaining devoid of emotional or affective hang-ups, and must be ever mindful that his or her intervention should be in keeping with the purposes, intent, and capabilities of the relevant project.

The following were among other exigent qualities of the ideal helper:

- **Genuineness**, the helper should always remain a person who is approachable, without consciously or unconsciously transforming himself or herself into a spiritless bureaucrat, and should also remain someone who constructively participates in the aid-dispensing relationship, with the capacity not to let go of one's self control and personal equilibrium.
- **Unconditional and willing acceptance of requests for help**, while always bearing in mind that the aid-seeker, regardless of her reduced state, is a person worthy of consideration and respect.
- **Empathy** is defined as the capacity to understand, be aware of, be sensitive to, and to vicariously experience the thoughts, feelings of another, without having them fully communicated in an objectively explicit manner. Simply stated, it is the capacity for projecting yourself into the other person's situation, and seeing the world as she sees it. Acquiring or maintaining the capacity to empathise is a very binding task, which requires the collaboration of other professional figures, particularly when the aid-seeker is a person who belongs to a ethnic group or culture different from that of the help provider. (Please see discussion of this point below.)

The following were additional focal points:

**The preparatory steps that the help-provider should take prior to an aid-seeker encounter**, for example, were giving a warm welcome within a receptive atmosphere, indulging in personal relaxation, and reviewing the fundamental points of past encounters.

**Being a good observer**, by observing such things as the aid-seeker's gestures and physical movements, which constitute non verbal communication, along with eye contact, salient physical signs characteristics; **and being a good listener**, by listening to what is said and how it is said, tone of voice delivery, and to how often recurrent themes are mentioned or brought up for discussion.

**Group discussion on the topic of the lecture**

Practical exercise on attentive listening, with the participants forming into couples, with each of them required to recount something to the other that deals with a specific argument. In the plenary sessions, each one had to accurately retell the story told to him or her by the other half of the couple.

The following were the purposes of the attentive-listening practical exercise:

- Favour mutual acquaintance among the participants during the initial phase of group formation.
- Familiarise the participants with practical training exercises that are centred on the ego, which is an infrequently experimented mode of training.
- To introduce dealing with the listening dimension, which occupies the central ground in the aid-dispensing relationship and work group operations.

**Group discussion on how the whole of the seminar was proceeding.**

**Passed out Daily Evaluation of Seminar Training Activity forms for compilation by the participants.**



# Seminar

## January 2000

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### **Presentation of the seminar programme**

#### **Warm-up practical exercises**

Drawing pictures that depict one's personal life story. This practical exercise served to introduce the telling of one's personal life story as a training method. It forced each participant to once again go over the salient moments in his or her life, with self-drawn imagery as thought-provoking stimulus. It also afforded each participant the opportunity to succinctly sum up his or her "philosophy of life" in a few phrases, and to depict his or her future with symbolic imagery.

A default, which was addressed before the start of this exercise, regarded the likelihood that exposing some of the unpleasant moments of one's personal life might be extremely anguishing or embarrassing. Therefore, it was established that each participant should reveal only what he or she was willing to share with the group at that moment.

All the participants worked very intensely on these drawings, which on the whole revealed the genuine feelings and the attitudinal moorings of individual participants. Curiously, in nearly all the drawings of the foreigners, an entire piece of their lives was missing. In some cases the experiences of the journey were represented.

The following are the significant points that emerged from this practical exercise:

In this instance, personal life story imagery represents just one of several modes of expression that open up the possibility of getting to know a person more deeply and of dealing with unpleasant circumstances in that person's life.

Trusting others was something that on this occasion was experimented in the presence of a group of strangers. Therefore, it is possible to view the group as an arena for hostile confrontation or as a retreat for mutual openness. The group may also serve as a safe haven for containing individual anguish.

The importance of the content of the personal "life story" in the "social assistance" profession. Meanwhile, because they call for much less intensive involvement in the personal life of others, other professions, which are potentially neutral in this regard, do not require a great deal of self reflection or require reflective thought concerning the most significant experiences of an individual's personal life. In social work, however, the substantially critical reconsideration of the most significant experiences in a person's life appears as the backdrop whereon technical dynamism is painted. However, this characteristic does not uniquely or fully represent the extent of sociological professional dynamism.

Practical exercises on the aid-dispensing relationship, with use of study/discussion of one's personal life or work experience as a training method. The self-experience case is the instance in which someone is personally requested to give help or in which someone requests help.

To deprive reflective-thinking lesson content of extraneousness or neutrality, the personal stories of each of the participants were adapted for lesson content. Each participant was asked to think about past experiences in which each had personally asked for help. Also, each of was asked to:

Recall specific episodes and to recall the particularly relevant sensations that were experienced.

Indicate whether the aid-dispensing relationship had been satisfactory, or not.

Explain the reason for either the yes or the no answer.

This exercise served to provoke seeing the aid-dispensing relationship “with the eyes of the other person” and attempted to define, even among differing circumstances and situations, the ideal helper.

**Group discussion on how the whole of the seminar was proceeding.**

Passing out of the Daily Evaluation of Seminar Training Activity forms for compilation by the participants.

## Seminar February 2000

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### **Presentation of the seminar programme**

Warm-up practical exercises

Practical exercise concerning past aid-dispensing self experiences that were characterised by feelings of personal satisfaction or non-satisfaction. The purpose of this exercise was to recall past occasions wherein the participant had acted in the role of help-provider.

It was decided to divide this exercise into two parts. In the first part, the aim was to recall a satisfactory help-provider experience whereas, in the second part, the aim was to recall an unsatisfactory help-provider experience, owing to frustration, bitterness, or for like reasons.

The practical exercise following this one is discussed below

### **Additional intents and purposes of this exercise were to:**

- **Reinforce the story-of-life method learning objective**, which essentially consists of calling up from the memory pertinent past experience and using it creatively for present and future actions.
- **Identify the root causes for your personal feelings of satisfaction or non-satisfaction**, regardless of the positive or negative outcome of the intervention, without linking the individual effort of other members of the work group to the success, or lack of success, of your personal efforts. Although this self-appraisal process is deemed important, it should not become one-dimensional. Also, devoting time and attention to your personal feelings of satisfaction or non satisfaction is an indirect way of dealing with the sometimes implicit, or explicit, sense of omnipotence that some social workers unwittingly manifest. Moreover, self-appraisal is particularly important in a profession with a high degree of fruitless effort and social operator burnout.

### **How the exercise was carried out**

First, within the limitations of available time, each participant had to recall his or her comportment in a past aid-dispensing episode, without regard to its final outcome, in which, by personal consideration, his or her comportment was considered acceptable. However, this comportment could have been adjudged unacceptable, owing to the attendant circumstances of the episode. These episodes could be taken from one's own work experience or from the work experience of others intimately familiar to each individual reporter.

Each participant then had to submit a written outline that contained the episode's principal decisive points, which thoroughly described the episode so that, when narrated, it would be perfectly clear and understandable for the other participants. The other participants would then be able to systematically tear it to pieces, ultimately profiting from individual reflective thought and comparison with their own personal experience.

**Listed below is what the participants identified as determinant factors that are tied up with an ultimate sense of satisfaction in aid-dispensing episodes.**

- Often the interventions that the participants judged positively were carried out under extraordinary conditions that involved invading the time “off-the-clock” in a participant’s private life.
- Be content even when the final results are modest or partial and with what you “leave inside” the aid-seekers with whom you interact.
- Allow the request to come from the aid-seeker and try to synergistically join the aid-seeker’s participation with the work group’s efforts on her behalf.
- Help the aid-seeker with her needs, not yours.
- The aid-dispensing function at times is not that of resolving problems, but getting the aid-seeker to accept her fears and concerns. Knowing when to adopt this course of action is something that has to be learned, which is based upon the attendant circumstances of the aid-seeker’s problem. However, the help-provider must maintain a position of profound genuineness.
- Be good to yourself. In difficult moments on the job it is important to set restraints when you are not feeling well, especially when it might influence your mood and job performance.
- The time dedicated to work should be “limited”. If the operator sets no limits for work time and the free time of private life he or she risks mental or physical exhaustion. (Please note the linkage with the first determinant listed here.)
- Practise self-enrichment, in whatever way you like, during your free time.
- The organisation of work should sanction pauses for the operators, to avoid or reduce the risk of burning them out because of periods of hyperactivity; otherwise, the operator might begin to work mechanically.

The second half of the exercise, complementary to the first, used identical methodology, with the only difference being the change in focus upon unsatisfactory situations, ones in which an error had been committed or something unpleasant had occurred. Also here, individual reports of personal experience were submitted for collective discussion and analysis. The following conclusions were signalled:

- The operator should **not** be insistent about resolving a given problem, which is something that can provoke extremely negative reactions. It is important to know how to accept an eventual refusal without bitterness and without negatively influencing future availability.
- To avoid the risk of **not** giving certain people and their problems due and proper attention, the operator should **not** overlook or forget about the problems of the aid-seekers who just sit back and wait with **no** insistence after having requested help. Since we all tend to occupy ourselves more with the aid-seekers who, once they have surfaced their problems, follow up with frequency and insistence, the bromide that the squeaky wheel gets oiled then ultimately proves to be true.
- The operator should **not** plant false hopes in the aid seeker about prospects whose outcome is likely to be uncertain or doubtful, to avoid the risk of leaving her disappointed and with unsatisfied hopes.
- The operator should **avoid** planting the conviction in an aid-seeker that there is **nothing** that can be done for her situation.
- At times, work group disorganisation, or lack of teamwork, can greatly influence singular failures in aid-seeker support.

- With respect to a given person or situation, the work group should speak with one voice.
- Espousal of contradictory points of view creates disharmony within the work group. And it may cause the aid-seeker to refuse contact with an operator, particularly one who, in the aid-seeker's eyes, is found to be problematical, and force the aid-seeker to ally him or herself with a different operator.
- The operator should **avoid** an exclusive one-on-one relationship with the aid-seeker that omits or fails to involve the other members of the work group.
- The operator should **avoid** giving out incomplete information, which is something that can happen owing to the lack of basic training. The operator should have the courage to admit not knowing or not being fully informed about something (like HIV infection) and, in such an instance, should refer the aid-seeker to someone else more qualified in that regard or initiate action to fill in gaps of missing work-related knowledge.

Practical exercise on Communication in the form of a game that deals with Communication Feedback and the Communication Relationship.

#### First Phase

The first phase involved the communication of messages with positive content. Each participant had to write notes concerning the pleasing comportment of others during the course. Each participant received comments from all the others and expressed comments about all the others.

Collective discussion about this experience.

The intents and purposes of this practical exercise:

- Report something about all the others, leaving no one out.
- Report something positive about all the others.
- Receive comments from all the others, in order to magnify self-awareness.

Collective discussion on the seminar's progression.

Distribution and compilation of Daily Evaluation of Seminar Training Activity forms.

## Seminar

### March 2000

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#### Seminar programme presentation

Warm-up practical exercise

Practical exercise concerning the opposing perceptions of two professional figures, the mediatrix and the social operator. The participants were divided into two professionally homogenous groups, with mediatrixes in one, with operators in the other.

- As the first task, each group had to express how it thought it was seen by the other.
- The second task was to express how it genuinely saw the other.
- Upon completion of these two tasks, the relevant reports were compared with one another.

The underlying description of this exercise does not follow chronological order. However, Part A reports the linguistic/cultural mediatrix's views on how she thinks she is seen, followed by the report on how she is actually seen by the social operator. Part B regards the social operator and reports the same things contained in Part A according to the perceptions of the mediatrix.

#### Part A

The mediatrix believed that the **operator sees her role:**

- as one that is **important**;
- **indispensable** for the understanding of language of culture;
- **difficult and stressful** because they have to deal with marginalized persons;
- Coinvolving (they could be professional...)

In synthesis, the **meritorious aspects** of the mediatrix's role were seen by the operator in the following manner:

**The integration of the two roles is fundamental** in a team effort. Her role is **important for the initial contact and for mediation** and is **indispensable for the unit that conducts its work on the streets**. Her work, which is generally occupied by women with precarious work contracts, who are alone in a foreign land, **is problem-filled and risky**. While performing translation during the intervention, she demonstrates that she is **well acquainted with the target's cultural values and compoment** and **passes on fundamental information to the target very well**, and **keeps the operator well informed**.

Numbered among **her demerits** were the following observations:

Though the mediatrix is highly motivated to help her fellow nationals, **she often risks damaging her professionalism because of excessive involvement**. Often, **she is poorly acquainted with the language and culture of the host country**. **She fails to take the initiative** to fill in gaps of missing work-related knowledge that should be transmitted to the target, though **she never fails to attend a convention**. Often, **she is combative with the target**, which results in her abandoning her proper professional role. To illustrate, if an aid-seeker comes into the office for information, and a service

disagreement flares up, **the mediatrix will sometimes lose her patience and resort to fighting**, and no longer remains a mediatrix.

## **Part B**

We'll see now how the operators think to be seen by the mediatrix. The operators write that the mediatrix see them 'maybe' in the following manner:

- The operators are a point of reference for the continuity of the project carried out
- They usually show little willingness to listen to the mediatrix and are frequently distracted when the mediatrix recounts casework stories and furnishes casework details.
- They're often frenetic, with little time for exchange and transmission of information.
- They're devilishly bureaucratic about such picayune or minor matters as filling out forms, expense reports, and the time spent on singular contacts.

In the second half of the exercise, it is to be pointed out that the group of mediatrixes employed an elegant strategy in their response to the question, which asked, "How do the mediatrixes see the social operators?" Merits and demerits were entered in adjoining columns. This strategy prevented understanding which one of the entries, or if both, corresponded to reality and, if so, which bore greater weight in terms of behavioural frequency.

We list the merits, with no indication of the demerits because they were the exact opposite of the merits.

- Don't have prejudices
- Trust each other
- Compact group
- The operators valorises the mediatrix and vice versa- when there's jalousie because the mediatrix speaks two languages, there's no valorisation.
- Respect to the role of the mediatrix
- Interest for the culture of the mediatrix
- Great humanity of the operators
- Make to much voluntary

In response to a specific question, the mediatrixes affirmed that percentage wise the meritorious aspects outweighed the negative ones. One mediatrix stated that at times the operators were seemingly jealous of their role because they want to know everything that is said during the dialogue between the mediatrix and the aid-seeker. Another mediatrix declared that the operator should seek the mediatrix's opinion at the end of the dialogue because it is she, the mediatrix, who in common shares the aid-seeker's culture. However, especially with the mediatrix filtering information, an operator retorted that, whenever clarifications are sought, it is not out of a lack of trust but out of fear that something significant may be overlooked or omitted or **not** brought to light for evaluation by the operator whose presence is sometimes reduced to being no more than casual bystander.

The following were the aims of the exercise:

- Seeing your professional role through the eyes of your counterpart.
- Compare your personal perceptions with those of others.
- Critical thinking about the comparison of perceptions.

- Becoming aware of the existence of multiple points of view about the same thing and not taking for granted your way of seeing things. In this case, we dealt with a particular professional role and a particular type of work.

### **Practical exercise concerning Co-operation and Competition**

This exercise consisted of enacting the famous game, *The Prisoners' Dilemma*. This choice of game play stemmed from the firm determination that co-operation between two individuals, groups, or organisations is inextricably linked with predictable behavioural patterns and the factor of trust.

Nearly all the decisions that we make are based on trust in one manner or another. In each interaction in this game, neither of the two parties has firsthand information. This game tries to reproduce the following dynamics, which all influence one another. Both parties must rely on the degree of trust that each has in the other, or on attempts to gauge the degree of trust that the other party may have, or on presupposed predictions of behaviour.

This game is perhaps the most elegant abstract representation of problem resolution that often is found in numerous types of human relationships, ranging from those of affection to those of teamwork. In our case we were interested in going into depth with regard to teamwork co-operation, while underscoring that co-operation is not, as often believed, merely a question of "good will". There are a number of identifiable contributing factors, **which are not casual**, that influence the efficient progression of work. Perhaps, the most important factor is that of mutual trust.

A final note concerns the very same or similar two-way relationships that often are witnessed in reality. This characteristic gives an idea of the game's practicality, with its twists and turns of dramatic effect that can cause the two parties to sustain opposing positions, with each party hardening his or her position.

**There was collective discussion about the exercise.**

**Theoretic notes concerning the faced topics.**

**There was collective discussion about the progression of the seminar**

**Distribution and compilation of daily evaluation of seminar training activity forms.**



## Seminar April 2000

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### **Presentation of the seminar programme to the trainees**

### **Compilation by the participants of a questionnaire that concerning the Work Group and Counselling**

### **Exercise consisting of painting a personal imagine of help**

### **Collective discussion on the intent, purpose, and significance of this exercise**

This exercise was carried out with great care and creativity. Many participants described situations of their life. It goes said that the drawings, some in a particular way, succeeded in vividly transmitting, though not always with immediate effect, the message that the participants tried to convey.

Many interesting things emerged from the collective thought and discussion that followed this exercise, among which was the importance attributed to the factors of silence, respect, and the warm welcome in an aid-dispensing relationship. Silent participation often helps more than a torrent of words and helps the aid-seeker feel welcome and reassured. Other thoughts underscored the multitude of possibilities for getting out of a problematical or difficult situation, but often the simplest and easiest solutions fail to give long-term results. Encouraging self-autonomy in the aid-dispensing relationship, with assessment of the aid-seeker's resources and potential, is fundamental. Others underscored that in each aid-dispensing relationship "finding common ground" is important and doing this may effect positive change in a given aid-seeker that she or he will carry away when the aid-dispensing relationship is terminated.

Study of an aid-dispensing episode.

Collective discussion to reflect profoundly experiences of analysis and confrontation with the cases. Collective reflection of the concept of empathy.

### **The methodology of negotiation in the work of group.**

Negotiation is a basal relationship that is present within any kind of organisation. At the beginning, one of the trainers gave a brief introduction on theory that treated the following arguments:

- What are the characteristics that differentiate the negotiation relationship from other types of relationships?
- What objectives are put into a negotiation relationship?
- Useful guiding principles when someone engages in negotiation.

Secondly, the participants were asked to simulate a negotiation concerning the division of a "tangible asset".

Negotiation is a complex activity because it integrates two opposing principles,

collaboration and competition, which we are accustomed to treating separately. There are different definitions for the term negotiation but all of them revolve around the idea that it is a useful methodology for an organisation or within interpersonal relationships, so long as all the parties may derive some benefit or profit from it and they all possess the will to reach agreement despite divergent interests.

Negotiation is a relationship that bears the following characteristics:

- There is limited availability of assets.
- The common will to reach to accord for the attribution or management of limited assets is present.

The parties to the negotiation possess the capability to influence one another, which is fulfilled when an agreed outcome, or final accord, is reached that will be implemented. Implementation of the final accord is a very important element because it is not rare to assist in negotiations for which an accord has been reached, which is not implemented. In this case, it is probable that the accord was faulty and that something during the process of negotiation failed to function.

The participants were divided into two groups, with mixed professions, and were furnished information to start up a negotiation. Part of the information was general and a part was pertinent to the proper group. Each group had to elaborate a strategy of negotiation, followed by a meeting among the groups to conduct the negotiation.

The basic requirements for effecting a negotiation as are follows:

- Effectuate good analysis of the situation.
- Work out a strategy.
- Obtain information and furnish information to and from others to see if common ground can be found for each of the respective objectives.
- Make a decision and reach or even don't to an accord
- Decide if the accord will be acted. (The factor of trust, dealt with in the game exercise, plays a very important role in decision-making.)

**There was collective discussion and thought that concerned this theme.**

**Group discussion on the progression of the whole of the seminar.**

**Compilation by the participants of the Daily Evaluation of Seminar Training Activity.**

### **Presentation of the seminar programme to the trainees**

#### **Practical exercise that required the execution of a personal impression of the 'night'.**

This exercise was considered a centrepiece of the participants' training.

#### **Group discussion to analyse the significance of this exercise.**

Three-phased exercise concerning personal and group perceptions of the *target*, in which the first part,

**Phase ONE**, was carried out in the following manner:

- Each participant was required to write his or her personal perceptions.
- The operators and mediatrixes were formed into two separate groups, in order to elaborate and to report their perceptions as an aggregate group.
- The two discrete reports of aggregate group perceptions were compared with one another.

This exercise served to surface the ways in which the target is seen by the operators and mediatrixes. There were three-fold reasons for our belief that this exercise would prove to be useful, in order to shed light on the following probabilities:

- There may be several ways of seeing the target, perhaps implicitly, who represent the core of the work.
- There may be several ways of seeing the target that are dependent upon a person's profession.
- Individual perceptions may or may not coincide with those of the professional group to which each individual belongs.

**Phase TWO** was carried out in the following manner:

Three subgroups were formed, one group of mediatrixes and two groups of operators. The reports that each subgroup produced differed substantially from one to the other.

**The single subgroup of mediatrixes** concentrated on coming up with a description of the target's more plainly 'visible' characteristics, pointing out that the target comprise women between 16 and 40 years in age. (The better representative age bracket, however, ranges from 18 to 26.) In general, the target are pushed into prostitution by fiancées or by *papponi* (pimps) or by *madames*. Generally, the target are diffident during the initial contacts but once their trust is gained they are grateful for the intervention. Often, they have a lot of debt to pay off. Also included was a comparison of the dress and makeup between Albanian and Nigerian women, with the former deemed praiseworthy and with the latter much less so. (At one time, this observation would have proved to be untrue, which signifies that recently the Albanian women have learned and adopted this fundamental trick of the trade.)

The **first subgroup of operators** exerted themselves to come up with a description a little more 'sociological' description that furnished a bird's eye view of the target from three points of vantage:

### **Where does the target come from?**

The operators underscored that economic and cultural appeal are first and second in order of importance. which subtly emanates from the mass media, plays an important enough role in convincing the target to leave their countries of origin in order to achieve economic standards that could be aspired to with difficulty by remaining at home. Therefore, they arrive in Europe with the goal of improving their personal condition in life. In order to depict their lives and their situation within Europe, even the complexity of their individual life stories was cited as fundamental factor.

### **What happens to the target?**

The operators underscored that the women may choose, more or less knowingly, to face the risks associated with an “immigration” contract but without yet completely foreseeing the forms of exploitation that they will butt up against. Once in Italy, they become social outcasts and are economically exploited by society as a whole. In fact, let us not forget that the money they earn through sex work gets spent in buying consumer goods, which directly contributes to Italy’s gross national product.

### **How does the target fare?**

The operators highlighted their courage in facing the difficulties tied up with life on the streets and their ironclad health and vitality, which is to be understood as their innate capacity for working out their negative experiences in positive fashion. Other things mentioned and highlighted were their fears and lack of faith in the institutions, primarily attributable to their having come to know firsthand the repressive side of the same.

### **The second subgroup of operators divided its report into two parts:**

#### **Prostitution**

Prostitution was deemed a respectable profession, but one that is risky, poorly paid, highly stigmatised, which, unfortunately, does not command public respect.

#### **Sex Workers**

The sex workers were regarded as courageous people of sunny disposition, who freely or coercively practise prostitution, who are poorly informed, who are ingenuous, are hidden or are boldly flaunted, who are illusory dreamers. Paradoxically, sex workers are all these things, and more, yet they are the exact opposite of all these things, and more.

### **Phase THREE was carried out in the following manner:**

The two discrete of aggregate group perceptions were compared with one another.

### **Another three-phased exercise that concerned personal perceptions of the target’s *clientele* that was carried out in the following manner:**

- Each participant was required to write his or her personal perceptions.
- The operators and mediatrixes were formed into two separate groups, in order to elaborate and to report their perceptions as an aggregate group.
- The two discrete reports of aggregate group perceptions were compared with one another.

**Phase TWO** was carried out in the following manner:

Two subgroups were formed, one of mediatrixes, the other of operators.

The findings of the two aggregate group reports proved to be very interesting and there were no big differences in perception between the two groups, but let us now see in detail what did emerge:

**The subgroup of mediatrixes** highlighted that the age of the clients may range from 16 to 85 years. The client was described as a “social” loner who often may be someone who has problems with conjugal relations, but this observation may not always be necessarily true. Usually, the client is someone considered normal, i.e., he is without evident sexual or psychological problems, who may be married or be engaged, who may have children, friends, and a job. In addition, there is a typology of client that tends to want to establish a privileged relationship with the sex workers, which is evidenced by such helpful gestures as bringing food, clothes, and harbouring them in their cars when it rains. In fact, there seems to be a series of masculine figures that hover about prostitutes that are not directly interested in having sexual relations but who are more interested in cultivating or establishing another type of relationship. Still others, as one mediatrix recalled, are disposed to pay only for a little talk. The overall judgement that the mediatrixes pronounced for the men who fit such behavioural patterns was that they are “good clients.” Since the women need clients, out of which, if there are some who are willing to proffer help, then this phenomenon is considered as something positive. The helpful or innocent nature of the good client is counterpoised to the hurtful nature of the *nasty* client who is nothing more than an individual who seeks any occasion to vent rage and to engage in gratuitous violence or abuse.

The subgroup of operators described the clients as the least visible part of the “problem” and, precisely, because of this poor visibility they are rarely considered as a factor that is taken into account within “projects of intervention”. Also, they highlighted that there is a precise typology of clients that represent transversals that can be categorised by age, nationality, and culture. Moreover, they listed considerations that indicate some of the client’s possible motivations:

- They might simply be consumers of sex.
- They might want to establish an intimate relationship.
- They might want a true and proper relationship.
- The operators also made note of the males who hover about the prostitutes, even though they are not true and proper clients.
- There was collective discussion on the progression of the seminar as a whole.
- The participants compiled the Daily Evaluation of Seminar Training Activity forms.

## Seminar

### June 2000

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Presentation of the seminar-training programme to the participants

Discussion in the group on the 'cultural' contrasts in Africa and in Italy that concern the concept of time. **(At the behest of one of the participants)**

Conduction of a practical exercise on techniques for brainstorming that was prefaced with a brief theoretical introduction that explained what a brainstorming is, for what it's needed and when it's used with most frequency. We discussed in the group on different modalities of making possible decisions and on the one which was adopted for the completion of this exercise (and about the consequences).

For completion of the assigned exercise tasking and for the plenary session, we divided the trainees into two mixed-profession subgroups (operators and mediatrixes). Using the brainstorming technique, each subgroup was tasked to "find a name for the group as a whole".

**The brainstorming technique adapted for this exercise proceeded in the following manner:**

- We then discussed the brainstorming method, which at its start Freewheeled output of ideas, whilst giving full vent to unbridled fantasy (accepting also the most extravagant things) , free from any restraint of judgement.
- Each idea was then judged critically, (this time taking rationality and relevancy into account) selecting not more than four of them.
- Successively, in plenary session the selective choice of names from each subgroup was then revealed and exchanged, with the matter of a singular choice of a name for the whole group settled by (secret) vote, without further discussion.

This excites the fantasy and imagination but afterwards it calls for rational and selective judgement. Besides this, we talked about several other methods of group decision-making, with the advantages and risks that each method comports.

We then conducted a practical exercise on non-verbal communication (nvc) that served to identify and interpret the emotions of another person. Using only bodily expression, with particular emphasis on the use of the face and eyes, one of the participants was asked to mime a given emotion or mood, such as anger confusion, happiness, fear, and so on. Seated in semicircular fashion around the actor or actress that was seated in front of them, the observers were required to declare what emotional state was being expressed. The principal motive for this exercise was to place oneself in another person's shoes that, in this instance, communicates without the use of words.

We then conducted a two-phased practical exercise that dealt with trust, with the first phase taking place in the form of a 'game', and with the second phase consisting of group discussion that re-elaborated this experience and its relevancy to the aid-dispensing relationship.

We then collectively discussed how the whole of the seminar was proceeding.

Finally, the participants filled out the Daily Evaluation of Seminar Training Activity forms.

## Seminar

### July 2000

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#### **We presented to the participants the seminar-training programme for that day**

In order to conduct a three-phased practical exercise, the trainees were divided into two subgroups, social operators in one, cultural - linguistic mediatrixes in the other. Each subgroup was assigned the task of singling out and listing the characteristics of a 'good' workgroup. Aim of this exercise was threefold:

- To test which concepts have been received from the trainees and in what manner they could be adopted as work tools.
- To see if each professional group would list characteristics that would differ from one another.
- To pass from theory to practise by having each subgroup reflect on its professional role and its comportment regarding the emerging elements.

This exercise about "characteristics of a good work of a group" was structured in the following fashion:

- Each homogeneous subgroup (on one side social operators, on the other side the mediatrixes) produced a list with the 'characteristics of a good workgroup'.
- The list produced by each subgroup should be presented and collectively discussed in plenary assembly.
- The trainees were then asked to reflect on how they, as trained group, have effected a good work of group.

#### **The mediatrixes listed the following characteristics:**

- The workgroup's rules are respected.
- Barely made proposals are not contradicted.
- There is reciprocal respect within the workgroup.
- Decisions are discussed.
- Others are listened to.
- Its members are not offensive.
- Its members are free of prejudices.
- Its members are professional.
- Its members are punctual and respect the constraints of time.

#### **The social operators listed the following characteristics:**

- It has an overall objective.
- This objective is made clear to all ( to eliminate the risk of working at cross-purposes).
- It singles out a Co-ordinator (that facilitates the free expression of all its members).
- Its rules are defined and its work method is shared by all.
- There is active/purposeful participation.
- Everyone's opinion is respected.
- There is freedom to criticise.
- Its roles are defined.
- It has the capacity for self-evaluation.

To us, the results of this exercise seemed to be particularly rich with outgrowth worthy of further argument and deeper reflection. Let us begin Phase 2 commentary with the lists that the two subgroups produced, which are strikingly different from one another.

The list that the mediatrixes produced is principally centred upon good rapport and interpersonal relationships among a workgroup's members [points b), c), e), f), g)]. It includes few points that regard work method [points a), d), i)].

The fact to be professional becomes to be a pre-requisite.

The mediatrix's work position, in terms of power and 'capacity to count for something' in the decision-making process, might explain the importance that was attributed to interpersonal relationships, which, in all probability, reflects the mediatrix's overall sense of 'weakness'. This was an element that emerged even during plenary discussion that followed the presentation of the two lists.

The mediatrixes made no mention of such vital elements as the presence of a Co-ordinator and a clearly defined, shared objective that is achieved by a common work method, with everyone's active and purposeful participation in clearly defined roles.

These elements, however, do appear in the trenchant list of characteristics that the social operators produced. Their list seems to be well completed and articulated.

It's to point out that during plenary discussion the subject 'rules' was newly an argument of first order. However, this recognised importance was without correspondent clarity because of the fuzziness of the responses to the hypothetical question, "**What do we do when the rules are broken or not followed?**" The most frequent answer was to turn to the Co-ordinator.

For some, the Co-ordinator should mediate the matter; for others, the Co-ordinator should issue a reprimand. In either instance responsibility is tentatively being delegated to 'the boss'. Admitting and overcoming failure is certainly a complex task; therefore, either singular or group acceptance of personal responsibility is no easy task.

During plenary discussion it was also mentioned that only a 'strong' workgroup was capable of self-criticism, which to us seems to be a very interesting thought.

Phase 3 tasking required that the training group analyse itself and its 'comportment' during the months of the course, by noting both its manifest strengths and weaknesses. Noted as strengths were attentive listening and unbridled criticism.

Noted as weaknesses were the lack of active and purposeful participation on the part of some and the group's occasional failure to respect rules.

### **We then followed with a frontal lecture on movements and self-mutual-help groups.**

The lecture content included the following topics:

- **Definition of self- self-mutual-help groups**
- **Birth of movements and groups**
- **Characteristics of self-mutual-help groups:**
- They are problem-oriented and are organised in relation to the specific problems.
- Their members are usually equals.
- They share common objectives.
- Their action is group action.
- 'To help others' is the motto expressed by the group.



- Power and leadership is au pair. (Tending to evolve on the basis of manifest merit and capacity, these dimensions may vary throughout the group's lifetime.)
- Communication is horizontal (with everyone taking part, although in a manner that may be differentiated from one member to another).
- Personal involvement. (Group membership excludes passive participation in the group's activities and resources. Therefore, each member must contribute something for the group's exigencies, according to his or her means at given moments.)
- There is personal responsibility for one's decisions and actions.
- They are action-oriented. (learning and changing by doing)
- **Processes which are developed in the group**
- **Processes which each person went through in this experience**

**The training group then collectively discussed this topic.**

The next item of training was a two-phased practical exercise in the form of a 'game' concerning communication: feedback and relation, which was carried out in the following manner:

**For the first phase:**

Communication of messages with negative content:

Each participant was required to write down on a slip of paper something about the behaviour of each of the other participants that he or she had found unpleasant during the length of this training course. In this manner each participant would receive comments from all the others and would express comments about all the others.

The purposes of this exercise were not only to say something about all other training group members but also to express something negative, without leaving anyone out, and, finally, to receive negative observations from all the others in order to increase each individual's degree of self-awareness in a negative vein.

**For the second phase:**

Collective discussion about the experience

We then collectively discussed how the whole of the seminar was proceeding.

Finally, the participants filled out the Daily Evaluation of Seminar Training Activity forms.

## Seminar

### September 2000

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We presented the seminar's training programme to the trainees

We gave a lecture on the legal framework in Italy and in whole Europe with respect to prostitution

The topic of the lecture was chewed up in an animated and in-depth general discussion

We then evaluated the responses to the questionnaires handed out in April, September, and November

The responses to the questionnaires underwent in-depth discussion and clarification

The training group then rendered a written and oral qualitative evaluation of the training course as a whole.

The training course was then concluded

#### **Evaluation**

We effectuated three types of evaluations during this course.

The first type of evaluation was geared toward gauging the degree of **learning** and relates to the two key arguments of this training course: **the workgroup and the aid-dispensing relationship**.

With respect to the workgroup, among the arguments we're paying attention to the objectives, communication, and the climate within the workgroup, the respect of roles and rules, and co-operation. With respect to the aid-dispensing relationship, among the arguments were empathy, building trust, and the capacity for attentive listening.

The tools of evaluation were two questionnaires, administered on three occasions; namely, at the start of the course (November 1999), mid-term (April 2000), and at the end of the course (September 2000). Each questionnaire allowed us to analyse several aspects of the arguments in question. In order to have a better view of the overall learning situation, the relevant practical exercises, which were adjuncts to the questionnaires and which were conducted throughout the year, must also be taken into account. On the greater part, the overall data analysis demonstrated that there were significant learning improvements during the lifetime of this course of training. However, for greater and more specific detail the reader is referred to the Italian language version of the report on this course.

The second type of evaluation regarded the **reactions of the participants**, and it was geared toward how a singular day of training had proceeded. This evaluation allowed us to see from a multitude of angles such things as the participants' satisfaction in terms of

interest, usefulness, and involvement, the adequacy of training methods, the training group's level of energy input and its rate of learning, as well as the trainer's effectiveness. The tool of evaluation was the *Daily Evaluation of Seminar Training Activity* forms that were filled out at the end of each training session, for a total of 10 (which excludes the evaluation of 11 September 2000, which was a final evaluation of the course overall).

The overall degree of satisfaction with the training course was noteworthy. The compilation of these forms allowed the trainers and the trainees to understand, with clarity, which were the most difficult topics and which were the most suitable training methods. In-progress evaluation has very strong validity. Not only does it open up useful channels of communication (among the trainees and between trainees/trainers) but also it indicates the eventual training needs, or desired future training, to emerge from the dark into the light.

The third type of evaluation was the **end-of-course evaluation**, which took place on 11 September 2000 and gave life to an animated group discussion about the overall quality of the course. This course had already undergone quantitative evaluation that comprises both the other types of evaluation that we have already explained. This qualitative evaluation served to ascertain the least and the most appreciated aspects of the course and to identify the subjects that the trainees considered desirable for future development and inclusion in the training prospectus.

We remember that the trainees commented on the need for more in-depth treatment of the aid-dispensing relationship and the workgroup with mixed professions. They also indicated that more practical exercises that serve to increase job knowledge and self-awareness of personal faults and weaknesses would be appreciated. The modality of social intervention, conflict medication, and a study on the figure of the client within the realm of prostitution, which are topics that were not treated in this course, were also recommended for future course development.

In our opinion, these three types of evaluation should be considered in combination with one another, in order to arrive at a rational and unified evaluation. The **end-of-course evaluation** is best understood when the **trainees' daily evaluations of seminar training activity** are combined with it and are also taken into account. The **evaluation that gauges the rate of learning** is not a stand-alone assessment. It should be considered in unison with the correspondent practical exercises of various types, which are described throughout the entire report, that also represent instances of evaluation, which backup the statistics that are extrapolated from the data contained in the questionnaires.

# Seminar

## November 2000

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Presentation of the seminar programme to the trainees

### **Passed out questionnaires relative to the work group and counselling for participant compilation**

A practical exercise in the form of a game to encourage socialisation

#### **A lecture concerning communication theory that treated:**

- Johari's Window (La Finestra di Johari) is a schematic outline of how one configures his or her internal world, with respect to communication with others.
- The "degree of openness" variable, its definition and characteristics
- The "feedback" variable, its definition and characteristics
- The characteristics of the speaker's message (clear, significant, coherent)
- The characteristics of the good listener) attentiveness, willingness to listen, openness)
- The arguments dealt with within a communication (neutral or value-filled arguments)
- The creation of a shared common code in the communication that occurs within the work group and within aid-dispensing relations)

#### **Collective discussion on the topic of the lecture**

Exercises of subgroups about the practical exercise relative to fundamental counselling characteristics

The aid-dispensing relationship, one of the three main topics of the training course, was undertaken as the central coursework for the trainees.

On the first day of the course, training was unfolded in subgroups, to single out, according to the opinion of the participants, the most important characteristics of counselling.

Three subgroups were formed, with each subgroup with an appointed secretary to take down notes on all suggestions and to furnish all subgroup reports in plenary sessions. The composition of the subgroups, each comprising five persons, was mixed, with male and female social assistants mixed with linguistic/cultural mediatrixes.

#### **The Material Produced**

**Subgroup ONE** singled out the following elements:

- **A warm welcome that fosters open dialogue and good communication, is important**, in order to generate an aura of trust from the start.
- When describing the project and giving out information, **the use of plain, clear and simple (low threshold) language is important**, to assure that the aid-seeker will understand what she or he is being told.

- **Clearly single out what the aid-seeker is really “asking for”** from dialogue that allows full exchange of ideas, her ideas and not yours.
- **The importance of cohesiveness within the work group**, so that all its members speak with one voice, to avoid giving out conflicting information and to maintain or increase the initial spark of trust that is generated with the aid seeker;
- **Devising a “plan of action” together with the aid-seeker**, without the help-provider’s imposing prefabricated solutions.

**Subgroup TWO** focussed on the following main points:

- Always bearing in mind that **the aid-dispensing relation involves two persons**.
- **Humility**, the capacity to place oneself in the other person’s shoes, without taking position of superiority;
- **Introspection**, the capacity to reflectively look inward
- **Empathy**, put the aid-seeker at ease
- **Exercising Patience**, without losing one’s patience or concentration.
- **Intuitive ability**, the capacity to distinguish from what is expressed the things that are important and those that are not.
- **Finding common ground**, without forgetting that the aid-seeker must arrive at his or her solutions.
- **Reaching the goal together**.

**Respecting the privacy and dignity of the aid-seeker**

- **Giving a feedback**, it means the importance to signalise that we understand and don’t listen passively

**Subgroup THREE** points of view were centred upon the following points.

- **Perceiving what is “unspoken”**, means to receive unexpressed request.
- **Attentive listening**. The listener must not manifest passive participation.
- **Avoid third-degree tactics**; the dialogue should not become an “interrogation”, and the aid-seeker should not feel harassed;
- **The relationship should be on “equal terms”**, filled with useful dialogue and exchange;
- **Avoid paternalism/maternalism and patronising speech**, by gratuitously rendering judgement, and declaring what is “right” for the other person.
- **The relationship should be filed with understanding and trust**; therefore, the help-provider should be well informed and knowledgeable about what he or she says and should not merely improvise answers;
- **Encouragement**.

The group of trainees in plenary assembly also dwelt on the negative habits that one should avoid. Among these, they highlighted not using one’s own personal experience as a point of departure, not giving advice as to how one should behave, and not playing favourites.

Discussed the overall progression of the seminar

The trainees were given Daily Evaluation of Seminar Training Activity forms to compile.

## International Meetings

### *General Meeting*

- Vienna, Austria/ 26-28 January 2001

### Bilateral Visits

- Italy and the Netherlands

Mestre, Italy/ 24 August 1999

Co-ordination Meeting for the *Leonardo da Vinci* Project

## The Team in Italy

- Carla Corso responsible organiser of the project for Italy
- Siega Battel Gianluca responsible scientist of the project for Italy
- Carlini Annarita teaching psychologist, collaborator of the project for Italy
- Ferrari Fabio consulting statistics

## Interviews with subject matter experts

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08/10/1999	Carla Corso
07/11/1999	Pia Covre
07/11/1999	Senior Albanian Mediatix

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## The matters treated in the interviews

- The function of linguistic/cultural mediation
- The various aspects of the work of mediatixes
- The working relationship between social operators and mediatixes
- The relationship with the target
- The professional characteristics that can be developed through training

## Meeting with future Leonardo Da Vinci Project participants

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19/10/1999	Torino
26/10/1999	Gorizia
07/11/1999	Pordenone
17/11/1999	Venezia/Mestre

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- Presentation of project guidelines
- Discussion of project guidelines
- Acceptance of proposals for modification or amplification of project content
- Analysis of additional training needs
- Ascertaining what times and places were available for training seminars



European Commission  
Directorate-General XXII  
Education, Training and Youth

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**LEONARDO DA VINCI PROGRAMME**

**Cultural Mediators  
in the Area of Prostitution/  
Transnational Training**

**MANUAL**

December 1998  
April 2001

**GERMANY**



## **An Overview**

### **The situation**

In 1999 TAMPEP conducted a poll with a view to finding out about the living and working conditions of female migrant sex workers in Germany. Analysis of the results has shown that at least 60% of women working as prostitutes in Germany are migrants.

Just as in other European countries, the living and working conditions of foreign prostitutes are very difficult, as most of the women have no right of residency. This situation gives rise to social isolation, dependency on pimps and brothel owners, exploitation, insecurity and fear.

The repressive nature of European laws on immigrants and prostitutes also cause women to move as fugitives from one city to another within a given country, or from one country to another within Europe or, indeed, from continent to continent. The lack of protection of the target group is only reinforced by this.

In addition, the situation is made worse through loss of orientation as the prostitutes move here, there and everywhere and through communication problems, because they do not speak the languages of the countries they move to.

A further consequence of this situation is that the women have limited access to medical care, as most of them have neither recognised health insurance nor any access to information on such health services as are on offer and where to go to get them.

This poll also showed how unequally the migrants sex workers are spread out across the Federal Republic of Germany. In Northern Germany where most of the local health authorities offer their medical services mostly free and anonymously – migrants go voluntarily to the health authorities to avail themselves of the services – the proportion of migrant prostitutes is substantially higher. However, in Southern Germany where, until December 2000, there were laws requiring all sex workers to undergo regular physical examinations, the proportion of migrant prostitutes was quite lower.

That proves again how repressive the measures are against (migrant) sex workers and how they end up marginalising this group of women resulting in all the evils of such a status.

### **Fluctuation**

The high fluctuation or turnover in the women who tend to change their workplace and place of residence rather often makes it very difficult to establish a lasting basis for medical and psychological treatment. Very often a course of medical treatment will be initiated, but never taken to its conclusion - for the reasons state above.

### **Need For Education**

Many women know very little about STD, HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases as well as the proper use of contraception. This means that working as a prostitute can be potentially very risky for the migrants. Not only are they liable to end up contracting sexually transmitted diseases, but they are also liable to get unwanted pregnancies.

### **Repression**

Massive police manoeuvres against foreign prostitutes drive the migrant women to being completely dependent on third parties who use the situation to exploit and abuse them. The women are holed up in hidden workplaces and therefore cannot be reached for consultations on preventative health care.

Their life of secrecy in the illegal underworld leaves the migrant women open to all sorts of terrors. The number of attacks on migrant prostitutes is increasing. The women are beaten up, robbed and raped. The perpetrators of these repugnant crimes go mostly unpunished, because the women are too frightened of being deported or losing their anonymity if they go to the police and press charges.

Many women complain therefore of physical ailments of every kind which doctors often diagnose as being psychosomatic. The women suffer from depression, anxiety attacks, breathing difficulties, dizziness and skin rashes. Some women try to cope with these illnesses and conditions by drinking alcohol and taking drugs.

### **Local Health Authorities**

Due to the isolation and illegal status of the migrant sex workers, the only place where they can usually get any sort of health care, i.e. physical examinations and treatment as well as psycho-social counselling, is from the Local Health Authorities. The migrant women approach these government places with their anxieties, psychological or physical complaints and expect support and understanding.

Most of these places have little experience of dealing with migrant women, not only because of the language barrier, but also mainly because of cultural differences.

The situation described on the migrant scene shows that effective prevention work and medical as well as psychological treatment are only possible if you can "get through" to this group in every way. Not only do you have to go looking for them and find them wherever they work so that you can give them information materials and address lists of support organisations, you also have to "communicate" with them so that, for instance, you can answer any questions they have on treatment and get a good idea of how the women live.

It is not enough to surmount the language problems. It is very important to win the trust of the women so that you are better able to improve their situation as well as carry out your work in preventative medicine.

Strengthening the self-confidence and self-esteem of the target group, enabling them to change their attitudes and possibly also the way they deal with the world, can only be attained through an attitude or stance, when working with them, which is oriented towards both their needs and their culture.

## TRAINING 1

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### **Cultural mediation as a prospective development for the Public Health Service**

A number of women working at offices of the Public Health Service in Germany have been selected to be subjects for participation on a three day training course as foreseen in the Interim Report in April 2000.

The reasons to undertake such a training with employees of the Health Authorities were:

- To underline the significance of their role and the responsibility that goes with it for providing effective psycho-social counselling and medical care for a social group that lacks all legal rights, lives in isolation and is both discriminated against and stigmatised by society at large.
- To sensitise these employees to the necessity of working alongside cultural mediators when dealing with a multicultural group.
- To arm them with basic competency in intercultural matters.
- To discuss potential conflicts and problems that arise in working with multicultural groups.

The training as described in this Final Report was realised twice during the project's period: in November 2000 and in March 2001.

## TRAINING 2

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### **Working with and for migrant and mobile sex workers**

The training was directed to social workers of different institutions in Copenhagen (social and health care providers) who were interested in learning ways and means when starting to develop specific work for and with migrant and mobile sex workers.

The aim was to bring up practical issues in order to demonstrate how such a work can be done in an effective way, considering a population which live and work in very difficult and quite often, very dependable situation of third persons.

It was a one day training which included:

- an overview of the internationalisation of prostitution nowadays: its meaning and consequences
- important points to consider when working with migrant sex workers
- why and how to do fieldwork
- the importance of cultural mediation
- the meaning of peer education in prevention work
- role play

The training as described in this Final Report was realised once during the project's period: in January 2001.

## **Cultural Mediation as a Prospective Development for the Public Health Service**

A Training Course for  
Doctors, Social Workers and Interpreters  
in the Public Health Service

### **Put on by**

- Project TAMPEP in Germany
- Bernhild Schrand<sup>1</sup>

### **Concept**

You are a social worker in the public health service and have daily contact with migrant women. Demands are increasingly being made on you in terms of your communication and interpersonal skills as well as your sensitivity to other cultures as the number of nationalities you have to deal with rises. Perhaps you know the feeling "I can't get through to these women".

You may well have thought for some time now that your inability to get through to your non-German clients is due entirely to the problem of the language barrier. Perhaps you have wondered "What would change in my work if I took on the challenge, as an employee of the public health service, of deciding to open up my work to an intercultural clientele, offering my counselling services to non-Germans, and work with the help of cultural mediators?"

We, TAMPEP, train qualified interpreters to be certified cultural mediators and are working in Hamburg on a project with the Central Counselling Bureau for Sexually Transmitted Diseases (henceforth CCB), an organ of the Public Health Service of the Department of Employment, Health and Social Welfare. The methods of cultural mediation developed by TAMPEP for work on STD/AIDS prevention amongst migrant sex workers are being put into practice here at a facility of the public health system for the first time.

The main point involved in this training course that we are offering is the exploration of the goals of cultural mediation as well as the role and responsibilities of a cultural mediator, both in regard to the target group and also the institutional context of the public health service. We will investigate in detail the difficulties and conflicts that result from putting cultural mediation into practice and will seek to address these problems with a view to overcoming them. Special attention will be given to both the fundamentals involved in and the conditions appropriate to working together with others in a multicultural team whose efficiency is a prerequisite for successful implementation of cultural mediation on the job at offices and surgeries across the public health service. Those taking the seminars will provide opportunities for personal discovery which address the mind, the heart and the hand in equal measure.

The training course will be spread over three days and comprise theory sessions, opportunities for the exchange of experience and practical exercises.

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<sup>1</sup> Bernhild Schrand is a sociologist, management trainer and management coach. She works as a supervisor with intercultural teams and is a trainer in the areas of supervision and coaching at the University of Hannover. She is in charge of two year mediation and counselling training courses for men and women who work in intercultural fields.

# Programme

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## 1<sup>st</sup> Day

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12:30	Proceedings to commence with lunch
13:30 – 15:00	Official greeting, introduction, programme overview
15:30 – 17:00	Reflection on participants' own work situations: demands made, challenges, goals Exchange of experience (small groups)
17:15 – 18:45	Discussion of the results in a plenum session
18:45 – 20:00	Dinner
20:00	Lecture entitled " <i>Cultural Mediation at the Central Counselling Bureau for Sexually Transmitted Diseases (CCB) in Hamburg</i> " <sup>2</sup>

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Day

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9:00 – 10:30	Basic suppositions involved in cultural mediation
10:45 – 12:30	The role and responsibilities of a cultural mediator: 3 cultural mediators present their work <sup>3</sup>
12:30 – 14:00	Lunch break
14:00 – 15:30	Cultural mediation in practice Using role-playing in your work
16:00 – 17:30	Body language, gesture and para-linguistic expression in counselling work Exercises to develop self-perception
17:45 – 18:45	Review of the day's work (consequences and guidelines for work)
18:45 – 20:00	Dinner
20:00	Cultural event / Entertainment programme

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Day

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9:00 – 10:30	Working in an intercultural team – avenues of conflict and group dynamics
10:45 – 12:30	Concept of cultural mediation as linked up to institutions: Pre-requisites, difficulties, perspectives, limits
12:30 – 13:30	Lunch break
13:30 – 14:30	Evaluation and conclusion

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<sup>2</sup> Christiane Wulf, Social worker, Deputy Director of the Central Counselling Bureau (CCB) in Hamburg

<sup>3</sup> Vera Sagel, TAMPEP and CCB  
Pat Mix, *Amnesty for Women*  
Inge Hambdorf, *Amnesty for Women* and CCB

## **Seminar procedure**

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### **General welcome**

A large percentage of the people working in the sex industry in Germany are migrant women. Therefore, public health care facilities specially directed at sex workers must take this reality into consideration.

To provide prostitutes with access to information, health care and social services, the counselling services cannot get around the necessity of dismantling barriers as much as possible and of taking on competent personnel who have the requisite linguistic and cultural skills to deal with this target group.

The World Health Organisation has formulated guidelines and recommendations concerning equal rights to receiving health care, but they are not binding. Germany does not possess any general legal stipulations concerning equality of access to health care for migrants; there is not even a law giving the migrant a right to demand the aid of an interpreter at a health care facility. Intercultural counselling is fraught with communication hurdles. Communication on topics such as disease and prevention require an approach which is sensitive to language and culture. Concepts of interpreting that go above and beyond literal translation and that take into account the culture-specific issues involved are only slowly coming to be recognized as relevant in practice. TAMPEP has developed a concept for cultural mediation and has put it into practice. This further training course aims at sensitising public health service employees to the concept of cultural mediation and winning them over to it.

## **First Day**

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### **Participants introduce themselves**

The round of introductions will be done using sociometric exercises. The questions in these exercises are as follows:

- How long did it take you to get here this morning?
- What direction (North, South, East or West) did you come from?
- How long have you been working in your current occupation and how long have you been an employee of the public health service?
- How satisfied are you with your occupation?
- How many (female) colleagues work in your team? Is your team intercultural?
- How many non-German clients do you have dealings with in the course of an average month?
- What is your personal motto for your work? Write it down on a piece of paper and look for those with similar mottos!

### **Reflections on one's own working situation**

- **First Exercise:**

The fact that you are taking part in this seminar is evidence of your willingness to review your attitudes and perspectives, and possibly to change them, and to contemplate structural deficiencies in your institution as well as strategies to overcome them. The first question for you to answer (in small groups) is:

What do you feel is awkward and cumbersome in your counselling work with migrant sex workers at the moment?

Draw up a web chart you can all use. In the centre write the main keyword. Now list up around it the various associations that come to mind. The exercise of listing up the associations serves as a kind of hypothesising. Causes and consequences are often difficult to tell apart. Now, using lines and arrows, join up the words (concepts) that are connected with each other or somehow interrelated.

The presentation of the results will take place during the plenum session.

- **Second Exercise:**

What obstacles stand in the way of opening up to people of widely differing nationalities at the health service facility where you work? Please distinguish between 'soft' factors (e.g. interpretation of values, the way you see yourself, history) and 'hard' facts (e.g. money, political and legal guidelines).

The analysis of the results will take place during the plenum session.

- **Third Exercise:**

Work out a vision: Imagine that when you return to work, cultural mediation is introduced at your office. What is different, new, fascinating about your work? What worries you? Prepare in small groups a role-play through which you can realise your vision and present it to the others.

**Comment on methodical procedure:**

The process of change always touches those who seek change. Only when people truly know themselves and can see through the motives and limitations of their situation at work, are they in a position to recognize problems when they see them, to define those problems and bring about change.

Furthermore, scrutiny of one's own cultural background is to be made an integral part of the training course here and incentives for intercultural perspectives are to be created.

**Synopsis of the lecture**

## **Interpreters and Cultural Mediators at the Central Counselling Bureau of the Department of Employment, Health and Social Welfare in Hamburg**

In 1997 the Central Counselling Bureau for Sexually Transmitted Diseases, Hamburg (*Zentrale Beratungsstelle für sexuell übertragbare Erkrankungen, Hamburg*) developed a new concept according to which mediators who spoke the client's language and knew the client's culture were put in place of the interpreters hitherto used. This new concept has vastly altered the sphere of activity of the mediators at the Central Counselling Bureau. The cultural mediators give the clients basic information, work in disease prevention, make contact with the clients and accompany them to other institutions (family planning centres, medical specialists, immigration offices).

The concept was hammered out in internal training courses on social and medical issues. As the cultural mediators work independently, contact with the clients and treatment of them could be made more intensive. On account of their familiarity with both the language and culture of the clients the mediators were able to bridge the gap between the host and the client cultures and establish a bond of trust between the two. This meant that the isolation of the women was more effectively penetrated and the women became more reachable. As a result of this new potential for the clients to articulate their anxieties and needs directly in their mother tongue without the intercession of a third party, the clients feel that they are being taken seriously. Experience to date shows that the women open up and come to trust the CCB more quickly and access it more readily.

The implementation of this concept was a long labour of love, taking quite a long time to do. This was partly due to the fact that the exact role the cultural mediators were to take on and what would be expected of them had not been clearly defined. The introduction of the cultural mediators into the conversation (between health officer and client) at first caused conflicts to do with spheres of responsibility and power which then led to distrust. The mediators worked very much in the interests of the client whereas the social workers saw the mediators simply as interpreters. This was a potential area of conflict, because the duties of the cultural mediators were understood differently by the two sides.

The introduction of the mediators into the conversation was not seen in the same light by the two parties. The mediators got the impression they would only be called in when intercultural knowledge was required. The social workers, on the other hand, felt the mediators were a disturbing presence and often considered the introduction of them as an attempt by the mediators to usurp the role of counsellor. The social workers expressed the opinion that this not only disturbed the atmosphere of the conversations, but also robbed them of a part of their counselling work.

These problems and conflicts about areas of responsibility as well as the role of the mediators persisted until both sides saw no other way out than to sit down and talk about the situation, exchange views and reflect on their work. During these talks, they tried to establish clearly what the role and significance of cultural mediation were. Since these first opportunities of mutual exchange with a view to healing conflicts and solving problems and as a result of further talks aimed at fine-tuning, the limits and responsibilities of the mediators' work has become clearer and clearer. This has led to a



more efficient and less conflict-fraught working relationship between the two sides. It has also reinforced mutual respect.

The cultural mediator should not be seen as a colleague who is putting the counselling officer's job in jeopardy, but should be acknowledged as an equal partner. Effective co-operation is only possible if both partners accept, trust and respect the qualifications of the other side, as is normal in other professions. This can also serve as a means of doing away with the anxieties and problems involved.

## **Second Day**

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### **Basic suppositions involved in cultural mediation in the health service Theories to be discussed**

- Every person has the right to receive counselling and be treated properly.
- If bad or inappropriate counselling and treatment are given, the consequences for clients can be highly detrimental, even damaging, and expensive for the health service.
- The Federal Republic of Germany is a society that attracts migrants. This means that all public facilities including the health services have to be prepared and able to adjust in order to deal with their new clientele and work out a new definition for the quality of their work.
- Up to now migrant women have generally observed that public health facilities often operate on a completely different set of assumptions from theirs. They feel that the officers do not understand or accept what they are saying or who they are culturally.
- Public health officers are under a lot of pressure in intercultural counselling situations. If they feel too pressured and overstretched, the counselling they give can suffer badly.
- Counselling situations are also situations of social control where there is a risk that the status quo with regard to the power structures in society which support the exclusion of minorities and the categorisation of them as "outsiders" is retained and replicated.
- Where partners are unable to communicate properly and a bond of trust cannot be established, both sides tend to make false judgements about the other and wrongly interpret their partner, giving rise to mutual consternation.
- If the conditions for mutual understanding are fulfilled (or at least met to a great extent), a new culture can establish itself where all parties involved feel happier with the situation.
- Cultural mediation helps get the actual message across in a way that takes language and culture into consideration and contributes towards mutual understanding.
- Cultural mediation also proves advantageous for the migrant women. They win protection through their own perception of their sufferings and the acknowledgement by others of their sufferings. This makes passing on information to them and treating them much easier. They are sensitised to why they do what they do, because they are made to feel worth something with their problems, questions and sufferings.
- For employees in the public health service, competence in dealing with intercultural communication means the ability to recognize different cultural allegiances as a resource and to use the methods of cultural mediation consciously.

## **Roles And Responsibilities Of Cultural Mediators**

Cultural mediators are interpreters and intermediaries. They fulfil the function of a go-between where the presence of vastly different cultural backgrounds means that behaviour is off-putting, communication is blocked and understanding founders, leading to distress. The particular resources that cultural mediators provide are:

- Linguistic competence – Multi-lingualism
- Experience of migrating
- Ability to act in a multicultural environment

Another problem which surfaced while working alongside salaried employees of the public health service was that insufficient financial resources and insecure job situations cause existing patterns of social stratification and discrimination to be reinforced and replicated: "You have the good jobs, the secure position; we just get hauled in to help out".

For the cultural mediator, the development of an awareness of her own professional rights and responsibilities is imperative. That includes the distance that her job demands she take from her clients. "It took time for me to grasp that it was necessary for me to distance myself from the person seeking my help. This is not out of selfishness. It is rather because only then am I in a position to help and support her properly. Since realising this I have changed the way I deal with the clients."

## **Three Cultural Mediators Present Their Work**

They will report on the way the counselling consultations are organised or arranged, their roles in relation to the institution where they work, the expectations placed on them by others concerning problems and conflicts that arise in their joint work with doctors and social workers, on expectations placed on them by the clients and also on their qualifications.

In their reports on their work they will also tell the participants what type of phenomena occur when discussing the topics of sexuality and prostitution with their clients.

### **Eastern Europe**

The Russian mediator often hears from her colleagues (social workers) that they sense the conceit of the Russian women and also their cool, aloof manner. Here one must remember that women from what used to be the Soviet Union have no experience of public services manned by friendly staff there to help them. The State in their experience has only ever been a grim organ of grief and injury. The mediator also had to explain to her colleagues that the Russian women's behaviour is more the result of insecurity and anxiety. They are only trying to protect themselves by putting on a very cool and aloof manner from the very beginning.

Women from the former Soviet Union have very bad experience of *the pill*, (pill that prevents conception). The Soviet Union did not manufacture *the pill* domestically, but imported it from what used to be East Germany and from Hungary. These pills were nothing more than hormone bombs of the first generation. They had strong side-effects. They caused weight-gain and dizziness and doctors had to warn the women against

cancer. As the pills were mostly procured through illegal channels and because women tended to take them without seeking a doctor's advice as to dosage, the women often experienced unpleasant complications such as strong haemorrhaging or period irregularities. Those are the fears that are behind the Russian women's refusal to take *the pill* and their preference for multiple abortions. If the counsellor then tries to persuade the woman to take the pill in spite of the woman's refusal to do so, which the counsellor finds inexplicable, the mediator remains fully conversant with the reasons for this refusal and the fears that the woman has and can understand the woman's stance.

### **Latin America**

The customs concerning the taking of medication in many countries in Latin America vary dramatically from those in Germany. A lot of medication is available without prescription. People tend to treat themselves on the advice of friends. Only armed with this knowledge can it be impressed on the Latin American women, via the cultural mediator, that she should take her medication at the times stipulated and not give it away to someone else.

Also the way certain topics are discussed in Latin America is very different from the way they are discussed in Germany. In such cases the mediator must steer the conversation round to the topic in hand in such a way that the migrant is not frightened off by the somewhat direct German manner.

### **Thai Women**

Sometimes it is very difficult to persuade Thai women to go for a check up with a gynaecologist, because they are not used to, and do not like, exposing themselves in front of a doctor, i.e. to be naked in front of a doctor, regardless of whether that doctor is male or female.

Gynaecological check ups in Thailand are different from those done in Germany. In Thailand women are covered with a thin blanket and there is always a female nurse around.

A cultural mediator is important in cases like this in order to explain to the doctor or social worker why a Thai woman is so shy. Some of them even have to make sure that the door is locked during the entire check up.

Language and gesture also play an important role in women's daily life. Many Thai women will nod their head to say *yes* even though they mean *no*. This makes it very difficult to gauge what they really mean or whether they really understand what the officer is saying. The Thai women do this merely to be polite.

Therefore, there are lots of misunderstanding between doctor, social worker and Thai women. The cultural mediator can in her role as a bridge between two cultures, watch those reactions and immediately interpret them and explain whether the women understand the conversation or not.

## **Cultural Mediation In Practice** **Working With Role-Plays**

Trying out the methods of cultural mediation yourself helps you learn how they work and what they are about. This helps you get your bearings and makes it easier for you to

put these methods into practice in your own situation. Only after putting a method into practice, can you see what effect it might have. The intensity of role-play situations helps participants identify with the idea of cultural mediation.

Various counselling situations will be role-played and as many participants as possible will have a go at playing all three roles of migrant sex worker, cultural mediator and counsellor. The cultural mediators will be on hand to play roles themselves to help the exercise work.

#### **Aim of the role-plays:**

- For participants to be made aware of cultural differences and to name them, and not to ignore them for fear of the potential for trouble to escalate
- For those observing to perceive astutely the subconscious definitions and stereotypes which arise immediately
- For participants to examine their own cultural perception filter, interpretation patterns and behaviour patterns
- For participants to practise changing their perspectives
- For participants to grasp that the individual and her experience are the starting point for encounters or contact, because individuals choose between their multiple identities (cultural identity is one of them) and define themselves according to the situation they happen to be in at the time.
- For participants to develop the ability to detach themselves from their own person and personal history

#### **Risks to the group dynamics in using role-plays**

Resistance can crop up when doing these role-plays about cultural difference. A taboo is infringed (on the German side, at least): everyone is aware of their own prejudices, is ashamed of themselves because of them, is frightened of being revealed as a prejudiced person and reacts by rejecting people.

Therefore, it is a good idea to establish a ritual "Step back out of the role" at the end of every role-play.

#### **Body Language And Para-linguistic Gestures In Counselling Work**

*"Where language does not reach, the body steps in"*

#### **Exercises to develop self-perception**

"The body is the glove of the soul, its language the word of the heart. Every inner movement, feeling, emotion and wish expresses itself through our bodies" (Samy Molcho)

- Greeting
- Approaching – Rejecting
- Expressing tension
- Bearing and carriage
- Seating order and ways of sitting
- Breathing
- Territorial behaviour
- Combat posturing and behaviour which aims to impress
- Signals showing pecking-order and status symbols

Body language: Gestures, metaphors and symbols

### **Review Of The Day's Work**

What is each individual participant going to take away with them in terms of impressions, thoughts and ideas?

- Quick round of comments

## **Third Day**

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### **Working In An Intercultural Team – Conflicts And Dynamics**

Important questions for the exchange of experience in the group:

- What experience do I have with multicultural teams?
- How will work and authority be distributed?
- Who takes the decisions, who makes the rules?
- What socio-cultural differences will become clear?
- What about respect for other people's "difference"?
- How will they go about acknowledging, rewarding or criticising team members?
- What things spark off conflicts?

Only a miniscule amount of cultural difference is ever consciously acknowledged or perceived, i.e. language, appearance, clothing, mores. Subconscious difference comes to the fore on the level of things like expected behaviour depending on role, attitude to work and tempo with which people work, time and motion practices, dealing with authority, the meaning of efficiency, the way decisions are taken, the way contact is made and the way conflicts are handled.

If basic values in the culture of either parties are violated, feelings such as indignation, anger

and incredulity can well up. Because people tend to take their own values for granted as natural values, it often never occurs to them that others may not share them and that cultural differences can be the cause of distress and trouble in working with others. Also, they often lack the vocabulary to address these differences.

A pre-requisite of working together in multicultural teams is a heightened tolerance of ambiguity, i.e. the ability to put up with and cope with contradictions.

### **The Concept "Cultural Mediation" And Its Link With Institutions**

What is the good of a good idea if only a few people are prepared to take it on? Hence the question: How do we go about realising the concept at the institutions you represent here?

- Describe the situation we are starting from
- Define our goal
- Develop strategy for the implementation of the concept
- Make room for dealing with resistance and conflicts
- Determine the very first steps to be taken
- Agree on standard procedure for concerted action

- Monitor success

### **Evaluation and Conclusion**

- Do you have the feeling that the issues that are important for you were addressed?
- Do you regard the results of the deliberations as basically positive for your daily work?
- Did anything worry you or was anything cause of anxiety in working together with the other participants?
- What was the basis for these worries or anxieties and how were you able to resolve them?
- Would you recommend cultural mediation to others without hesitation?

### **Closing Words**

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Participants experience countless limitations in their every day lives through the general prevailing regimes attendant at the institutions and offices of the public health service.

The main problems are:

- lack of personnel/understaffed offices
- lack of resources – lack of funds
- legal limitations
- Making the counselling centres actually work properly – enquiries into numbers and statistics: emphasis on quantity, not quality.
- Limited therapeutic and medical care offered: no funds available for longer-term treatment
- Institutional hierarchies involved in the decision-making process
- Prejudices against working with the target group "*Migrant women*"
  - Low regard for the work and the women
  - Low regard for social work
- Advantages from colleagues' standpoint

A variety of demands confront health service employees in their work with the target group "*Migrant women*".

In their direct, face-to-face dealings with their clients they have to cope with:

- Mistrust of the institution they represent
- Unreliability
- Lack of room to manoeuvre on their own initiative
- Lack of openness

The employees react with feelings of powerlessness, have problems delineating the boundaries of their work and responsibility, and wonder how involved they dare get in each case. They do not feel able to do justice to themselves or to the clients. Confusion as to what their goal should be is the result. ("*What do the women want?*").

The employees do not have intermediaries at their disposal who speak the client's language and know the client's culture and who can make counselling in line with decent standards possible. They are not familiar with the cultural and social background of the clients. They need well qualified mediators and a new definition of social work *vis-a-vis* migrants

## **Outlook**

The training course showed the participants what cultural mediation is and what cultural mediators can do in practice.

The role of the cultural mediator became particularly clear through role-plays.

The seminar unearthed new perspectives for doctors and social workers in the public health service. It gave all of them the opportunity to obtain the means, including its supporting argumentation, to change the way things are done at their various places of work.

The training course encouraged participants to bring up intercultural topics more for discussion and to invite more serious attention to these topics from the upper echelons of the public health service.

In the public health service, working with cultural mediators will, in future, be indispensable. Therefore, adequate funding and personnel resources must be made available.

Participants on the training course were highly motivated to fight for these resources and to put the ideas of cultural mediation into practice in their daily work.

## **Texts used as transparencies and posters**

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The following 14 texts were brought out on different occasions in order to underline the main points discussed during the seminar. They were used as transparencies during the lectures and as posters on show around the seminar room.

Afterwards, they were distributed as hand-outs to remind the participants of what materials were used at the seminar and also as reference materials to be used when

attempting to persuade policy makers or other authorities of the importance and necessity of using cultural mediation in developing work methods for dealing with a migrant target group.

## Basic Suppositions

- Every person has a right to receive counselling and to be treated properly.  
(*Fundamental stance of the Ethno-Medical Centre Hannover*)
- Where cultural mediation is not available and the resulting counselling and treatment are shoddy or inappropriate, the consequences can be much worse for the patient and much more costly for the public health services.  
(*WHO representative*)
- Germany is a society that attracts migrants. This means that all public facilities including the health services have to be prepared and able to adjust in order to deal with their new clientele and work out a new definition for the quality of their work.

## The TAMPEP Definitions

- Cultural mediators are intermediaries who know the motivations, customs and rules not only of the nationalities or ethnic groups migrating, but also of the host country, and at the same time are familiar with the conditions, social ethics and the scene in which this minority lives.
- They are neither social workers nor occupied as instruments of the local health authorities: nor are they simply translators; however, they are armed with a certain basic level of knowledge which allows them to pass on specific information when doing streetwork or working as workshop leaders or trainers.
- Cultural mediators in this area of work are also regarded as **supporters**, as they are there to strengthen and reinforce the sex-workers' self-confidence so that the latter can change their behaviour and their negotiation tactics. Mediators must support migrant sex-workers to help them be more professional in their job as sex-workers and to act as professional sex-workers, even if the majority of them do not see themselves as such.
- Cultural mediators are experts, because they themselves have experienced the migration process and, in some cases, have also worked in the sex industry and because they have sufficient knowledge of the areas mentioned above.

## Cultural mediators in the public health service

- Not only do they speak the target group's language and translate what the client says, but more importantly they convey the **cultural values** and **non-verbal signs** between two totally different groups.
- Mediators function as **bridges** between the health carer and the clients.



- As a recognised team member there to support counsellor and client, they are in a position to promote **real understanding** during the counselling sessions and, as a result, influence and steer the behaviour of both sides.
- The cultural mediator has a **clearly defined, autonomous** and **neutral** position within the three-party counselling sessions
- The cultural mediators must be recognised as members of the counselling team **fully equal in standing** to the doctors and social workers.

### **Job profile of the cultural mediator in the public health service**

- To concentrate on translating carefully for the social worker or doctor
- To do *streetwork* with social workers and doctors; to participate in the evaluation of the work done to seek out and inform the target group
- To make contact with the clients while they wait for the counselling sessions to begin
- To bring across to the clients basic information about the health facility and methods involved in preventive medicine
- To fine-tune information materials in the native language of the client and hammer out concepts on prevention along with the other team members
- To put on *workshops* in co-operation with the other team members
- To accompany clients, where necessary, on visits to the offices of local authorities, hospitals, doctors' surgeries etc
- To do regular evaluations

### **Qualifications that the public health service require of the cultural mediators**

- To have a highly competent command of the language to be interpreted from and into
- To know the facts concerning STD, HIV & AIDS, safer sex practices, pregnancy & contraception, hygiene etc

- To be privy to laws and legal stipulations in the Federal Republic of Germany regarding immigration, foreign residents and prostitution
- To be well-informed of the legal and social situation of migrant women in the Federal Republic of Germany
- To be conversant with the culture of the home country, the reasons why women migrate and the consequences of their migration
- To be familiar with methods of preventive medical care
- To be disciplined in impartiality and neutrality in order to ensure a truly professional standard of mediation
- To be critically aware of their own personal ideas as well as received norms regarding sexuality, prostitution, abortion et cetera so that they can remain neutral in their work, preventing their personal opinions from spilling over into the counselling

### Obligations of the team members towards one another

- The **social workers** tell the cultural mediators about the social welfare system, local networks and the most common crisis scenarios.
- The **doctors** teach the cultural mediators about STD, HIV & AIDS, safer sex practices, pregnancy & contraception, hygiene et cetera
- The **cultural mediators**, in their turn, make the doctors and social workers aware of the home-country culture of the clients

### Communication

- Where partners are unable to communicate properly and a bond of trust cannot be established, both sides tend to make false judgements about the other and wrongly interpret their partner, giving rise to mutual consternation.
- If the conditions for mutual understanding are fulfilled (or at least met to a great extent), a new culture can establish itself where all parties involved feel happier with the situation.
- Cultural mediation helps get the actual message across in a way that takes language and culture into consideration and contributes towards mutual understanding.

### Counselling situations

- Up to now migrant women have generally observed that public health facilities often operate on a completely different set of assumptions from theirs. They feel that the officers do not understand or accept what they are saying or who they are culturally.

- Public health officers are under a lot of pressure in intercultural counselling situations. If they feel too pressured and overstretched, the counselling they give can suffer badly.
- Counselling situations are also situations of social control where there is a risk that the status quo with regard to the power structures in society which support the exclusion of minorities and the categorisation of them as "outsiders" is retained and replicated.

## The difference between a translator and a cultural mediator

TRANSLATOR	CULTURAL MEDIATOR
- She is <b>only</b> responsible for translating	- She is responsible for translating <b>and</b> for taking into account all multicultural factors
- She is an impartial entity	- She champions the one side
- She does <b>not</b> have any influence over the content of the conversation	- She influences the content of the conversation, because she can and should intervene where necessary
- She does not get emotionally involved	- She is allowed to get emotionally involved

### When should counselling proceedings be interrupted

- When the cultural mediator has not understood what she is supposed to translate
- When either of the two parties has not understood the content or tone of what the other has said despite accurate translation
- When members sense that information about cultural practices is (too) scant
- When instances of injustice, illegality, lack of respect, abuse of official power or discrimination occur

### Mutual respect

- Cultural mediation also proves advantageous for the migrant women. They win protection through their own perception of their sufferings and the acknowledgement by others of their sufferings. This makes passing on information to them and treating them much easier. They are sensitised to why they do what they do, because they are made to feel worth something with their problems, questions and sufferings.
- For employees in the public health service, competence in dealing with intercultural communication means the ability to recognise different cultural allegiances as a resource and to use the methods of cultural mediation consciously.

## Changes made in accordance with the new concept of the CCB

- Cultural mediators now work **on their own initiative / independently** at the counselling centre
- The new role of the cultural mediators in *streetwork*: **independent**
- The possibility of bringing knowledge of the language and cultural background (of client and host country) to bear in the three-prong counselling conversation
- **Equality of standing** in the team

## Problems encountered in cultural mediation

### When the cultural mediator is seen as a miracle worker:

- By the clients: as a *healer* or the person responsible for solving their problems
- By the institutions: transferring power of attorney to her or shoving in her lap all responsibility for the counselling process and its results

### When the cultural mediator is seen as being a stooge of the institution:

In this case she is exposed to the risk that she may be seen as an accomplice of the institution and thus may be unjustly held responsible for unpopular or unpleasant counselling sessions.

### When the cultural mediator is excluded by both parties:

- When the institutions harbour **unrealistic expectations** of the effectiveness of cultural mediation
- When the sex workers entertain **exaggerated hopes** that the mediator can (single-handedly) bring about improvements in health care services

## Other problems encountered in cultural mediation

- Less intimacy through presence of a third party
- Possible loss of meaning in isolated statements due to translation
- Anxiety about competition on the job between the cultural mediator and the social worker
- Danger of making decisions for the client (instead of doing what they want)
- Danger that the social worker/cultural mediator might abuse their power

**It must be clear for both sides from the very beginning that cultural mediation is no guarantee of success for either party. The rights and also the limitations of each party must be acknowledged and respected.**

## TRAINING 2

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# Working with and for migrant and mobile sex workers

Training for social workers in organisations already dealing with migrant and mobile sex workers and/or for those wishing to start working with that target group

## Put on by:

TAMPEP Project in Germany

## Workshop outline:

- The TAMPEP Project
- An overview of migrant and mobile prostitution in Europe
- What to consider when working with migrant and mobile sex workers
- Why and how to do outreach work
- The importance of cultural mediation
- The importance of peer education
- Role play

## Structure of the workshop

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The aim of the workshop was to bring up the most important issues concerning the starting and the development of social work directed towards migrant and mobile sex workers in a West European country.

Also to confront the participants with the different problems which the target group is faced with and which have direct consequences on their living and working conditions, such as:

- The current legislation concerning immigration, prostitution and trafficking in women, etc.
- their legal status in the country
- their access to social and health care services
- their access to general information about their rights, employment and residency possibilities in the host country

Another important issue discussed was the concrete possibility for doing fieldwork and the proper way to go about it, given the specificity of the Danish sex industry and the organisations and institutions dealing with that target group.

The workshop lasted five hours with a one hour break.

The salient points of each section of the seminar were presented in front of the whole audience by means of an overhead projector. These points are the ones presented here as constituting the structure for a workshop of this nature.

Questions arose continuously from the audience, leading to a fruitful exchange of experience between the different participants who were employees of a variety of institutions in the social and preventative health care sector.

During the section dealing with *Outreach work* a range of materials developed by TAMPEP specifically for work with migrant and mobile sex workers were put on display. This gave seminar organizers a useful opportunity to describe in more detail the methodology employed during practical work (fieldwork, workshops, etc) developed by TAMPEP in the different prostitution scenes.

The role play gave those with less experience the opportunity to have a more accurate picture of the prostitution scene and the different factors which influence the situation of its population.

After the presentation participants discussed topics such as: legalisation of prostitution, trafficking in women and ideas and proposals on how and where intervention would be most effective (through practical work, peer education, political lobbying etc.) in order to improve the living and working conditions of migrant sex workers in that region.

## **The TAMPEP project**

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TAMPEP is a project which started in 1993 and now links up 22 countries in the EU and in Central and Eastern Europe.

It is a model of intervention, reaching more than 20 different nationalities of women and transgender sex workers from Central and Eastern Europe, South East Asia, Africa and Latin America.

- TAMPEP provides migrant sex workers with culturally appropriate HIV/STD education, resources and materials. It has developed specific information materials in 10 different languages.
- It seeks to increase empowerment and self-esteem among migrant sex workers.
- It educates social and medical establishments to respond better to the needs of migrant sex workers in terms of health and well-being.
- TAMPEP is a reference point for migrant sex workers as it observes the variations and dynamics of migration in the countries served by the project.
- It investigates the social, legal and working conditions of migrant sex workers through fieldwork in the different prostitution areas.
- The project works with two professionals trained by TAMPEP:
  - the **cultural mediator**, a person from the migrant community who acts as a bridge between members of that community and social services and health care institutions, and
  - the **peer educator**, a sex worker who is trained to pass on information and increase empowerment among her peers.

## **An overview of migrant and mobile prostitution in Europe**

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**Percentage increase in the presence of migrant women  
in the European sex industry \***  
%

	1997		1999		2001
Austria	70	↗	85	=	85
Belgium	30	↗	45	↗	60
Denmark	30	=	30	↗	35
Finland	20	↗	30	↗	50
France	40	=	40	↗	60
Germany	50	↗	55	↗	60
Greece	60	↗	70	=	70
Ireland	10	↗	15		-----
Italy	80	↗	90	=	90
Luxembourg	40	=	40	=	40
Netherlands	60	↗	70	↗	75
Norway		↗	25	↗	30
Portugal	15	↗	20	=	20
Spain **	40	↗	50		
Sweden	20	↗	25		-----
United Kingdom	25		There are variations depending on the town. *		

\* **Attention!** These figures are not absolute numbers. They just show a tendency, in percentage, of the amount of migrant sex workers in each country.

\*\* The numbers of Spain represents only the city of Madrid.

Despite the exacerbation of repressive policies that have been implemented in all European countries in the past two years, the migrant sex-worker population has increased.

It has been noted that the supply of people and the organisation of the commercial sex market are global. In those countries where TAMPEP intervenes, we note that policies aimed at containing or eliminating prostitution have the unintended effect of creating greater territorial distribution of prostitution and an increase in its overall extent within the commercial sex market. Repressive policy also makes more room for the entry of new protagonists, compromises the safety, autonomy and the capacity to negotiate of professional prostitutes, and widens the field of action for criminal organisations involved in exploiting prostitution and trafficking women. The immediate outcome of police intervention and abrupt administrative policy changes, which impose controls or prohibitions, is greater sex-worker mobility. To evade controls and to exercise their



trade, the prostitutes go elsewhere. *Overt prostitution becomes covert prostitution.* In the situation of covert prostitution, it is easier to escape detection and controls, because prostitutes ply their trade in apartments, in night-spots, in small provincial centres and outside or on the edges of cities or towns rather than in them. In this way, new prostitution circuits are created, leading to an increase in the number of prostitutes and the overall extent and forms of prostitution.

The globalisation of prostitution and the logistic and communication networks surrounding the migrant/prostitute community give every indication that there will be no significant fall in the numbers of people choosing to migrate. The people excluded from the official economy in EU countries seek economic survival in the grey economy. Therefore, we strongly feel that the practice of prostitution should be considered, classified, and legally recognised as official work.

Migrants now engage in prostitution in all EU countries. Unlike in the past, the high percentage of female migrant sex workers is no longer a characteristic peculiar to the countries of Northern Europe.

In all European countries, factors such as the geographic vicinity of the country of destination and migratory movements that extend beyond borders, seem to be of greater influence. Also, to explain the presence, or the lack of presence, of certain nationalities in certain EU countries, regional considerations are of extreme importance. For example, Greece, which lies in the Balkan region, Turkey and other Asian countries serve as countries of transit towards other destinations. Scandinavian countries are countries of entry and passage for women from the Baltic region. Also, in the Baltic countries, local private organisations report the presence of Russian, Moldavan and Ukrainian women within the local sex industry.

Migratory routes become established on the basis of things such as the entry visa requirements for tourism (or other purposes) of each EU country, the norms and the extent of police controls and the usual outcome of these controls, and the legal norms for expulsion or repatriation in each of the European countries that is a signatory to the Schengen Accords.

Finally, the most important factor of all is the character and spirit of each woman who leaves her country to improve her conditions in life, the vigour with which she seeks social and economic opportunities elsewhere and her determination, whatever the cost, short of committing outright criminal offences, to overcome every administrative, legal or physical obstacle that may come her way.

## **What to consider when working with migrant and mobile sex workers**

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## Confrontation

To work with and for migrant sex workers means, among other things, being confronted with:

- Clichés concerning migrant women in general and specific nationalities in particular
- Impotence in the face of facts and situations mainly due to immigration laws
- Cultural misunderstandings
- Or situations where there is no communication at all or in which one has the feeling of not getting through to the other party in any way.
- Confrontation with discrimination and stigmatisation towards prostitution.

## Prostitution is a job

Nowadays prostitution is a job option for millions of women around the world, not only during the migration process, but also in their home countries<sup>4</sup>:

- According to the *Spiegel*, there are 70,000 women working in prostitution in Bombay
- According to *Veja*, there are 1,500,000 women working as prostitutes in Brazil
- According to *Le Monde*, there are about 300,000 Central and Eastern European women working in prostitution in Western Europe

According to *TAMPEP*, most of the women working in prostitution nowadays in Western Europe are migrants.

## Migration

Most of the time one is dealing with a group which is under constant pressure and in the most varied relationships of dependency.

Each individual will generally have experienced very different things from the moment they decided to migrate. The reasons why they decided to migrate are not important at this juncture. The important fact is that **they, themselves, decided** to leave their country in order to find whatever they were looking for in another country.

At this stage it is important to reinforce three facts:

1. That most migrant women who work in the Western European sex industry are not victims of trafficking in the way one hears about in the media.
2. That *trafficking in women* occurs **not only** to force women into prostitution but also to employ them as cheap domestic labour or illegal industrial labour. Women are also trafficked for the purposes of providing men with wives<sup>5</sup>. The fact that trafficking in women is directly and almost exclusively linked with prostitution serves only to increase the stigmatisation of and discrimination towards prostitutes.
3. That most women know they are going to work as prostitutes. What they do not know are the conditions in which they are going to engage in this activity.

During the migration process, most migrant sex workers have to cope with being illegal and at the same time socially marginalised. As a result, their basic human rights get virtually zero recognition. These situations in which women become extremely vulnerable are the ones which lead easily to exploitation and trafficking.

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<sup>4</sup> *Der Spiegel*, December 1999

*Veja*, April 2000

*Le Monde*, March 2000

*TAMPEP*, October 1999

<sup>5</sup> This is to a large extent facilitated by legislation which governs marriage to foreigners whose status of permanent residency in the country depends directly on the marriage.

In this process the laws governing immigration have a direct influence on the living and working conditions of migrant sex workers.

### **Consequences of immigration law**

- **Dependency** on third persons (pimps, club owners, husbands and other people involved in the sex industry)
- **Exploitation** through underpayment, long working hours, unprotected and unsafe working conditions
- **Isolation** because of cultural differences, language problems, lack of information on social and legal rights
- **Mobility** because their temporary visa has expired or because they are taken by their pimps to another place
- **Insecurity and fear** which can cause physical and psychological problems
- **Exposure** to dominating and exploitative clients who force them to accept all conditions, however unacceptable: low prices, unprotected sex, unsafe working conditions

### **Points to consider**

- **The internationalisation of prostitution determines and maps the structures of the prostitution scene world wide.**  
New policies need to take account of changes resulting from internationalisation.
- **Denying rights is an obstacle to proper social welfare and health care.**  
The acceptance of prostitution and the process of internationalisation are both important for effective implementation of health care services and HIV/STD prevention for migrant sex workers.  
Evidence shows that regulations (requiring legal status and valid health insurance) discourage migrant sex workers from approaching health care services and the like, because they fear being reported to the authorities as illegal immigrants. Consequently, they distrust all kinds of government offices and local authorities.  
This results in extremely limited access to health care services and to information on safer sex practices and health promotion. Under these conditions safer sex is not a priority anymore.  
*- how can primary prevention work be done, how can healthy practices be widely promoted, if you cannot reach your target group, because it is obliged to hide?*
- **Preventing exploitation should not mean preventing prostitution.**  
A clear difference should be made between political measures against exploiters and policies addressing the rights of migrants themselves, including their decision to enter the European sex market.
- **Social policies do not reflect the changes in the sex industry.**  
The effects of repressive policies are mostly counter-productive with regard to safer sex practices in general, public health and the right of self-determination.
- **Prostitution should be decriminalised and legalised.**  
Because prostitution is a job which enables millions of women to earn a living and support their families. Those who choose to do it should have their social and employment rights guaranteed.

## **Why and how to do outreach work**

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- **Prostitution is a social phenomenon that requires the employment of strategies which specifically address sex workers.**
- **To be able to develop effective and efficient work for migrant sex workers, it is necessary to bear in mind the fact that women from totally different backgrounds (cultural, religious, health and sexual values) need totally different approaches, strategies and information materials.**

In about half of the EU countries, outreach work is not implemented as part of prevention activities for migrant sex workers. However, because of their considerable mobility and the resulting high turnover in migrants, the different prostitution areas need to be visited in all countries at regular intervals and in an intensive and repetitive way.

### Aims

- **to contact women** who are usually extremely mobile, isolated and marginalised.
- **to gain insight** into the state of health, working and living conditions of migrant sex workers.
- **to identify possible peer educators**, select and train them.
- to make migrant sex workers aware of the **social welfare and health care services that are available** and to improve their access to them.
- to encourage and **support the migrant sex workers in reporting cases on trafficking** in women and any other kind of exploitative or abusive behaviour.
- to inform migrant sex workers, especially the non-insured ones, of their **rights and legal status** during their stay in the country.
- **to empower migrant sex workers**; to support and encourage them to develop self-confidence, self-awareness and self-esteem.
- **to inform politicians and policy makers** of the problems migrant sex workers are confronted with when staying in a given city/country

### Points to watch

- Building up **trust** between the outreach worker and the target group is a fundamental goal to be accomplished in this type of work.
- The outreach worker should **speak the same language** as the target group or work with a cultural mediator, in order to make the first contact, and afterwards develop her own relationship of trust with the target group.
- Experience has already shown that **working with an "interpreter" is not enough**. Cultural mediators or peer educators are much more effective, as they are trained to deal with that target group and because they, too, have generally been through the experience of migrating and/or of working as a prostitute.
- It is very important **to be as neutral as possible**, to be open and not to adopt a discriminatory, arrogant, paternalistic or pitying attitude.
- **To demonstrate that you respect her and her job**. That you do not want to take her away from it (or "rescue" her from her plight, for instance). Your goal is to get across to her the information she needs on how and why to protect herself better from diseases, infections, etc.
- By doing that, the outreach worker will automatically be giving the sex workers the means to improve their **negotiation techniques** and self-esteem.

- Because of the insecure social and legal status of the migrant sex workers, it is important to make it very clear from the beginning **whom you represent** (organisation, project, etc.), i.e. you are not from the police or from any other official organ of control.
- **For safety reasons**, an outreach worker should never do streetwork alone, but he/she should always be accompanied by another person (a cultural mediator, a peer supporter, a medical doctor, a social worker, etc.)
- The outreach worker should always be **well prepared for a crisis situation** or emergency. She should be able to show flexibility in dealing with acute problems occurring during her/his work.
- **Avoid going with a new person or with a group of persons each time you visit a sex worker.** This is work which is built on trust and confidentiality and sex workers should not be treated as *objects of academic study*. Avoid voyeurism!

### **Outreach work is also considered a difficult job**

- Because one has to go out in certain prostitution areas which are considered to be dangerous.
- Because the outreach worker often experiences initial hesitation in contacting sex workers as she fears that the sex worker might reject her overtures of help.
- Because of a possible social and cultural barrier and/or personal inhibitions in contacting sex workers.

### **The practice of outreach work**

The fact that migrant sex workers are an extremely mobile group and they constitute a social group whose profile is constantly changing in terms of its constituent nationalities means that **outreach work is virtually the only sure way of reaching this specific target group.**

### **How often**

- depends on **the size of the prostitution area** you are going to work in (one street, several streets, several different areas of town)
- depends on **the number of active sex workers** (full-time, part-time)
- depends on **the number of different cultural groups** in the area you are going to work in
- depends on **the type of prostitution** (streets, roads, bars, cabarets, clubs, brothels, window brothels, private apartments, houses, massage parlours, cinemas, escort agencies, saunas, peep shows, sex shows, etc.)
- Preferably, **accompanied by a cultural mediator or a peer supporter/educator.**

### **Different places of work**

There are some places of work where women are more easily accessed by an outreach worker, just because they have more time available and are not under pressure from pimps, bar owners or the coming and going of clients.

- **Apartments** are a good example of such a situation. As it is a form of hidden prostitution, women mostly live in the same place as they work and, therefore, they stay there the entire day. When visiting them, it is possible to improvise spontaneous workshops about the use of condoms, lubricants, sponges, contraceptive methods, HIV/STD prevention, and pass on information about health clinics, etc. The important point about this kind of outreach work is that the streetworkers always have to be ready and prepared in terms of time, materials and the necessary

knowledge about health prevention and social/legal issues in order to perform this sort of workshop.

## Outreach work with medical doctors

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In Hamburg (Germany) outreach work was done in apartments by cultural mediators accompanied by doctors from the local health care service. The results were very encouraging for several reasons:

- medical issues and questions could be dealt with immediately by the doctor
  - the sex workers felt much more at ease, because they were on their own territory,
  - they already knew whom they were going to meet at the health clinic and that gave them much more confidence.
- 

On the other hand, there are places where women are not so willing to waste time chatting to an outreach worker, but are more interested in what the clients are doing. In cases of this kind, the work of the outreach worker has to be very fast, concise and effective.

- In **bars**, for example, outreach work is often limited to just simple distribution of condoms and some small leaflets about how to reach the health clinic and/or the street worker/cultural mediator for further information.

### **Mobility**

The high turnover among migrant sex workers means that all information on safer sex practices, HIV/STD prevention, birth control, tuberculosis, condoms, lubricants and personal hygiene **should be given to them right away** at the first meeting. Otherwise there is the risk that the second time the outreach worker visits the woman, she may already have gone and have been replaced by another one.

### **Information materials**

- The educational/information materials should be distributed **in the languages of the target groups**.
- In the format of **what they are used to** as a means of communication: lots of text, or less text and more illustrations, etc.
- The main point, however, is what happens afterwards: if there is **no communication**, who is going to explain things or clarify any doubts? Therefore one can say that the simple distribution of leaflets alone is not enough to reach the target. If no translator or cultural mediator is on hand, the effort to inform will be in vain.
- **The production and use of information materials should be considered a tool for the work and not as an end in itself**. The materials should be created and developed **along** with the target group during workshops, streetwork and other kinds of regular meetings. This ensures that they become an important teaching resource during the training of peer educators/supporters.
- This involvement of sex workers in the production of materials is done in order to:
  - **improve the learning process** as it is done for and with migrant sex workers,
  - observe and **incorporate the specific cultural differences** within the group, and
  - **increase awareness** of HIV/STD and safer sex practices.
- The materials should be:
  - continuously adapted and developed.

- they should **be usable with people with varying levels of education** and be produced according to those levels (for example, audio-cassettes for illiterate people)
- their production should be cheap so that changing content does not mean exorbitant costs
- they should be a reasonable size (they have to be small enough to fit into pockets and small handbags).
- should **include addresses** where the migrant sex workers can obtain immediate, free and anonymous social and/or health counselling and assistance; mainly those where the services of interpreters or cultural mediators are available.

### **Knowledge of the scene**

- The street worker has to have a **good knowledge** of the prostitution scene in a given place. Preferably she should be (personally) acquainted with the owners of sex clubs, window brothels, bars etc.
- During outreach work, the outreach worker should reconnoitre the activities of **pimps**. Contact with a given prostitute may only be possible through the intervention of her pimp. In cases like this it is advisable to establish (friendly) relations with the pimps of the sex workers.

### **Streetwork bag**

During outreach work, the outreach worker needs a bag or briefcase to carry the articles which she will be distributing among the sex workers:

- different types of condoms (for vaginal, anal and oral sex), lubricants, sponges and various information leaflets.
- contraceptives (pills, IUD, diaphragm) and a dildo with which the correct use of condoms may be demonstrated and practised.

### **Meeting place**

In the absence of a drop-in centre, the project should have the use of a place or a room where meetings and workshops with sex workers, who cannot be approached at their place of work, can be held. These premises should be located near where the prostitutes work or live.

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### **Language courses**

In Hamburg (Germany) we have had very positive experience with German courses aimed specially at migrant sex workers inside their working area. The courses are taken by cultural mediators who teach the host country's language with emphasis on the practical needs of the migrant sex workers. Parallel to the German classes, they perform workshops on health promotion and safer sex practices, distribute condoms and information materials. The course has become a meeting point for migrant sex workers who also seek counselling and support.

### **Co-operation between a mobile unit and the drop-in centre**

In Italy the workers of mobile units initiate contacts with prostitutes working on the streets. The sex workers are invited and encouraged to visit a drop-in centre. The drop-in centre is then a counselling centre for sex workers and the place where all kinds of activities are carried out such as workshops, training courses for peer educators and contacts with residents interested in the project itself.

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### **Punctuality**

One point has to be very clear: **while working with migrant sex workers one should keep in mind that it is often difficult for the members of the target group to commit themselves to turning up for appointments, dates or any planned meetings or events** (workshops, visits to the doctor, etc.) **in advance**. This is due to their unstable living and working conditions which oblige them to change their priorities every other moment, even if the matter in hand concerns their own health.

## Cultural Mediation

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As with other marginalised social groups which are hard to reach, there is overall recognition of the need for specialised staff to deal with a multicultural target group. These people should be employed during fieldwork and at (health) institutions. They are key-people for work with migrant sex workers as well as fundamental contacts for both sex workers and institutions (NGOs and/or GOs).

**A cultural mediator is a person who is a go-between, who knows the customs and the codes of the host country as well as those of the minority group, the conditions, the social ethics and the scene in which this specific minority group operates.**

- It is a person belonging to the **same ethnic group or nationality** as the sex workers and therefore capable of recognising and appreciating the cultural and social mechanisms influencing their behaviour and choices. This person does not work in the sex industry, at least not when working as a mediator.
- She **mediates and intervenes between two different cultures to facilitate communication and understanding**, being able to translate and transmit, both ways, what is being said (including non-verbal language) and the different cultural, health and sexual values. Therefore she has a very important role vis-à-vis health care services, as she is able to call attention to and articulate the needs and expectations of both - sex workers and medical personnel.
- Through confidential contact, a cultural mediator is capable of **facilitating trust** and the contact with the target group.
- As a recognised supporter, she is required to promote and **facilitate empowerment** and counselling, as well as behaviour changes and self-esteem.
- A cultural mediator **works in co-operation** with health institutions (GOs) and/or NGOs.
- A cultural mediator has a **very clear autonomous, neutral and defined position** inside this triangular situation; a position that has to be made clear to both sides at the very beginning.
  - For one thing, not to build dependency on the side of the target group as well as false expectations as *healers*.
  - For another, not to be invested with the role of *advocate* for the services themselves, as she can be viewed as an accomplice of the service.



- Cultural mediators should be considered as co-workers in a team of specialists (doctors, health care personnel, social workers, lawyers, psychologists, etc.). Although they are neither social workers, nor health care personnel, nor mere translators, they have a basic knowledge of HIV/STD prevention, legal and social rights and the migrants' situation in the host country.

## Peer educator

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**The peer education method means that given members of the target group themselves pass on the information from the cultural mediators to their fellow members, encouraging empowerment and group solidarity.**

**At the same time, it uses the target group's tendency to move around a lot as a means of spreading the information in a greatly advantageous way, because the peer educators pass on the information in their own way - a way that gets through to their fellow members.**

- In contrast to the cultural mediator, a peer educator is a **member of the target group** and therefore identifies herself completely with the group.
- She has to be **recognised as a leader by the community** base while representing a particular project. Therefore, she has to be clear about her role within the group and the project itself.
- Peer education implies a **teaching role and an influence on behaviour**. A peer educator should be able to organise and conduct a series of lessons on various subjects tied to prevention and safer sex practices, as well as assist in raising awareness among her colleagues about STD and HIV/AIDS.
- Besides her role in increasing self-responsibility, knowledge and self-esteem, the peer educator should, at the same time, keep her duties within the community and her own and other sex workers private and professional lives apart.
- Peer educators have to be able to apply the concept of peer education within a situation of great mobility.
- The peer educator should be at an equal level with other team workers on the project. She should be able to exercise influence on decisions concerning the strategies and activities of the project.
- The peer educator should receive financial compensation for her services. However, one should bear in mind that payment can be effectuated in an unofficial way.

## Example of a Role Play

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This kind of exercise is meant for those who are starting to work with migrant and mobile sex workers.

By getting them into a defined situation, the role play should help them to understand the different points of view of each character in that given situation. To confront them with the various difficulties and priorities of each character and the relationships existing between them.

The prostitute, the client and the pimp have very clear roles.

The prostitute's friend, also a sex worker, should have the role and the weight decided by the group.

The prostitute, the client, the pimp and the friend go to another room for about 10 minutes to develop the situation which they are going to present.

The rest of the group get the different points which they will have to watch out for and observe in the scene which will be presented to them:

- What kind of language and words are used?
- Is there any non-verbal communication?
- What attitude do they have towards the prostitute?
- What about the prostitute: does she know what the reasons for the conflict are? Does she, herself, offer any solutions to the problem?
- What sort of relationships exist between the characters?
- Are there any clichés?
- Is it possible to find legal ways out?
- No situation is too absurd to be thought of, since (almost) everything is possible in a scenario which is ruled by its own codes, with people who are under different types of pressure, have different cultural backgrounds and behavioural values.

The main point is to develop a conflict among the figures which will then be discussed by the group in order to find solutions to the given problem or to find out what the reasons for the conflicts are or to study one of the characters more deeply, etc.

In a group of 12 people, they should be divided into four groups of three people each. Each group should have a prostitute, a social worker and a translator or a cultural mediator. Those who are presenting the role-play should not take part in the next step.

Those three characters should have a conversation in which some sort of proposal for the given problem is presented. This should happen in a pre-determined situation. In our case, two groups should stage the conversation in a counselling office and the other two in the prostitute's room. This is important because the power relationships between the characters vary according to the scenario.

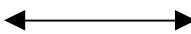
The proposal must not be a solution to the problem, but a first reaction to that situation.

The presentation should last about 5 to 10 minutes.

The four small groups should have about 15 minutes to decide their strategy.

Each small group should then present their "solution" to the group.

The group should discuss the matters, trying to find similarities and differences.

Prostitute	Client	Pimp	Prostitute's friend	Social worker
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- migrant woman (<i>determine her nationality</i>)</li> <li>- ..... years old (<i>determine her age</i>)</li> <li>- has not much experience of prostitution</li> <li>- six months in ..... (<i>determine the country</i>), roughly one year in Western Europe</li> <li>- speaks very little .....(<i>determine the language</i>)</li> <li>- illegal</li> <li>- she asks for help</li> <li>- she is nervous, has psycho-somatic symptoms.</li> <li>- she has been robbed (?)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- local man</li> <li>- asks for unsafe sex</li> <li>- asks woman to lower the price</li> <li>- knows about the vulnerable situation of the woman and takes advantage of it</li> </ul> <p><u>Points to watch:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- what about his awareness of safer sex practices?</li> <li>- What about his responsibility for his own sexuality?</li> <li>- there is a concrete need to develop specialised work (campaigns) for clients.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- traditional pimp or apartment owner or bar manager</li> <li>- or a friend to whom the prostitute owes money (travel debts)</li> <li>- or husband</li> <li>- pressures the woman to serve the client "properly"</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- migrant woman (<i>determine her nationality</i>)</li> <li>- .....years old (<i>determine her age</i>)</li> <li>- experienced prostitute</li> <li>- .....years in ..... (<i>determine time and country</i>)</li> <li>- she shows solidarity or just competition?</li> <li>- does she empower the colleague or stay on the side of the pimp?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- knowledge about Laws on Aliens, social and employment rights for migrants.</li> <li>- Contact to NGOs dealing with migrant population</li> <li>- contact to women shelters</li> <li>- contact to doctors, dentists, psychologists etc. who speak different languages</li> <li>- lawyers</li> <li>- contact to the police for women who want to press charges or inform on people.</li> <li>- <u>But be careful when contacting the police !!!!!</u> Trust is the most important issue when doing outreach work!!!!</li> <li>- contact to translators, cultural mediators</li> </ul>
<p><b>Power Relationship</b></p> 				
- The power to dictate the rules	- The power of money			

**Points to be noted:**

- Respect
- No paternalism
- Tolerance of the differences

## **The Project in Germany**

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### **International Meetings**

#### *General Meeting*

- Vienna, Austria / January 26-28, 2001

### **Bilateral Visits**

- Germany & Austria

Vienna, September 30, 2000

Austrian Training for Cultural Mediators, inside the *Leonardo da Vinci Programme*

### **The Team in Germany**

#### *Second Period*

- |                                   |                 |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|
| - Veronica Munk                   | Co-ordinator    |
| - Vera Sagel                      | Eastern Europe  |
| - Mónica Lastra and Julieta Manzi | Latin America   |
| - Evelyn Taresch                  | Finances        |
| - Llywelyn Golesworthy            | Translation     |
| - Bernhild Schrand                | Seminar Trainer |

**Katrin Lempp**  
Interviews

**Antje Mansbrügge**  
Transcription  
Assessment  
Text

# Cultural Mediation in the Public Health Service

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Taking stock of cultural mediation for the benefit of migrant women sex-workers in Hamburg's *Central Counselling Bureau for Sexually Transmitted Diseases*

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### ■ Observations and Perspectives

**A** high percentage of the people working in the sex industry in Western Europe, including Germany, are migrants. Migration is a reality in society as a whole as well as in all spheres of employment and this demands changes in structures and institutions which effect migrants. For prostitutes this means, amongst other things, the health services available in Germany and particularly those in Hamburg which specifically target the needs of sex-workers of both sexes.

Communication between those who offer medical or social services and their potential clients requires a certain competence in the areas of both language and culture. When this competence is lacking, a prostitute can easily be denied access to information and services. In such a situation a prostitute's social, medical and legal needs cannot be met. Thus, our goal must be twofold: the minimalization of barriers towards migrants to such access still extant in the pertinent institutions offering advice and the call for advice needed to be made available on demand. After all, *everyone has the right to avail themselves of both appropriate advice and necessary medical care*. However, this right is not laid down in the public health service in Germany. Guidelines and recommendations issued by the *World Health Organisation* (WHO) on equal rights to the use of health care facilities are not mandatory. WHO is trying to obtain international recognition for its proposed patient rights in which access to health care services is laid down by law.<sup>1</sup> German health care services also lack, at least in terms of language, more general regulations on an equal right of access for migrants to their services. Regulations could be part, say, of anti-discrimination laws. For instance, in Great Britain, such laws grant migrants the right to use interpreting services. Another

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<sup>1</sup> In 1994 this was set down by WHO European Region to safeguard the improvement of the health of migrant men and women.

## Cultural Mediation at TAMPEP

"Cultural mediators are go-betweens who know the rationale, the customs and the *mores* of the majority culture and the host country, as well as the conditions, social ethics and the scene in which the minority group operates" (L. Brussa).

### Furthermore<sup>2</sup>:

Cultural mediation is about conveying new intervention possibilities in the area of HIV and STD prevention through culture and language. The mediators function as bridges between providers of health services and the clients. They sensitize both sides to the behaviour and reservations of the other and mediate for both in a harmonizing way.

<sup>2</sup> Licia Brussa, "The TAMPEP project in Western Europe" in: Kamala Kempadoo, Jo Doezema (Hg.), *Global Sex Workers. Rights, Resistance, and Redefinition*, Routledge, New York/London 1998

method is a direct regulation on language. For example, the *Nordic Language Convention*<sup>3</sup> established the stipulation in 1987 covering Denmark, Sweden, Iceland, Norway and Finland that in contact with the local authorities the mother tongue is to be used and the authorities must bear the costs of interpreters.<sup>4</sup>

Counselling and treatment of the sick are just as much part and parcel of the basic health care of any person living in the Federal Republic of Germany as prevention work. However, for many migrants they pose serious problems, not least of which are the communication hurdles that need to be surmounted when counselling is to take place between people of very different cultural backgrounds. Illness is not an objective state, but one that is made clear through language. Exchanges on the subject of illness and health are always coloured by the interplay of individual experience and culturally specific attitudes as to what illness is and how it is to be dealt with. Talking about illness and appropriate approaches for its treatment takes place through interaction whereby each participant contributes their own concepts and experience and thus influences how illness is conveyed. Likewise, the structures, in which illness is experienced and talked about, have an influence on the picture presented. This demands a framework for communication about illness and prevention that is sensitive to language and is culture-specific.

Only slowly is it dawning on people in the health service that it makes little sense to expect patients to have to bring some member of their family or a neighbour with them as their interpreter and equally little sense to have to send out a call for that member of their own staff who speaks the language in question to do the interpreting. In addition, the concept of interpreting which goes over and above verbatim translation, taking into account the culture of the patient, is beginning to be taken seriously in practice. The concept of the *Intercultural Practitioner*<sup>5</sup> or *Community Interpreter* or *Cultural Interpreter*<sup>6</sup> is winning recognition. This is the contextual background of cultural mediation as defined by TAMPEP and brought to bear in practice.

<sup>3</sup> Race Relations Act 1976

<sup>4</sup> I cannot here say categorically which public services and which languages are actually called for and provided in practice.

<sup>5</sup> See: Michael Agar, *The Intercultural Frame*, in: Int. J. Intercultural Rel., Vol. 18, No. 2, 1994

<sup>6</sup> See Overview of Terms, Rahel Stuker, *Translators in Health Care: The medical case history in the context of migration*, Qualifying dissertation, Institute for Ethnology of the University of Berne, 1998

Cultural mediators are not social workers, health care personnel or merely interpreters. At TAMPEP they are people from the same ethnic group or nationality as the sex-workers who can build a relationship of trust with the target group. Thus they are in a position to influence, recognize, evaluate and convey to others the cultural and social attributes of the mentality and national character of the target group. They have knowledge and experience of AIDS/STD prevention which they can pass on to the target group. In this sense they are accepted as trainers by the target group. The mediators also have experience of migration themselves and, in certain individual cases, of prostitution. In their daily work as intermediaries between the health service and the target group they elucidate and explain to the target group the health service system and the medical care on offer in the host country. It is quite possible that the target group are not familiar with the health service system or have experience of contact with it where they ended up being denied attention. They themselves belong to a 'different' culture from the dominant culture of the host country within which they must operate. They make health services staff aware of aspects of the target group which make it difficult or impossible for them to gain access to health care. This is not just a problem of language, but also of all the aspects which lie behind the living and working conditions which obtain in the host country in question as well as educational background and culture-specific attitudes towards sexuality. The mediators must take care to maintain a standpoint which is as neutral as possible as well as independent.

In Hamburg the *Central Counselling Bureau for Sexually Transmitted Diseases* (CCB), a facility run by the public health service of the Office for Labour, Health and Social Welfare, deals with questions concerning health matters and acts as a place to which – particularly migrant – women sex workers can turn. According to the CCB, 90% of their clientele is foreign, mostly from Eastern and Middle Europe. In 1997 this situation led to a rethink about the workings of the CCB and as a result "linguistic and cultural interpreters"<sup>7</sup> were integrated into its personnel policy. Since 1993 TAMPEP has been co-operating with the CCB, following, accompanying and furthering developments in the work with interpreters resulting in this integration, TAMPEP staff themselves working for the CCB as linguistic and cultural interpreters. Since the integration of official interpreters, TAMPEP has advised the CCB on training interpreters to be cultural mediators. The CCB's work with these integrated interpreters and their special assignment constitutes a nationwide precedent. The methods of cultural mediation for tackling STD/AIDS prevention amongst migrant women sex workers that TAMPEP developed and propagates have at last been integrated conceptually in a facility of the German Health Service. Thus TAMPEP is very much interested in investigating in greater detail how the role of the mediators is put into practice and to what level it is accepted within the facility as well as such possibilities, difficulties and limits as the mediators may face within the framework of the health care system. This study provides a **review of achievements so far**. It limits itself to a survey of TAMPEP co-workers and the presentation of the results. The selection of statements made as well as the transcribed interviews themselves offer material of suitably wide scope for a future scientific evaluation of theory and practice. However, the study itself does not purport to be such an evaluation, but rather an addendum to the data already collected of observations and remarks from the point of view of TAMPEP. These may serve to facilitate an awareness for existing problems in daily practice and the orientation required for strategies aimed at solving problems.

The investigation pays particular attention to the implementation of theoretical concepts in practice. Accordingly, space has been given to the presentation of the CCB's concept of 1997 which contains a brief outline of the distribution of duties amongst the mediators. The survey of day-to-day experience concentrates on the cultural mediators' appraisal of their roles and duties in terms of their differing (or similar) perspectives and also on the expectations placed upon them. In the presentation of these perspectives, focus has been placed on the differing professional groups within the CCB (social workers, doctors, interpreters) and TAMPEP and also on the viewpoint of the clients. The data are organized accordingly.

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<sup>7</sup> This designation, to all intents and purposes, describes cultural mediators at TAMPEP

## Concept of the Central Counselling Bureau for Sexually Transmitted Diseases

This organizing of perspectives according to professions results from the reservations and conflicts specific to the various professional groups already known to us as well as from the practical experience of TAMPEP co-workers at the CCB which makes it perfectly clear that there is a considerable potential for conflict along these lines. The role and pertinent awareness of a given person develops out of both individual proclivities and attitudes that are formed by situation and society at large. Differentiating between these processes does not lie within the scope of this report, but the investigation will concentrate on the processes influenced by situation as they seem to be central to day-to-day work. Furthermore, the bringing into alignment of individual and entire societal structures would vastly exceed the set framework of the investigation. In situation-dependent processes, the professional function in the institution and its place in the internal hierarchy are decisive distinguishing factors. Individual distinctions in awareness show themselves clearly within the profession-specific arrangement of the results of the interviews. Thus the role of the cultural mediator is elucidated from various perspectives in the presentation of awareness of self and others. This study sets out to document the existing potential for conflict – in so far as TAMPEP has experienced it – and examine the sources of that conflict in those different awarenesses, expectations and structural conditions. By this means we hope to be able to point out perspectives that can facilitate possible changes and thus contribute to the acceptance of cultural mediators and to successful collaboration within the CCB.

Our heartfelt thanks go to the interviewees for their unstinting cooperation and willingness to provide the information which forms the basis of this study.

**T**he CCB developed a new concept in 1997 which, alongside the profile of the institution, described the basis of a change in or rethink of its concept. It also included the basis for working with cultural mediators (in CCB's terminology: "Linguistic and cultural interpreters") and a more detailed description in terms of their function in day-to-day work. The following section cites and reports exclusively from this concept.

### **What is the CCB?**

"The Central Counselling Bureau (CCB) of the Office for Labour, Health and Social Welfare offers, as a facility of the public health service, medical and psychological care for female, male and transsexual prostitutes in Hamburg. The work of the CCB is based on the Law on the Fight against Sexually Transmitted Diseases (GBGK in German), i.e.. we take part in the recognition, treatment, prevention and limiting of the spread of sexually transmitted diseases, and in addition other sexually transmitted ailments (VD/STD) as well as the diseases associated with and resulting from them. Since 1955 the CCB has assumed total responsibility



for the monitoring of the health of female prostitutes on the basis of the Hamburg STD Law of 1953 [...]

Since 1978, however, the hitherto rather restrictive monitoring system has been liberalized bit by bit. This came about due to the need for modernization and innovation of what had come to be seen as an outmoded law on the grounds of changes in social relationships and moral standards as well as the advances in epidemiology. This process was finally completed after a planning stage during which basic concepts and legal requirements were hammered out.[...]

The concept which emerged in 1987 contains the discontinuance of the legal obligation to undergo a medical check-up (compulsory check-ups), replacing it with a voluntary and anonymous check-up system, access to medical examinations and treatment of broader scope than before and also psycho-sociological counselling and care. All these measures were aimed at giving more weight to the ideas of preventative care than had hitherto been possible under the former outdated STD Law on grounds of changes in epidemiology and social mores." (Page 5/6)

In 1997 the starting point had changed again, leading to a reworking of the concepts used up to then. The CCB thus reacted to the accessibility of its target group and the ease with which its clients, now 90% migrant women, could be brought together

### **New starting point of the CCB**

"We have to find conceptual answers to the following:

- How we are to establish lasting medical and social-work relations with an ever dwindling cycle of clients due to fluctuation in their numbers,
- How we can contact an increased number of prostitutes by freeing ourselves from the limits of conventional streetwork which deprives us of systematic access to the entire fabric of prostitution in Hamburg and in turn prevents us from establishing a more focused basis for preventative care.
- Women newly arrived in the Federal Republic are more often than not completely unfamiliar with contraception and preventative measures, so these things have to be explained again and again
- We need knowledge of or access to those with knowledge of several languages if we are to do our job properly,
- We need to understand a wide variety of cultural and social backgrounds and gain access to them
- Due to mostly illegal residency status, the number of clients who rely on the free medical services we offer is growing, yet there are others we need to reach as well.
- Our resources are limited due to the changes in clientele, particularly obvious in the medical sphere,
- The significance of epidemiology, classical STDs and other sexually transmitted diseases is growing and therefore both those in danger and the general public need to be reached."(Page 8, Special Points A.M.)

## Interpreters at the CCB

"Linguistic and cultural interpreters – particularly compatriots of the clients – are used. An "Interpreter" is not only an interpreter, but also a cultural mediator. Mediating involves, over and above the translation of speech, the conveying of the culture of the client, their rites, norms, lifestyles and forms of expression in such a way as to optimize communication and understanding between all present. In this way a bridge is built between culturally very different people in order to establish a relationship of trust, so that better preventative care is possible. Interpreters should be involved in work inside and outside the Bureau. Co-operating with each other, they contact clients, give out basic information to them and escort them when necessary. Apart from the significance of the contents of this approach, tailored to migrant women as it is, it enables a more effective use of resources, as contacting and enlightening a client does not require both a social education worker AND an interpreter." (Page 9)

One of the building blocks of the concept to cope with these changes in circumstances is the **use of linguistic and cultural interpreters**.

The CCB's services are aimed at "people with a high-risk of infection due to their work (prostitution), their background, their living conditions (migration, illegal status, no or negligible knowledge of German)" (Page 12), as well as at "people at risk of infection due to their work (German prostitutes and their environment), or ignorance (young people) and generally as sexually active people (e.g. the clients of prostitutes)" (Page 13)

For the first target group the interpreters themselves are one of the building blocks of the concept: they are used in streetwork and consultation sessions. We strive towards interdisciplinary cooperation.

### Qualification requirements for the interpreters

- "A command of the language to be interpreted into and out of"
- Knowledge of STD, HIV and AIDS, safer sex practices, pregnancy, contraception and hygiene
- Knowledge of the law in the Federal Republic as it applies to prostitution, foreigners' rights, services and duties of the CCB
- Knowledge of the legal and social situation of migrants in the Federal Republic of Germany
- Familiarity with the reasons for and consequences of the migration of women
- Knowledge of the methods of preventative care
- Training in impartiality and neutrality in order to render value-free mediation
- Reflection on personal values and norms with regard to sexuality, prostitution, abortion etc. to avoid imposing them" (Page 26)

### Training the interpreters

"The social workers teach the interpreters about the social systems and networks obtaining [in Germany], and the interpreters teach the social workers, in turn, about the home culture of the clients. Regular discussion of theoretical case studies is designed to improve quality, on the one hand, and to improve co-workers' knowledge, on the other. Each co-worker is required to gain a basic knowledge of one of the languages relevant for the CCB to break down language barriers," (Page 10)

"Training mediators takes place via TAMPEP according to the concept of TAMPEP/Italy<sup>8</sup> and is augmented with further medical and educational training provided by CCB doctors and social workers." (Page 26)

### Outline of the duties of interpreters

"They engage in contact work whose contents and aims have been worked out by the CCB and they provide counselling sessions at fixed times at the counselling bureau during office hours, make contact with clients in the

<sup>8</sup> This is not about TAMPEP/Italy, but about the organization called COSPE (cooperazione per lo sviluppo dei paesi emergenti) in Florence, Italy. Correction A.M.

waiting area, give out basic information on the CCB and preventative care. They translate for social workers and doctors. They work alongside their co-workers on educational literature in the languages of the target group, develop concepts on preventative care for the migrant women and see them realised with the help of their CCB co-workers. They keep an account of their work. In addition, they also have to escort clients to government offices, hospitals, doctors' surgeries etc., in accordance with medical requirements.

The interpreters and co-workers constantly give each other the benefit of their experience in an atmosphere of mutual education, i.e., they give out information on the cultures represented by the clients at the CCB, while they receive information on medical, legal and social questions in Germany."(Page 17)

Conceptual and organizational co-ordination of the interpreters is incumbent upon the social education workers.

### **Regulations governing contact with clients**

■ concerning social work: First contact is made ideally by both an interpreter and a social worker together. The interpreter introduces the social worker to the client. The interpreter conducts the conversation on her own and fills in the questionnaire (necessary in the case of illiterate clients). If no interpreter is available, the social worker hands over to the client the information leaflet in the client's language. When counselling is required, the social worker conducts an impromptu counselling session with the help of the interpreter.

■ concerning medical care: Doctors work in tandem with interpreters when compiling case histories, when treating or counselling clients and when advising clients of the results of tests and medical examinations.

"If an interpreter for the client's language is not available, basic information is conveyed via a leaflet in that language."(Page 17)

### **Co-workers**

At present CCB staff includes two gynaecologists, two DAs (doctor's assistants), a nurse, six social workers/streetworkers, an administrator and five interpreters/translators. The overall manager of the CCB is a doctor, her deputy a social worker.

### **Working hours for the interpreters by language**

- 7 hours per week for Russian
- 2 hours per week for Polish
- 2 hours per week for Bulgarian
- 6 hours per week for Spanish
- 2 hours per week for Thai

Each interpreter is allotted a further 2 hours per month for team consultation, the co-ordinator of the interpreters 4 hours per month for participation on the CCB's whole team and for all other interpreters 2 hours every two months for the whole team. The training programmes put on for the interpreters are paid for by the CCB.

Interviews were carried out using a catalogue of open questions in the form of a conversation on a general theme. The various clients were interviewed individually and personally after they had received the catalogue. The interviews, lasting between 30 and 60 minutes, were recorded on tape and transcribed at a later stage.

The woman who conducted the interviews was engaged in practical training at the CCB in March this year and during that time had ample opportunity to see at first hand the workings and goings-on of the various facets of the CCB's work. While gaining this practical experience, she was made privy to the various problems and conflicts which arise in all areas of the CCB's work.

### **Participants in the interview**

#### **5 cultural mediators** (all working for the CCB at present)

- for Spanish, Russian, Polish, Bulgarian and Thai. All the mediators come from the countries for whose languages they are responsible, except the Spanish mediators, who grew up here in Germany.
- have served as CCB staff for different periods: from one year to eight years
- have differing experience and qualifications as interpreters: from private commissions, through interpreting jobs for law courts and asylum seekers to several years' experience as commercial interpreters or state-recognized interpreters
- different experience of intercultural work: from no experience at all to several years' work at *Amnesty for Women e.V.*

#### **3 social workers** (the choice of who to interview (interviewee) was left up to the social workers, one of whom is deputy manager of the CCB)

- from eight to thirteen years' service at the CCB
- have differing experience of intercultural work through their activities at the CCB

#### **2 doctors** (one of whom is manager of the CCB)

- have differing experience of intercultural work through their activities at the CCB; one of the doctors grew up in two cultures, Austria and Brazil.
- have worked for the CCB from three to five years

#### **3 TAMPEP co-workers** (one co-ordinator and two cultural mediators)

- with TAMPEP between one to six years (from beginning of project)
- two used to work for the CCB as interpreters before the survey was initiated, one is still working as a cultural mediator for the CCB
- have differing experience of intercultural work

#### **5 clients**

- from: Estonia, Russia, Ukraine, Chile and Colombia

## Results of the Interviews

- have been in Germany for differing lengths of time: between four months and two years
- come to the CCB often or regularly
- the Spanish conversations were conducted by the interviewer herself and translated back into German for the purposes of the recording of the conversation. The Russian conversations were translated by the cultural mediator from the CCB.

### Analysis of data

The data constituted 88 pages of transcribed interviews (2,540 characters per page on average). The analysis of the data concentrated on the **qualitative presentation of the material**. Within each individual topic covered the various statements of the interviewees are sorted according to viewpoint. As explained earlier, the perspectives have largely been sorted according to professional groups (cultural mediators, social workers, doctors, TAM-PEP co-workers) and clients. Any exceptions are duly marked. The statements here are, for the most part, not lifted verbatim from the transcriptions, but rather reproduced here from verbal summaries. On the other hand, the sections "Own" and "Other attitude" comprise the verbatim statements of the interviewees, as the particularly sensitive attitudes with their opposing reservations must be made clear here. The section "Evaluation of the CCB rethink" also delivers the unedited transcription. Additions have been given in parentheses.

As the survey constitutes a taking of stock, it concentrates on *presenting* the results of the interviews. Interpretations, evaluations and suggestions are added in brief to each section under the heading "Observations". These are observations from TAM-PEP's viewpoint. They are not meant to count as definitive assessments of the situation, but rather as ideas proffered for its interpretation.

## 1 Conversation set-up

The situation (described below) in which the conversations took place, in terms of seating arrangements and eye-contact, is largely the same for all interviews. Thus, profession-specific perspectives are not differentiated here. The following data summarize the statements of all professional groups.

### Description of how conversations were conducted

- Participants sat in a triangle so that all three had ease of eye-contact
- The individual persons are introduced to the client and their roles explained
- The client is told the counselling and treatment are anonymous.
- In theory the social worker should conduct the conversation, but in practice this is very difficult, if the social worker and the client have no common language.
- The social worker looks at the client when addressing her.
- The cultural mediator looks at the person to whom she is addressing her translation.

- The person with whom the client maintains eye-contact varies: sometimes both social worker and mediator, sometimes only the cultural mediator.
- Everything said is interpreted for the client, including conversation between the social worker and the cultural mediator.
- The social worker takes care to note the client's reaction, i.e., when three to five sentences have been spoken by the social worker and mediator, the social worker checks that the client has been able to follow the conversation.
- More attention is given to the conversation from the standpoint of social work than of medical concern.
- The way the conversation goes depends overall on the individual participants and how they are feeling on the day.
- The conversation is not steered or controlled, but rather allowed to flow in whichever direction it seems to want to go.
- The amount of direct interruptions by the cultural mediator varies from doctor to doctor and is rarely expected by the social workers.

#### **In what way does a counselling session change when the cultural mediator is present as a third party?**

- Constantly changing eye-contact
- Switching languages
- Less intimacy due to the presence of a third party
- More intimacy thanks to the elimination of the language barrier
- The participants' powers of concentration suffer through the attrition of repeated translation and eventually they become unable to concentrate on the conversation.

#### **What possibilities does a cultural mediator bring to a conversation?**

- A relationship of trust can be established more quickly.
- During conversations between doctors and clients, the mediator's contribution reduces tension in the atmosphere.
- Non-verbal elements of the conversation can be conveyed in language and interpreted.
- Misunderstandings can be recognized, identified and possibly ironed out.
- Work processes can be optimized

#### **What problems come up in these conversations?**

- The changing eye-contact and the language-switching can sometimes cause the client to get confused.
- Direct non-verbal contact is broken.
- The contact between social worker and client has to be established via a third party and is therefore more difficult to achieve. To help this process, according to the social workers, the cultural mediator's reservedness, neutrality and sensitive method of conveying the things said are all the more important. They believe the success of any attempt at establishing contact depends to a great extent on the behaviour of the cultural mediator.
- According to the cultural mediators, it is in cases where the social worker's behaviour in the conversation hinders the establishment of contact that the cultural mediators have to work hard at their job of mediating.

## OBSERVATIONS

The three-way conversation comes across to all participants as rather complex and makes for difficulties as well as possibilities. The social workers face anxiety due to lack of control over the proceedings, the mediators due to the ambiguity of their duties. The conversation demands a considerable willingness to work within the framework of the three-way system. To make the conversation function properly, duties and roles have to be made clear to all participants. To cope with any problems that may arise in conversation with the social worker, the conversation is given formal structure. Here the question is this: how can the social worker carry on a conversation with the client without hindering informative and emotionally important communication between the cultural mediator and the client. Another important thing is the trust that both sides have, the social workers/doctors versus the cultural mediators, in the other's competence in their respective jobs. The three-way conversation is based on *collaboration*. If one of the parties present is difficult or not accepted as a fundamental participant in the conversation, serious discord can be the result.

### One-off, immediate reactions to the conversation

- Cultural mediator and counsellor must basically work in unison. There must be no awkwardness between them.
- It is advantageous for the counsellor to have a slight smattering of the language being used with the client so that she knows what point the mediator has reached at any given moment.
- The most important tool I have as a social worker is language. But in this situation I can't use it and that's terrible for me. I manage to make contact with someone and suddenly there's a third person right between us! There are few people capable of representing me properly. This is not only difficult for me to accept, but also the work itself loses quality.
- I, as cultural mediator, would prefer to sit behind the doctor. The patient should be fully aware that she is talking to the doctor or social worker and not to me. Otherwise she thinks that I have said the things said. She should also look the doctor in the eye and see for herself how serious the doctor is taking her and treating her.

### Comments on the role of the interpreting itself and other elements of the conversation

- Interpreting is never just a matter of converting one language into another, but is always a combination of language and culture.
- The important thing is that non-verbal signals, that are perhaps cultural-specific, can be conveyed or pointed out, i.e. do not go unnoticed.
- Language is a prerequisite for mutual understanding, but besides language, empathy and humanity are also important.
- Besides the culture of their home country, the client's class and education play a large role in the way the conversation is conducted and in the translation.
- When explaining things or using simplified language for the benefit of the client, it is important to be very careful not to insult the client's intelligence.
- Understanding for the group, for whom a translation is being given, is important, i.e. for migrants and prostitutes.
- The emotional bond made possible through the interpreting has an effect on the conversation, changing it.

### Particular aspects of working in areas of STD, HIV and prostitution which have an effect on the conversation

- This sort of work touches on very intimate and sensitive issues which have an effect on all participants in the conversation.
- You not only have to surmount the barriers of language, but also the barriers one expects to be present when talking about such intimate matters not normally discussed with strangers.
- In very few cultures are sex and prostitution discussed openly. These two subjects are inextricably bound up with moral condemnation, guilt and punishment, all of which go into the conversation.
- Knowledge of the specific cultural attitude towards and handling of the body, sexuality and health plays a big role.
- You must always weigh up to what extent the client can be confronted with problems.

## 2 The role of the cultural mediator at the CCB

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### Duties of the cultural mediators

Generally speaking, the job of the cultural mediator is above all one of a linguistic and cultural go-between. She conveys and integrates, she functions as a connecting link, she builds bridges. In the interviews, various aspects of this role are formulated with differing emphasis:

### Cultural mediators' perspectives

- To be a person the clients can trust and turn to.
- To look after the clients in every area (preliminary interview, medical situations, possibly in social work situations)
- To conduct first conversation to get particulars and facts about the clients
- To provide background information on client's culture and on German culture during the three-way conversations.
- To be a go-between and bridge between two cultures (client's culture and German culture) and between two worlds (the prostitution scene and the local authorities)
- To put into words all non-verbal, paralinguistic communication
- To foster a friendly and open atmosphere

When out trying to find migrant prostitutes, the mediators have, according to their own statements, the following additional duties:

- To conduct conversation, to give information
- To establish initial contact
- To establish trust
- To interpret and explain accordingly

When defining the job of the interpreter-cum-mediator, various assessments and interpretations come to light:

- "I am an interpreter and cultural mediator in one."
- "My job is to interpret and bring across exactly what is said and exactly what is meant."
- "I am a go-between, i.e., I translate not only exactly what is said, but also experience the emotions involved. As a professional interpreter, one must be totally neutral with regard to one's client. But as a cultural mediator at the CCB, you must also allow your personality some say in your job."
- "Simply interpreting does not make clients have trust in you"
- "The CCB expects interpreting more than anything else"
- "When I'm with the social workers, I'm more of an interpreter than a mediator"
- "When working with the doctors, the mediators are more independent. I take charge more of the organization and have more of a say; I can talk to the women myself tête-à-tête"
- "Cultural mediation means that I can work a little bit more independently".
- "When I was hired, I was not aware that I was a cultural mediator. I have only realised this since talking with the other cultural mediators. There was never any explanation of one's exact duties as such."



### **Social workers' perspectives**

The cultural mediators have the following duties:

- To provide background information on the client's culture for the social workers and information on structures in Germany and on the CCB for the clients.
- To define, in tandem with the social worker, what the problems currently facing the client are. That is what the social worker's job is about, i.e. she knows what steps need to be taken and how contact is to be established etc. The cultural mediator supports the process via language backup and background information.
- The cultural mediator is, by dint of her doing the preliminary interviews, the first contact person for the clients.

When looking for clients, the cultural mediators have the additional following duties:

- To establish trust
- To open doors

When defining the job of the interpreter-cum-mediator, various assessments and interpretations come to light:

- "Situation-dependent mixture of translating and cultural mediation"
- "First and foremost accurate translation of what is said, augmented by the cultural mediation contribution"
- "Rather than verbatim translation, translation conveying what is actually meant, so that both parties understand where the other is at"
- "Medical conversations seem to operate according to a different concept. It is not cultural mediation, but (mere) translation that is required in these situations."
- "Everything depends on who works with whom."

### **Doctors' perspectives**

- To act as oral and cultural go-between and integrate, to function as a connecting link, to build a bridge
- To interpret what is expressed via body language
- To provide background information on the client's culture and on German culture
- To be the first contact person for the clients

When looking for clients, the cultural mediators have the additional following duties:

- To be the chief contact person
- To be in charge of all preliminary work (planning, looking up addresses, establishing contact)
- At the door: to establish initial trust, to introduce who we are

### **Clients' perspectives**

- "She helps me understand and be understood"
- "I have most contact with the cultural mediator"
- "She is more than a cultural mediator; she is a friend."
- "They are translators and cultural mediators, both are very important"

## OBSERVATIONS

The mediators acquit themselves of their duties in a very client-oriented way. The most important thing for them is that they are the first contact person for the client and the person the client trusts. They see their function also as a spokesperson for the client. They approach their work with more solidarity with the clients than with their co-workers from the institution. The social workers see the job of the mediators more as one of delivering extra information and of translating. They acknowledge the fact that the mediator is the person whom the client trusts, but they lay a different value on it. Here we can see potential conflict arising from this discrepancy of perception or emphasis.

The cultural mediator is not a representative of the cultural group from which the client comes. Thus, she is not "authorized" by a person or group. Care must therefore be taken to bring across cultural points that have a bearing on the issue at hand without taking up the role of "party spokesperson". Similarly, the mediator must not exercise power over the client or make the client dependent on her.

How their roles and duties should be formulated as regards streetwork does not, on the whole, appear to be uniform or clear.

- "She gives me information on condoms, diseases and lots of other things.
- "They help to solve problems, even though the problems have nothing to do with health."
- "They commit themselves a lot to the women's welfare."
- "It would be good if they did everything."

### TAMPEP co-workers' perspectives

- To be a linguistic and cultural go-between, to be a bridge to both sides
- Language is not enough to be a cultural mediator. You have to have a good knowledge of the client's culture, and be very familiar with the living and working conditions of prostitutes.
- The cultural mediators are not social workers
- Maintaining a neutral stance towards both parties is very important, but often very difficult. A cultural mediator tends to feel drawn more towards the client and takes the side of the group she represents
- Although nobody would deny that the interests of the women need to be represented, both sides should be equally represented. One must be neutral, because one has to provide information both ways, yet sometimes one is not neutral, as one is there for the interests of the women.
- The clients' wishes for service, security, an ally and affiliate make it very difficult to be neutral.

## 3 Expectations

### The cultural mediators' expectations of themselves

- "I am the main contact person for the clients" (Commented 4x)
- "I am a *confidante* for the clients"
- To find out what education the women have and how much they understand and bring that across accordingly to the doctor and social worker so that there is sufficient information for a successful conversation strategy (technical language or images)
- "To translate both the words and the meaning. The decision as to when I translate more (merely) the words, and when I translate rather what is meant is one I take myself"
- To pay attention not to hurt the feelings of the client
- To nip emotional situations in the bud
- Organization of the counselling amongst the clients
- "I am a social worker and cultural mediator in one"
- "The women tend to want to talk to me about their problems, certainly not to the social workers"

As regards the job of looking for clients, the cultural mediators have the following to add:

- Conversations are conducted in the name of the institution, but simultaneously as "private persons", i.e., there are lots of topics of conversation which do not have a direct bearing on the job of the CCB

## OBSERVATIONS

Whereas lots of observations concerning the translating process were made by the social workers above for the definition of the duties, it is exactly in this area that the cultural mediators have problems defining expectations. They are not at all certain just what the institution expects from them, as the way the institution's concept is put into practice varies a lot from individual to individual. Their self-evaluation and expectations of themselves often go far beyond the duties defined by the concept. Their appraisal of their role as pseudo-social workers leads to disputes over respective areas of responsibility or competence, power struggles and mistrust on the part of the real social workers. This over-estimation of their own role may well result from the above-mentioned unclear definition of their role as well as from the unpredictable way the concept is handled by the institution. The client-oriented definition of the duties of the cultural mediators would seem to be confirmed by the expectations expressed here by the clients themselves and they explain the marked emphasis put on the job of being a *confidante*. When defining their role themselves, the mediators would seem to be very mindful of the expectations of the clients, whereas the expectations of their colleagues from the institution would seem to have little influence on their self-definition, which is a source of confusion for their CCB colleagues. However, the cultural mediators do not have to worry about whether the clients are satisfied with the social workers and the service provided by the institution.

### The cultural mediators reckon that the CCB expects the following from them

- Accurate translation, followed by clarification of the cultural things
- Translation of the words spoken
- "Careful interpreting. The social workers are particularly keen that I should not give my interpretation of what has been said or that I should not intervene. Doctors are a bit more laid-back. With them I can bring my own knowledge to bear"
- "It is not clear whether they expect the same from me as is stipulated in their concept"
- "I am not absolutely sure of what is expected of me"
- "I am not sure whether I am allowed to conduct the preliminary interview, finding conversation on my own. It seems to be handled in different ways."

### The cultural mediators reckon that the clients expect the following from them

- The clients expect immediate help
- "The clients also expect the mediators to be their attorneys (spokespersons) for them"
- "The clients think we can do more than we can"
- "When the clients have not understood the doctors, they expect me to explain it to them"

### Social workers' expectations of the cultural mediators

- "Professionalism is difficult to achieve, as there is no course you can do to obtain the necessary qualifications"
- Flexibility – to translate the words or the cultural implications depending on the situation
- They should not only be a smoothing influence, but also lend support when working on problems
- They should stay in the background during the conversations
- "They should be able to feel when they are exerting a disturbing influence on a conversation and hold back accordingly"
- "They should be particularly mindful of their role in the conversation and of their own expectations in their supporting work for the counselling"
- "Their personalities should be such that they know where to draw the line, where to hold back in the conversations"

### Doctors' expectations of the cultural mediators

- Humanity
- The ability to establish trust

## 4 Problems and conflicts when working with cultural mediators

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### Cultural mediators' perspectives

- Both sides have problems understanding the other's culture
- "Conflicts arise when I am put under pressure to explain things very quickly"
- "I sometimes have problems with the social workers when I get talking to the client"
- "I have trouble with the social workers, when I know more than they do"
- "I once had problems, because the client kept looking at me during the conversation instead of the social worker. The latter thought this was my fault"
- "Another source of conflict is the fact that the cultural mediators are at the bottom of the hierarchy and have to obey the directives of the social workers"
- "There are few conflicts between the clients and the social workers, because I try to divert them, i.e., to draw them upon myself instead. That makes my job of translating very strenuous, because you intercept things, as in psychoanalysis, and act as a buffer"
- "The conversations between the doctors and the clients produce fewer conflicts, because they follow the more rigid structure of a medical check-up"
- "I try to avoid conflict situations out of consideration for the women. Naturally there have been situations where I was dissatisfied. The clients noticed when I was really reprimanded during conversations. That has also had an adverse effect on the relationship of trust I have with the clients whom I have been seeing regularly for two years"
- "The conflicts are often about the same thing, and the longer one works here, the less often they arise"

### Dealing with discussions on conflicts after the conversations

- "Sometimes there are brief discussions of what did not go well"
- "In theory, there is supposed to be time after the conversations when you can clear up conflicts, but this is not realistic, as there is rarely enough time left over. In actual fact, the conflicts are brushed under the carpet and the trouble just accumulates"
- "I see no sense in discussing the situations where conflict arises"
- "Whether the conflict scenarios are discussed or not depends on the available time"
- "In my experience, speaking up about conflict does not help any. Now I just do what the social worker says"
- "I no longer work alongside social workers who are not sensitive to the other culture and do not change their attitude"

### Social workers' perspectives

- "Conflicts usually arise in situations whereby I confront the client with questions and problems. But it is just in these

## OBSERVATIONS

There are conflicts between the co-workers concerning areas of responsibility and roles in the Institution and particularly in contact with the clients during and outside the counselling sessions. A major cause of this dissention is the errant evaluation of the role of the cultural mediators. Furthermore, there are conflicts due to differing opinions and behaviour which are perceived as culture-specific.

It is taken for granted that there is a potential for conflicts dormant in the contact between the social workers and the clients and also between the mediators and the clients. The cultural mediators, though, find themselves having to be the ones to smooth over unpleasantness arising from the language or behaviour of the social workers. They take it as understood that they have to ensure the good quality of the conversations and the counselling by defusing any such tension. The social workers, however, see the mediators in terms of the problems they can cause by not being reserved enough during the counselling sessions.

The after-session talks, theoretically the time when social workers and mediators can exchange thoughts and work through conflicts, very often do not take place.

situations that I need a cultural mediator who can remain perfectly calm and neutral; the slightest agitation can adversely affect the conversation"

■ "When HIV testing, for instance, there are very direct questions. This test demands such questions, as people have to be real about sexuality. This can lead to conflicts with the cultural mediators who want to smooth over the rough bits in the talk"

■ "Some clients do not feel comfortable at all having a compatriot present. There have been situations when the conversation on sexual matters was much more open when the mediator was outside"

■ "The different ideas of morality, which the cultural mediators bring with them and which, to my mind, are partly very conservative and judgmental, can lead to difficulties in the conversations"

■ "A discussion can be a conflict scenario. If I, for instance, made some claim which was not right in that given context, the mediator would then have to intervene and I would lose face as a competent counsellor. So it is better if I say quite honestly: I don't know exactly whether I am quite up-to-date etc and then compare notes with the cultural mediator. Discussions on competence should not take place in front of the client"

■ "I think it is an act of disrespect towards a client to clarify via a third woman, who comes from the client's country, but from a different class, what questions I can and cannot ask. That is something the client should make me aware of herself"

■ "I know how some cultural mediators see themselves. But what I need is someone who can simply translate sensitively"

Dealing with discussions on conflicts after the conversations

■ Conflicts are not dealt with during the conversation, but rather after it.

■ "I've been in situations where I have had words after the conversation, but also situations where I couldn't be bothered to talk about the conflict after the conversation and just conducted the conversation the way I wanted to in my role as social worker"

■ "There is scarcely time enough to sit down and talk about things"

■ "The longer I work with a woman, the better and more effective our team work becomes"

### Doctors' perspectives

■ There are few conflicts

## 5 Different perceptions

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This section describes the sometimes quite serious differences in perception and documents the reservations directly or indirectly expressed as well as opinions which hinder the establishment of a bond of trust and opinions which prevent effective collaboration.

### **Cultural mediators' perspectives**

- "We are not here simply to help out. We are a chance for the institution to function the way it is supposed to"
- "I get the impression from the social workers that they do not trust the cultural mediators"
- "My qualifications are put in doubt"
- "Sometimes I get the impression that the social workers think that I say or translate different things from the things they say. That is only because I do not translate verbatim. If I did, the conversation would founder and falter. But I tell the social worker what I've said. This does not mean that I am acting independently, but that it is necessary to say a few extra words"
- "The social workers keep their expertise to themselves. They do not want to pass it on, because we are just interpreters"
- "In lots of situations I am very glad that the social worker carries the responsibility, e.g. when a woman has to be told about the results of an HIV test. This situation would be too much for me on my own as I get very nervous"
- "Sometimes I know much more than the social worker"
- "As a cultural mediator I have to translate things that are not right and when I interrupt and intervene, there's trouble"
- "People expect the migrant women to open up, but I get the impression that there is not enough interest in their side of things"
- "Some social workers try to understand. Others remain stubborn and remind you that they are the counsellor. But some understand that they totally rely on us"
- "If we were to work in a team on more of an equal level, some things would definitely change"
- "In most cases I feel the social work input is superfluous. It is irrelevant for the clients"

### **Social workers' perspectives**

- "My culture is not represented by the cultural mediators. They feel themselves allied with the client, their compatriot, and they defend or represent her. They do not really convey the message: 'You are here in an institution; you can trust the people here'. There is no sign of this basic position"
- "I am not always presented to the client as a person who is kindly disposed towards her, as opposed to someone who is just there for entertainment"

■ "The cultural mediators are only here for about two to four hours a week. That is nothing in comparison with the work we do here"

■ "I am here more or less 38 hours. It is difficult to draw limits for yourself, but that is part of being a professional. I cannot ditch a conversation every time there is some little problem. I am not obliged to have it out with people whenever they insinuate that I am not doing my job properly"

■ (Regarding the question of coaching) "I am not interested now in having to deal with four or five colleagues who do not possess the same level of self-awareness as I do. So, it is not my job to reappraise this with women who are not familiar with the issues and I would always say "No" to this. I can imagine working in working groups, but not under the aegis of a coach.

■ "I believe very deeply that there are lots of deficiencies on the personal level (with the cultural mediators). I have to remain on a professional level. If I descend to a personal level, I am lost. I know this and it saps up too much energy"

■ "What I feel is a nasty trap when working in a multicultural arena is the way people quite simply and readily accuse you of racism (...) The idea that the Germans think in a racist way is in itself an racist attitude (...) The topic of racism involves lots of issues: being right, positions of power. The reason why we sometimes have serious arguments is that ultimately it is about our jobs. Coaching or some sort of professional support can help you to deal with instances of racism or accusations of racism"

■ "Basically it is idiotic to assert that it is the mediators who conduct the interviews. The roles get completely mixed up, because contact is the way trust is established and not the meat of the professional counselling"

■ "The danger for everybody in the counselling role is that one feels one's stature increased through the trust the woman has in the mediator, via this trust. It is a good feeling. The problem is simply that excessive demands are made which cannot then be made known"

■ "I do not need mediation to see that the women have a different attitude to their bodies etc.; that has become very obvious to me over the course of time in this job. When we did not have mediators working with us, we still learned a great deal about the women. I do not need a cultural mediator to learn about the women"

■ "The cultural mediators can pass on a lot of information, but I have studied psycho-sociological counselling and certain interventions for four years AND (despite that) I have done further training for years more"

■ "There are counselling situations where the cultural mediators are totally disruptive"

### **Doctors' perspectives**

■ "We work here with cultural mediators in whom I have complete confidence. They have the technical expertise and the requisite humanity"

■ "The cultural mediators have the same power in the hierarchy as everybody else"

## **OBSERVATIONS**

Each group's lack of acceptance of the other, their lack of trust, their lack of respect for the qualifications and work of the other is all too obvious here. Serious accusations have been made which attack the personalities and functions of individuals and call their jobs into question.

- "There is a lot of resistance to the cultural mediators on the part of the social workers. The latter do not consider them sufficiently well trained to take on jobs with major responsibility"
- "The social workers do not use a great deal of what they have learned. The cultural mediators can do just as good a job. Only when problems with repercussions arise are the social workers needed. That is what they are important for. There is a big power struggle between all the (various) groups involved"
- "It is a great disadvantage that you cannot react to the needs of the women with the attitudes of social workers"
- "It is a paradox; on the one hand the social workers realise that training to be a cultural mediator was important, but, on the other hand, they do not admit that in public"
- "Conflict is a part of the German mentality. That is why the population is so ill"

### **TAMPEP co-workers' perspectives**

- "The CCB is supposed to be a model counselling centre. This is true when you compare them with other counselling centres. But still I find the substance of the work they do rather poor"
- "I have often found the way the social workers behave towards the migrant women rather strange – this exaggerated affectation. And also this 'not wanting to understand' business"
- "In difficult situations the social workers are very important. They have the expertise. Such situations often go beyond the capabilities of the cultural mediators"
- "I cannot understand why the Germans always feel they are responsible for everything, for all the cultures in the world. It makes me feel they want to keep them in their control"

## **6 Things people want from their colleagues**

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### **Cultural mediators' perspectives**

- Respect for the job of interpreting
- Recognition of expertise
- "Confidence in the fact that I know that I am more familiar with the client's situation, her situation in her home country and the causes which led to her migrating"
- Acceptance as equals
- To be considered not only as a service, but also as a person who has an influence on how the encounter goes"
- "The realisation that they are reliant on my help"
- More sensitive attunement to the culture in question
- More understanding for the culture and the situation the clients are in
- More time for conversations



- The duties to be performed and the job outline must be clearly formulated when hiring people
- More intensive exchange of expertise
- More explanation for the clients of the medication which is prescribed

#### **Social workers' perspectives**

- Greater consideration of what one's own role in the work means, of one's own psychological stability, of one's own motivational basis for doing counselling and support work
- "I need a cultural mediator who also has confidence in the way I do my job, i.e. according to a concept, and who also believes that that concept makes sense"

#### **Doctors' perspectives**

- "I wish the social workers spoke foreign languages as well. I think it is a great shame that they all only speak German"

## **7 What does working in a multi-cultural team mean and how does it work?**

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#### **Cultural mediators' perspectives**

- It is interesting and enriching
- There are lots of misunderstandings
- Conflicts arise, because you think you understand, but you do not quite understand, because the tone is different or one word is wrongly interpreted
- Conflicts arise, because migrant women are almost always in a situation whereby they cannot themselves stipulate the work they do
- "Not understanding has something to do with language and culture, but also with the hierarchy at the CCB"
- "Racism is perhaps a little harsh, but sometimes something close to it comes up"

#### **Social workers' perspectives**

- To be open and interested when meeting others
- It leads to conflicts and friction. "But it prompts this lovely scene of conflict's spawning warmth"
- The conflicts are also important for making you examine your own attitudes and changing them, if necessary
- It is not just multi-cultural, but also multi-professional: there are lots of power struggles
- A team made up of social workers, each from a different culture, would be very exciting; at present, however, the social workers are all Germans, the mediators all foreigners, and the latter tend to be ranked below the former in the hierarchy.
- There are lots of misunderstandings
- There are lots of prejudices on all sides
- There is a lack of mutual tolerance
- People tend to shy away from conflict, not using it as a constructive tool

### **Doctors' perspectives**

- It is very enriching for one's work
- "I have to be prepared at all times to learn new things from the others and about the others"
- It is very taxing having daily contact in five languages
- It means lots of getting down to the nitty-gritty of things
- It requires constant re-evaluation of and correction of one's own perceptions
- It is afflicted with conflicts which result from lack of understanding and problems concerning areas of responsibility
- Coaching would be helpful

## **8 What qualifications should a cultural mediator possess?**

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This section consolidates the statements of all professional groups with quantitative supporting data

### **Cultural qualifications**

- Good knowledge of their home country and of Germany  
(Cited: 10x)

Knowledge of the home country is cited as the most important part of this qualification. Knowledge of Germany is not so explicitly emphasized. 1x found fault with the fact that knowledge of Germany is neglected.

### **Language qualifications**

- Good language qualifications in both languages  
(Cited: 8x)

A qualification as translator or interpreter was only 1x taken into consideration

### **Personal qualifications**

- Openness (Cited: 7x)
- Sensitivity (Cited: 5x)
- Mature personality, i.e. be in a position to separate your own conflicts from those of others, have thought about the way you are affected by the issues, be able to delineate limits for yourself (Cited: 3x)
- Empathy (Cited: 3x)
- Commitment to social good works (Cited: 2x)
- Strong personality (Cited: 2x)
- Pleasure in working with people
- Flexible when communicating with different people
- She is a symbol of "Succour and Safety"
- Adherence to the role and function they take on themselves

Personal suitability is cited as the most important qualification next to the cultural and language knowledge.

## OBSERVATIONS

Though the actual working hours are rather limited, great demands are made of the cultural mediators in terms of what qualifications are required of them. Particularly the personal qualities, so difficult to evaluate, play a central role in the statements of all interviewees.

The strong demands for personal qualities may be responsible for the tendency for social work duties to be delegated to the cultural mediators. The cultural mediators are not social workers and cannot be expected to achieve the same results.

### Specialized knowledge

- Specialized knowledge of medicine and social work and the readiness to undertake further training in these disciplines (Cited: 6x)
- Knowledge of the prostitute scene, i.e. knowing about the living and working conditions of the women (Cited: 4x)
- Get down to the nitty-gritty of prostitution, finding out about it and dealing with it (Cited: 3x)

### Experience of migrating

- Experience of migrating is important (Cited: 4x)
- Experience of migrating is preferable, but not a prerequisite
- Experience of migrating is not necessarily important

### Should the mediator be a compatriot of the client?

On this point opinions were unanimous

- It is preferable, but it always depends on the actual person

#### For compatriots:

- She has sufficient knowledge of the other country involved
- Amongst all the problematic issues the clients are confronted with, the compatriot offers them a positive anchor or link. She is a known quantity in an unfamiliar environment.

#### Against compatriots:

- "The clients quite possibly feel a deeper sense of shame when they have to talk about things in front of someone from their own country"

### Feedback from clients on the matter of compatriots as mediators

- "A woman from my home country is much better. She knows my home country and the mentality of my people much better.
- "It doesn't matter. The important thing is that she understands my language and helps me"
- "It doesn't matter whether she is from my country, but it is very important that she is familiar with conditions in my country and the mentality of its people"
- "A woman from my country would not think so openly about lots of things and might make my problems worse"

## 9 Feedback on reciprocal training and learning how to do the job

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### Cultural mediators' perspectives

- "As far as medical matters are concerned, I have benefited a great deal from the further training"
- "As far as medical matters are concerned I feel much surer since doing the training and this confidence has a positive influence on the conversations as I radiate confidence on the job"

- "I have learned a lot myself and can use a lot of that new knowledge as tips for the clients"
- "I have not learned anything new. I knew it all already from my professional training"
- "The TAMPEP further training does not interest me"
- "In theory, I think the further training approach is good, but I do not know whether it brings across very much"

### **Problems**

- When presenting (the cultural mediators) an entire area falls foul of stereotyping
- Lots of cultural mediators missed the chance for further training, because they started late at the CCB
- "Suddenly I know a lot more than the social workers. When we are working together giving counselling in some medical matter and I know more than her, I am actually more than an interpreter in this situation, but I have to keep to my role and place and maybe translate things that are not right"

### **Changes and Outlook**

- It is very important to continue the further training and to intensify it, especially where social work is concerned
- The social workers are gradually coming round to appreciating the further training programme
- Nothing has changed

### **Social workers' perspectives**

- "The basic knowledge that the cultural mediators have is generally interesting, but it all depends on the individual woman"
- "For me personally, it's the actual conversations between social workers and cultural mediators that are important. I learn a lot about the individual cultures from them"
- "The information the cultural mediators provided was very interesting, but not related to the clients. This further training would not make me feel any more able to evaluate the clients, at the most only on a couple of individual points"
- "Lots of things that the cultural mediators told me was already familiar to me"

### **Problems**

- Self-reflection was not integrated in the further training
- "From a training course I expect to get to grips with the question as to why a woman (cultural mediator) does this job, the issues involved with self-knowledge in work like this. But this is a very tricky and awkward issue"
- The problem is that the information the cultural mediators provide covers an enormous group of people

### **Changes and Outlook**

- "I have not noticed any changes having incurred as a result of the TAMPEP training"
  - "The great misunderstanding is that the cultural mediators think they will be working independently once they have undertaken the training"
  - "After doing further training the cultural mediators can come up with the facts, but whether they can actually conduct the sort of conversations we have to conduct is quite a different matter"
- On the matter of learning how to do the job**
- "We teach the cultural mediators how to do the job, but sometimes this can go wrong, too"
  - "We introduce our concept to the cultural mediators"
  - "The way cultural mediation is handled varies a lot and this means that learning the job is different from person to person"
  - "Perhaps we should be more uniform in our methods and practices through stricter regulation of work. For those who only come here once or twice a week, regulated work is very important"

### Doctors' perspectives

- The mutual training was very interesting, but there wasn't enough of it
- "I would like to have more information from the cultural mediators"

### Changes and Outlook

- "I have observed that the cultural mediators know much more now about the medical issues (contraception, common illnesses, therapies available)"
  - "We should intensify the further training. You see the positive results in the conversations with the patients"
- The authorities would have to pay for more training
- "We should aim at my not having to be present at every conversation session"

### Problems

- As a cultural mediator you speak on behalf of a very large group of people and must constantly take care to avoid clichés. Reporting on a land or a whole continent in two hours is pure folly; one ought not do it.

### TAMPEP co-workers' perspectives

- The further training programmes were good, but too short
- It prompted more openness overall
- "The mutual exchange of information was very important, also the information from the cultural mediator about the 'machinery of the local authorities' and (their) bureaucratic procedures. That has made it easier to understand the behaviour of the social workers, the difficulties they encounter and their self-satisfaction"

## 10 Evaluation of the conceptual rethink at the CCB

**Y**es, lots of things have changed - the interpreters' sphere of activity, for one! Now we have much broader duties as cultural mediators. It used to be like this: the interpreters weren't allowed to have any contact with the women, none at all. Whatever the woman asked, a simple question such as where the chemist was. You just had to translate and a social worker always had to be present. Things have changed, of course, a lot since and it is better now. The cultural mediators do a lot on their own, which is very good and saves a lot of time; e.g., they provide information on the CCB. That really doesn't need to be relayed twice, once in German and once in the language of the client – that was absolutely absurd. We can introduce the CCB and tell the women what sort of personnel work here, what sort of services we offer, what she can get from it. That saves a lot of time. The cultural mediators present this information on their own. That is also good, because the women have someone from their own country as the first contact. This makes them open up more quickly. Because there is no language barrier, naturally, not because I am from their country, but also because we are alone together in the room. That is always different from when there are three of you. The women come from all sorts of backgrounds. Hardly any of them has ever had the

experience of having to talk through the medium of a cultural mediator. They have to learn and know how it works. Our co-workers have to learn that, too; they have learned a lot already, actually. It is very difficult. We have to learn to interpret, carefully and correctly and also really try to convey the ideas and background carefully, and they have to learn to work in tandem with us.

We have done much more intensive training in the medical issues than in the social work issues. That also saves a lot of time and provides us with a bit of confidence, as we are surer now of our ground when we translate medical things, because we know a lot about them. You know what it's all about. True, everybody knows what gonorrhoea is, but perhaps not everyone knows what causes it, how long its incubation period lasts, what dose of antibiotics is required and how long it remains contagious. All these things! When you have a clear picture of all this in your head about all venereal diseases, that makes your job much easier. Then you can interpret with greater confidence."

### **One social worker's perspective**

**”W**ell, we used to say quite categorically that we wanted translators. They were there just to translate and that was that. Hmm, how can I put this; as our boss is a Brazilian of Austrian extraction, she has very much strengthened the position of the cultural mediators who, if I can put it bluntly, used to be mere translators. Through TAMPEP and other project work undertaken together these women gradually metamorphosed into cultural mediators and then there were arguments about what this meant. What were the advantages and disadvantages. I must say I am still a bit undecided on the issue. I believe that a cultural mediator is important, but I understand the reservations others have about their intervening in the conversation. That is a different concept, in fact, such a method does not exist, and it does not form part of what is understood as their role. The path leading to this state of affairs was a stony one indeed as the matter of racism came up. True, it is interesting to learn about another culture, it is also interesting though to see how I can protect women by confronting them, which isn't part of normal behaviour in many countries. But isn't it one way of doing it, despite that? For a time this didn't work. So when I asked a question and didn't confront the woman myself and point out the limits, but rather the mediator did, the whole thing was often very difficult for me. Firstly, because I couldn't put my plan into action, and secondly because it was sometimes unclear as to what the role of the cultural mediator was anyway! There've been lots of arguments; people have come and gone. People still differ on this matter, and few are making any attempt to come to grips with it at the moment. At present there's a truce. And there are the most diverse ways of tackling it, which makes it sometimes very implausible. There was a phase when we had a lot of strife and stress and gave up on the preliminary interviews, because everyone had had enough. Because totally discontented people had been doing them for ages. Ultimately we were right in saying that initial contact is the most important contact. How things go

from here, we'll have to wait and see. There's always plenty of potential for trouble and lots of over-stepping the limits by the translators which often goes unnoticed. Then again there are lots of people at the CCB and three translators, four social workers - plenty goes wrong. And I know we're presently discussing a (new) structure for getting to grips with our work in a different way.

### **One doctor's perspective**

“**T**ranslating for patients used to be a very strict and orderly matter. The doctor would speak to the patient and the translator would have to translate word for word. There was no room for asides and observations from the translator. Whenever she sensed doctor and patient weren't understanding each other, she couldn't intervene. The period of transition was a difficult time. It was partly about defending your own professional territory. In fact, that was the main cause of strife during this period. Where suddenly a mediator had more room to manoeuvre, the others involved, the social workers and doctors, could get the impression initially that they weren't needed so much anymore. Or that someone who had no education at all in medicine or social work was suddenly the most important person in the process. That was the trouble – where is my place in this and is she challenging it? Is she muscling in on my territory or not? That was a difficult phase. Initially it was handled in such a way that they established exactly what a mediator was allowed to do and what not. That has become, thank God, obvious simply through experience. And the cultural mediators have had to find their feet in this role, too, and also, naturally, get some training, because they've suddenly had to deliver much more.”

### **One TAMPEP co-worker's perspective**

“**B**efore the conceptual rethink, it was very strict. We were very restricted in our contact with the women. The main role was the territory of the social worker. When conflict started to arise and the whole thing blew up in everyone's face, it was clear to me, till the new concept came along, that it was the result of people's fear of losing their power; between the social workers and the doctors there was never any problem; the power or control over the women. But that is silly. This sort of work is not a power game. And pointing this out was the biggest cause of conflict for me. It was also a problem of trust. They didn't trust us cultural mediators. It came to quite extreme cases where they said we weren't allowed any contact with the women, not even to say 'Hello, good day'. That was, of course, extreme. It was always very interesting for me, because here at TAMPEP we have created something quite different. The contrast was very stark with the way we did streetwork at TAMPEP and still do today, where we operate independently. Because we, who do the work, have this ability or capacity. Not everybody can be a cultural mediator, just because they speak another language.”

# 11 Collaboration between TAMPEP and the CCB

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## Social workers' perspectives

- The work of TAMPEP was most enriching
- "The educational materials and other translated literature were very helpful; the cartoon book is, for instance, worth its weight in gold"
- "TAMPEP supported the streetwork carried out by the CCB"
- "TAMPEP profited from our streetwork experience"

## Doctors' perspectives

- TAMPEP put a lot of effort in and pointed out background influences and interconnections
- "At first we needed the help of the cultural mediators from TAMPEP"
- "The collaboration was very productive; thanks to TAMPEP we had a great breakthrough"
- "Collaboration on the individual projects was really good"

## TAMPEP co-workers' perspectives

- "At the beginning it was very difficult, but now they (at the CCB) understand that we are not competing with them, but that we develop things that they can use as well"
- "There were a lot of difficulties collaborating with the CCB, because they simply didn't accept us"

## Remarks and Perspectives

**A**s the main area of conflict, one could document the definition of roles and the expectations associated with them as well as self-perceptions versus the perceptions of others amongst the individual professional groups. Especial note should be taken of certain points for genuine collaboration between social workers/doctors and cultural mediators:

- Her own experience of integrating and the difficulties she has had colour the emotional attitude of a cultural mediator. This is the very reason why there must be a clear mark of delineation between her and the patient in order to do a professional job of interpreting. To undertake this professional role, she has to have reflected on the way she handles her own migration history. Otherwise there is a danger she might end up either being over-loyal to the client or rejecting them. The social workers and doctors must support this professional delineation. Part of that means recognizing the professionalism of the role. Additionally, coaching, feedback or discussion before and afterwards and training courses are very important.



■ Conflicts arise through the tension caused by the neutrality expected of the cultural mediators, on the one hand, and their emotional involvement in the counselling sessions and the partiality which results therefrom, on the other.

■ Apart from culture-specific factors, individual factors and experiences of collaboration always affect one's behaviour and one's emotions during conversations. These experiences are, in most cases, not good, because introducing cultural mediators into the work situation means lots of conflicts. They can only be solved slowly, one by one. It should, however, be a part of the collaboration process to reflect on shared history and to develop the collaboration process for the future.

■ Even if it is a matter of power and status amongst the individual professional groups, lots of difficulties arise. Conflicts arise here out of a 'combination of a lack of formal recognition of the interpreting job and at the same time of situational power in the interpreting process'.<sup>9</sup> Feelings of loss of control, power and authority over one's territory as well as helplessness on the part of the doctors or social workers can result from their very dependency on the translators. It is possible that some try to compensate for this by treating the interpreters dismissively. The interpreter can also abuse her position of power by keeping back important information. Conflict due to such power politics can be defused through recognizing the function of the interpreters (through appropriate institutional status, through financial reward and training). An relationship of unswerving trust between doctor/ social worker and cultural mediator can be helped along by coaching and/or appropriate discussion before and after counselling sessions.

■ The status of the cultural mediators is mirrored in the conditions of hire, the concept behind the technical collaboration and the prerequisites for the training courses.

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<sup>9</sup> Stuker 1998, S. 63

European Commission  
Directorate-General XXII  
Education, Training and Youth

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**LEONARDO DA VINCI PROGRAMME**

Cultural Mediators  
in the Area of Prostitution/  
Transnational Training

**MANUAL**

December 1998  
April 2001

**AUSTRIA**

Formation of co-operation  
groups in the provinces,  
strengthening of national networks

## **Developments and limitations in working with women who are affected by trafficking**

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10<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> November 2000  
Raach/Gloggnitz (Austria)

### **Terms and Conditions**

The association LEFÖ (*Latin American Migrant Women in Austria*) is still the only NGO in Austria that works as information centre, “pool of experts” and education institution on the topics of women migration and trafficking in women. Since three years, the staff of the IBF – “Intervention Site for women who are Affected by Trafficking” (which is part of the association LEFÖ) is – as the first and so far only acknowledged Victim Support Centre in Austria – counselling and looking after women who became affected by trafficking in Austria.

The growing number of migrant women in all social areas in Western Europe and, at the same time, the lack of rights of these women, gives the political meaning of our work more relevance with every day: It’s about support of the women, demands for a legal frame for their protection and transparency. And to achieve this, specifically aimed education work from our side is required.

In this respect, the Education Seminar is an important contribution, as it is designed for the staff of organisations and institutions who through their work are confronted with the topic of women migration and trafficking in women (e.g. Women’s Shelters, Deportation Care Institutions, Intervention Sites).

Our aim was to develop a new concept which in the future should have served as example/model for the annual Education Seminars. A new concept became necessary because it was evident from the experience gathered throughout the past years that new methods were needed to achieve our aims in order to be able to communicate the essence of this complex topic to the staff members of other organisations.

### **Aims of the Seminar**

- to specifically mediate the difficulties with the phenomenon of trafficking in women;
- to achieve and establish more sensitivity for the phenomenon of trafficking in women;
- to realise the complex situation of the women affected (by trafficking) and to learn to better understand their problems;
- to become familiar with the most important International documents concerning migration, prostitution, trafficking in women and Women’s Rights;
- to evaluate the role and the possibilities of cultural mediation as a working method with women affected by trafficking and with migrant women working in prostitution;
- to improve and to enlarge the nation wide networking and co-operation in Austria;

## **Target Groups**

- Staff members of counselling and information centres for migrant women and for women in general;
- Deportation Care Institutions;
- Staff members of Educational Institutions with a focus on South-North, migration, Human Rights, protection from violence, Eastern and Central Europe;
- People active in the field of media and culture who deal with migration and would like to – in more detail – deal with the topic of women migration;
- LEFÖ staff members (from various fields of work);

## **Topics/Contents of the Seminar**

In content, our Education Seminar on one hand highlighted the different “faces” of trafficking in women in Austria in order to achieve more sensitivity for the phenomenon of trafficking in women. On the other hand, it was important to us to improve the co-operation between the different organisations in order to be able to, in the future, better support the affected women.

The following were the contents of the seminar:

- Women’s Rights, migration, prostitution and trafficking in women in Europe – International documents.
- How does the “Intervention Site for Women who are Affected by Trafficking” work?
- What is trafficking in women: definition of trafficking in women and recognising women who are affected (by trafficking).
- How can different institutions (Deportation Care Institutions, Institutions for migrant women, Women’s Shelters etc.) co-operate to recognise women who are affected (by trafficking) and to provide them with specific support?
- Comparison of some of the different Victim Support Centres for women who are affected by trafficking in Europe: What are their emphases in work? What is the legal situation? What kinds of co-operation do exist?

## **Methods**

- input lectures by subject specialists/expert lecturers from Austria and Germany, with follow-up discussion
- RPG – Role Playing Game
- moderated work in small groups
- plenary session
- “open space”
- free/unscheduled evenings

In this seminar, it was tried to overcome the usual scheme of (frontal) presentations to thus evade purely cognitive or passive confrontation with the topic. In this sense, input lectures and small working groups were alternating.

After each lecture, there was room for and the possibility of discussion during which the lecturers were – among other things – answering questions or facing points of criticism.

In order to give the participants the possibility to discuss still untouched issues or open questions, the last unit of the seminar was designed as “open space”.

On both evenings, a scheduled evening program was deliberately forgone to give the seminar participants an opportunity for informal talks and to foster the process of getting to know each other – and thus the future co-operation.

### **Technical Aids**

Much emphasis was being put on visualising the contents or results of discussions, working groups and plenary sessions (by using posters), in order to enable targeted concentration on the most important points of the respective topics that were being dealt with at the time.

This breaching of a (frontal) presentation added to better concentration and dynamics during the lectures and working groups, and at the same time partly provided a (written) documentation of the seminar.

Beside the flip-chart, pin boards and an overhead-projector were used as technical aids. Other training aids were deliberately forgone.

### **Participants**

26 women participated at the seminar.

## **Seminar Procedure**

### **First Day**

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#### **Welcoming and introduction to the seminar**

##### Getting to know each other

The participants were given enough time to get to know each other through a role playing game. This was extremely important to us in order to, from the start, get to know people's motivation for participating at the seminar and to establish trust within the group.

During the RPG, the following three questions were raised:

- My motivation for being here...
- Expectations and fears...
- My working background...

#### **Introduction to the work of LEFÖ/"Intervention site for women who are affected by trafficking"**

Staff members of the Intervention Site presented their work and tried to thus draw a realistic image of their day-to-day work and of the again and again arising difficulties when co-operating with the authorities/the police but also when working with the affected women in counselling. Thereby it was possible to demonstrate what trafficking in women is and which causes and backgrounds underlain it.

Also, a definition of trafficking in women and trafficking in human beings was provided, whereat there was approximate consensus with the participants concerning the definition we used.

#### **Input lecture, followed by discussion**

Introductorily, Ms Theda Kröger (Counselling Institution Kobra, Hannover), in her lecture explained the political backgrounds that led to the foundation of the "Central Co-ordination

and Counselling Centre for Women who are Affected by Trafficking” – Kobra – in Hannover. Afterwards, she depicted the legal situation of “Women who are Affected by Trafficking” in Germany.

In the following discussion, similarities and differences within the legislation and their execution were actively being discussed, as well as difficulties that strongly impair the work of our organisations. But also similar prerequisites within the legal framework were highlighted.

Again, it was confirmed that government intervention in the area of trafficking in women – in Germany as well as in Austria – is focusing solely on one motivation: to render the prosecution of traffickers more effective. The affected women are being reduced to only serve as witnesses. They remain “illegalised” migrants who usually – once they fulfilled their role as witnesses – have to leave the country. They are not being perceived as victims of an aggravating violation of Human Rights.

## **Free/Unscheduled evening**

## **Second Day**

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### **Input lecture, followed by discussion**

In her lecture, Ms Doris Eckhardt-Aktas, Ecumenical Asia Group (Frankfurt/Main) – standing in for Ms Elvira Niesner – talked about developments and limitations in the field of trafficking in women in an International scope and on the basis of two examples: Germany and Italy. She related to a research about prosecution and victim protection concerning trafficking in Human Beings that has been undertaken by the FIF (Frankfurt Institute for Women’s Studies).

### Working Group 1

#### **Trafficking in Women – (Not) An Issue in my Work?**

Moderated group work was a central part of this seminar and thought of as a completion in content to the input lectures. There were three working groups at 8 participants each. Among other things, we deliberately chose work in small groups to thus enable more focused and more efficient work.

Work in the small groups also enabled confrontation and discussion in the small groups which – among other things – led to a more intense confrontation with the topic. Small working groups also foster the process of getting to know each other which in the future might contribute to an improved level of co-operation.

### **Input lecture, followed by discussion**

In her lecture “Domestic workers: Also affected by trafficking in women?”, Ms Helga Hess-Knapp, Chamber of Work Vienna/Women’s Department, tried to uncover why the term “trafficking in women” is just as applicable onto the situation of domestic workers and that in these cases the same mechanisms are at work as usually in prostitution.

### Working Group 2

#### **Possibilities of co-operation with other NGOs and with executive bodies**

## **Plenary Session**

In plenary, the different working groups reported back about the findings/results from their group work. Following these presentations, the results of each group were discussed.

## **Free/Unscheduled evening**

## **Third Day**

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### **Open Space**

We chose the concept of the “open space” for the last day of the seminar to thus give the participants the opportunity to pick-up on issues and contents which – in their opinion – needed further elaboration or had not been sufficiently dealt with during the course of the seminar.

The concept of the “open space” gave participants the possibility to unrestrictedly decide about the issue and the way of processing it, according to interest and still available energy-resources.

It became evident that the use of this concept is especially well suited for the last day of the seminar.

### **Final Round/Feedback Round**

To officially close the seminar and to reflect upon it's contents and it's procedure, the feedback round was being chosen as finish. Thus it was possible for us to learn about the reactions, suggestions and points of criticism of each individual participant, which is – among other things – particularly important for the following evaluation of the seminar.

## **CONCLUSION/ FINAL THOUGHTS**

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During the whole meeting, there were very interesting and active arguments/confrontations in content on the topic. Also the breaks and evenings were being used for a resuming discussion and, above all, also for an exchange of experience.

Through this relaxed and productive working atmosphere, the input lectures – that were very good in content – and the working groups we succeeded to a large extent in realising the preconceived aims of the meeting through our working method.

It became evident that the procedure/structure that we were using affected the total result of the seminar very positively and above all also very constructively.

The aim could to that extent not completely be achieved which concerns the participation of members of other organisations that correspond to our target group. This fact motivates us to – in view of this – perform an evaluation in order to be able to achieve also this one aim with the next Education Seminars.

# AGENDA

## Friday, 10<sup>th</sup> November

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Morning	Arrival & Registration
12.30	Lunch, Welcoming
14.00	Introduction to the seminar
14.30	Presentation of the participants Expectations and wishes towards the seminar
15.30	3 years IBF/"Intervention Site for Women who are Affected by Trafficking": What has been achieved/put into practice?
16.30	Theda Kröger, co-ordinator at Kobra (Central Co-ordination and Counselling Centre for Women who are Affected by Trafficking), Hannover <i>Kobra: History of origin and political background of a German Victim Support Centre.</i>
19.00	Dinner Free/Unscheduled evening

## Saturday, 11<sup>th</sup> November

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9.00	Input lecture: Doris Eckhardt-Aktas, Ecumenical Asia Group (Frankfurt/Main) <i>Developments and Limitations in the field of Trafficking in Women in an International Scope, two examples: Germany and Italy.</i> Afterwards: Working Groups. Topic: <i>Trafficking in Women – (Not) An Issue in my Work?</i>
12.30	Lunch
14.30	Input lecture: Helga Hess-Knapp, Chamber of Work Vienna/Women's Department <i>Domestic workers: Also affected by trafficking in women?</i> Afterwards: Working Groups. Topic: <i>Possibilities of co-operation with other NGOs and with executive bodies.</i>
17.30	Plenary session
19.00	Dinner
21.00	Party

## Sunday, 12<sup>th</sup> November

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9.30	Open Space (scheduled – as a result of long experience – to give participants the opportunity to deal with untouched issues or open questions) Final discussion round
12.30	Lunch, Departure

## Subject Specialists/Expert Lecturers

- Maria Cristina Boidi, LEFÖ
- Evelyn Probst, LEFÖ/IBF
- Eva Kaufmann, LEFÖ/IBF
- Theda Kröger, Kobra (Hannover)
- Doris Eckhardt-Aktas, Ökumenische Asiengruppe (Frankfurt/Main)
- Helga Hess-Knapp, Arbeiterkammer/Frauenreferat

## Concept / Implementation

- Bernadette Karner, LEFÖ

## Moderation

- Bernadette Karner, LEFÖ



# Series of Training Seminars for Cultural Mediators in the Area of Trafficking in Women and Prostitution

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September 2000 – May 2001  
Vienna, Austria

## Duration of the training

- 4 one-day seminars
- 1 half-day seminars

## Goals of the training

- Co-operation with the existing relief services and professionals
- Recognition of structural violence in migration
- Confrontation with clichés in assistance work with sex workers
- Development of a heightened awareness of the problem, sensitisation
- Reconsideration of one's own standpoint on migration and violence
- Recognition of prejudices, also becoming aware of and deconstructing one's own prejudices
- Grasping the complex situation of the women affected
- Offering protection and help in co-operation and networking
- Reflecting on one's own task in the assistance work
- Transferring specialised professional knowledge
- Recognition of the socio-political contexts

## Target group

Cultural Mediators from the LEFÖ staff carrying out assistance work with immigrants who are affected by the trafficking in women and/or work as prostitutes.

## Overview of the contents and thematic blocks of the seminar series

- Thematic block 1  
Sensitisation and self reflection  
*Meaning and background of cultural mediation work*
- Thematic block 2  
Advisory and assistance work  
*Understanding the situation of the affected women...starting with the women's strengths*
- Thematic block 3  
Transferring knowledge and the legal aspects  
*Transfer of knowledge about legal rights, the area of health and legal decisions in the land of residence, Austria.*
- Thematic block 4  
Violence in the socio-political context  
*Causes and structures of relations of violence*
- Thematic block 5  
Between dependence and self determination  
*Mental and physical reactions of the affected women*

## **Structure of the Document**

This document is a systematic summary of the training seminars for “cultural mediators” which took place in Vienna, Austria.

The daily work done here in Austria to counteract the trafficking in women links up internationally through a multitude of networking structures. International networking is a central strategy in the struggle to combat trafficking in women. Structural exchange through international networking, particularly at the level of training and further education, lends necessary supports to the difficult work of combating trafficking in women.

This document will present methods and didactics. Using these as a base, similar training programs for cultural mediators in other countries can be designed. Knowledge and insight collected during the planning, realisation and evaluation of the training series all flow into this document.

The present document offers concrete material for holding short training sessions for cultural mediators who are involved in assistance work at women’s centres and in the communities. It delivers foundational information about trafficking of women and summarises working principles and basic attitudes for providing assistance in this field of work with women.

This document also builds one of the bases for the implementation talks held with those responsible for the networking of training and continued education at an EU level.

## **Presentation of the Training Concept**

Advanced training can easily lead to problems of competence and competition at various levels. Therefore, an important element of the concept presented is that, right from the start of the training and the formation of the group, respect is shown for the experiences and interests of cultural mediators who are able to take part in this training.

Inviting representatives from specific professions involved at a practical level to obtain specialised professional knowledge, e.g. about health or legal issues, has proven valuable in this training series.

In addition, the concept accounts for the fact that participants are migrants themselves and that they have experienced structural violence.

The seminar is always led and moderated in such a way that all group members are taken into consideration. Reconstruction work, personal experience and group confrontation must be constantly pursued in view of the overall goals of the participants’ training. A major motivation in designing and carrying out this training series was to transport structural and political backgrounds which lead to migration so that the cultural mediators recognise other approaches in addition to their own individualised approach to assistance work.

During the course of the training, prejudices and stereotypes came up for discussion. It is important that those carrying out the training are prepared for this and able to provide the (safe) space needed for discussions. Without this methodical step, rethinking processes cannot take place.

It is especially important for trainers to prepare for racist structures of bias which may at times frequently arise. Not only differences but also parallels in the various lands of origin can be pointed out.

Having a team member from LEFÖ present at every seminar as a liaison had a very positive impact. This professional was always directly responsible for concrete questions about the facilities at LEFÖ and the structure of co-operative work. The team members participated on a rotating basis, allowing the cultural mediators to meet all of the responsible professionals from each area to whom they can and must turn during practical assistance work.

At the beginning of the training series it was important to establish and support the site and context of the emerging group of participating women as a place of learning. Clarifying the structures, goals and framework conditions for the training is essential for the participants. This information, contributed by inputs and impulse lectures, provides the participants with the clarity and security to enable concentration on the upcoming training. These clarifications provide an orientation for the emerging group, which is crucial in supporting further group formation.

In order to be able to actively participate in the training as a whole, it is crucial that the liaisons pay attention to both the group as well as the individual participants.

In all five thematic blocks during the training series, attention is constantly given to the fact that cultural mediators must be aware of the socio-political backgrounds and contexts in the theme of trafficking in women.

### **Certificate**

Participation in three one-day seminars as well as at the half-day seminar is required to receive a certificate.

- The following section will introduce important principles, which form the basic framework for carrying out the training seminars. A continual confrontation with these principles is crucial for the trainers, the liaisons as well as the participants. These principles and positions parallel those discussed in NGOs.

### **Principles for the training/agreements with the participants**

#### 1. Protection and security

The assurance of the security of women and their children is the main goal of the assistance work.

#### 2. Women as independent subjects

The hierarchical arrangement between the sexes forms the basis for the violence against women and for the trafficking of women. The knowledge that women are independent subjects, regardless of whether they are alone or not, if they have children or are in a partnership, must be made available and continuously emphasised.

The liaisons and the leader of the training series serve as a role model in this respect.

#### 3. Self organisation/ "Empowerment Approach"/ Authority

Women who are affected by trafficking should be strengthened and supported by the assistance work of the cultural mediators. Women need more rights and possibilities to make decisions in terms of migration and sex work. These are defined within NGOs, in terms of the women's interests. The idea is to strengthen the position of women. In order to be able to take advantage of their rights, women must possess adequate power to transform the present social

situation. The main idea of this approach is to clarify that women are subjects and need comprehensive rights. This is the basis for enabling self-determination and refers to prostitution as well as migration and the assistance work of cultural mediators in these areas.

#### 4. Complexity

The trafficking in women is a complex socio-political, economic structural phenomenon of violence. When planning the implementation of training seminars for cultural mediators who assist migrants involved in the field of prostitution and/or trafficking, aspects such as land of origin, class affiliation, age, religion, etc. must be taken into account and respected.

#### 5. Gender specific language

The language used is important for the training series as a whole. Lecturers use gender specific language to elucidate social roles and positioning and power relations which are also revealed by corresponding speech patterns. This set off animated discussion among the participants in which various positions on the matter were expressed. In the first seminar, the following agreement was developed and suggested: The liaisons would step in where it is advisable for female speakers to adapt female speech forms.

#### 6. Practice – Theory relationship

The concept for the series calls for a direct relationship between theory and practice for the cultural mediators. The exercises and questions for the group work were all taken from practical situations in a working environment. Inquiries directed at the liaisons as well as the respective lecturers were requested and came abundantly.

#### 7. 'Disturbances have priority'

We suggested and adopted this rule from theme centred interaction. It enables prompt examination of something whose presence is strongly felt by individuals or the group, without allowing it to influence the course of events as a whole. Tensions arising within the group of participants were constantly pointed out during the training series. The advantage is that this prevents them from underhandedly dominating the working atmosphere. Allowing and providing space for the participants to discuss the reasons for the tensions in the group dynamics proved to be useful.

#### 8. Active involvement of all participants

Active involvement by all participants is desired. Experience, involving oneself, and being curious about other women, leading up to the ability to be critical, are prerequisites for the personality growth that is crucial for cultural mediators.

In the training, the organisers and the liaisons make sure that one participant does not dominate the group discussion. For this, it is important to set limits for the participants without adopting an authoritative leadership style.

#### 9. Framework agreements/ascertaining and assuring commitments

Every training participant is prepared to take part in the whole series. The presence and collaboration of every woman is important for the group and learning processes. The leader of the series must be notified personally if there are reasons for preventing participation in a seminar.

These points were presented and the participants expressed their agreement.

## Necessary aids for the seminar series

- Overhead-projector
- Moveable walls
- Flip-Chart
- Markers
- Handout

The following time structure proved useful throughout the entire series of seminars

## Time schedule for the one-day seminars

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09:00	welcoming, presentation of leadership and concept, presentation of the framework and goals
09:39	getting to know each other (1 <sup>st</sup> time only!), theme, first task (i.e.: interview)
10.30	break
11.00	theme, second task, input, work in small groups
12.30	lunch break
13.30	continuation of theme, discussion in plenary
14.30	break
15.00	theme
16.30	summary, feedback session
17.15	end of day

## Time schedule for the half-day seminar

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16.00	present and work on theme, discussion
17.30	break
17.45	intensify theme or a second theme
19.00	break
19.15	visualising the theme, handout
20.00	summary, feedback session, end of day

## Thematic block 1

(One-day seminar)

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## Sensitisation and self-reflection: Meaning and context of cultural mediation work

- Welcoming and getting to know each other
- Project presentation: LEFÖ – *Emigrated Latin American Women in Austria*.
- History, politics: us about ourselves
- Reconsidering our own standpoint on trafficking in women and prostitution, dismantling prejudices
- Reflection on one's own migration as a context of experience
- Being foreign in Austria
- Relationships between racism-sexism
- What is cultural mediation?

## Goals

Possibilities and limitations of assistance work

Re-examining one's own basic positions on the themes:

- trafficking in women
- migration and sex work

## Content

- Recognising and understanding the group as a site for learning and as a learning context;
- Enabling the necessary prerequisites for group formation;
- Experience of social learning and group work;
- Importance of the crossover of socio-political confrontations and self-reflection;
- Input about the trafficking of women and migration (see material for Seminar 1 in the addendum);
  - Confrontation with "the trafficking in women"

## Getting acquainted

Goal: The participants now have the possibility to first get acquainted with each other within the context of the theme.

## Methods

Working in groups of three (interviewer, interviewee, person recording), change roles, thirty minutes.

## Question

### "My own experiences with migration"

- Interviewer places questions
- Interviewee gives answers
- Person recording writes down keywords and keeps an eye on the time, the small group works out similarities/differences among the women minutes
- Plenary session: collect differences/ similarities
- This exercise is meant to record the participants' respective backgrounds and make them public and visible. The personal is the political.

This time of getting to know one another represents an important step in the initial training situation. A good speaking environment and a certain basic trust in the group are necessary so that the participants feel increasingly confident about speaking about their experiences and even about their insecurities.

- Break/prepared poster is hung: "*Racism-Sexism*"
- Two posters with the texts "*With sexism I associate ....*" and "*With racism I associate....*"

Participants can add to these during the breaks. This series of posters will be displayed at the seminars.

## Create an approach to the posters

### Task

Definitions of "*trafficking in women*" are distributed on a handout and read together and discussed in small groups. (see material for Seminar 1 in the addendum)

*"When we talk about women's work migration, we are speaking about a current world wide system that explains and produces it" – LEFÖ*

During the entire day of the seminar, portions of this fundamental knowledge were allowed to continually flow into the group discussion so that the participants' discussion could further intensify.

Work in small groups.

### **Question**

Assess and determine criteria for the peer-assistance work done by migrant women

### **Methods**

- Impulse lecture about the significance of one's own assessments of positions related to migration and the trafficking in women
- Spontaneous contribution
- Individual work in order to become aware of the current positions on assistance work
- Guided work in small groups

## **Thematic block 2**

(One-day seminar)

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### **Advisory and Assistance work : understanding the situation of affected women.... "Beginning with the women's strengths...."**

- The feminist position in advisory work
- Why do women remain in abusive relationships?
- Possibilities and limitations of assistance work
- Between empathy and dissociation
- Developing competent work behaviour
- Saying goodbye

### **Goal:**

Understanding the situation of the affected women

### **Content**

- Recognising and learning to understand the backgrounds of women's situations
- Confronting the mechanisms which women bear, for example, in violent and abusive relationships from which they cannot or do not part
- (see material for Seminar 2 in the addendum)
- Feminist positions in advisory and assistance work
- Between empathy and dissociation
- (see material for Seminar 2 in the addendum)

## **Input**

The theme of trafficking in women should not be allowed to be reduced to “the villain and the victim.” This reduction illustrates an incorrect picture of reality. It simplifies the process and does not take into account the responsibility of the society of the lands of origin, nor the international economic interests and customers. A linear perspective of the trafficking in women reduces women to the role of “victim.”

For an analysis of the trafficking in women, however, the concept of the victim is useful only in a legal sense. Those affected can certainly be victims under the law, however that does not mean that they should be made into objects. The perspective of the woman as victim infers the “poor” (“uneducated,” “primitive”) woman. The “deceived” woman, the woman whose only qualities or uses lie in either sex work or domestic labour, the woman, who “actually is guilty of her own fate.”

The racist and sexist stereotypes of the “soft, gentle, passionate, wild” or “obedient” woman support the reduction of the female migrant to an object. For years, marriage agencies and the sex tourism industry have propagated this stereotype without any legal intervention. The media likewise transports this image of the woman as victim and repeats the same clichés. It is rare to find an article that offers accurate information about the background to the trafficking in women and the causes of women’s migration.

The concept of women’s work migration allows us to view the women as subjects.

It allows for an understanding of their motives and needs, support of their capabilities, changes they make despite the pressure to produce that is placed on them and, primarily, to recognise their courage and strength in light of the risky situation in which they find themselves. This concept opposes the common point of view. As objects/victims, the migrants are marginalised, often pitied and in the end deported. On the contrary, as subjects and women living in a European country, they possess the same rights as immigrants, workers and prostitutes.

## **Methods**

- Individual work and work in small groups on the question:
- “Which criteria are important for me in assistance work?”
- Summary: which points occur most commonly and which stand alone?
- Working out specific cases
- Working on women’s situations based on concrete cases as a didactic aid has the advantage that they correspond well with working out the possibilities for confronting the problems of the respective women.

## **Task**

### First encounter.

You have the night shift in the women's shelter. In the kitchen, one of the residents begins to explain that she borrowed money from her relatives and parents to finance her trip to Europe. Here, she was working under extremely poor conditions in a bar. She could not bear the violent acts of the bar owner and fled. She is extremely afraid of the owner and his friends – crying she collapses in front of you. What should be done?

In the small group, work out concrete and practical steps for the conversation.



After working in the small group there was a discussion of the case study in the plenary session which considered the following points:

- Is immediate intervention necessary/allowed?
- What can/must I do as a cultural mediator?
- Is the back up of a professional necessary?
- Long term steps?

### **Input**

- The situation of the affected women – Why do women remain in abusive relationships? (see addendum, material for Seminar 2)
- Between empathy and dissociation – Feminist positions in assistance work. (see addendum, material for Seminar 2)

## **Thematic block 3**

(One-day Seminar)

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### **Transferring knowledge and Legal Aspects**

Transfer of knowledge about legal rights, the area of health and legal decisions in the land of residence, Austria.

- Health aspects (Hepatitis, Aids, Sexually-Transmitted Diseases/Infections, abortion etc.)
- Legal aspects: migration – escape – asylum
- Legal framework in Austria: trafficking, slave trade, exploitative trafficking, victim protection, residency
- Handling authorities

### **Goal**

- Transfer of knowledge about legal rights
- Information about the area of health
- Current legal decisions which determine the women's living and working conditions

### **Content**

- Basic knowledge of the legal foundations in the land of destination
- Criminal law and civil code aspects, duties of the police
- Health aspects: Basic knowledge about STDs etc.
- Information about the institutions which help the affected women, financial possibilities for support and rights, etc.

### **Methods**

Lectures by experts, lawyers and advisors from aids help-centre and STD clinic;

### **Tasks**

Groups of three form which have the task of holding a counselling talk. For this, one woman “plays” the advisor, another the affected woman and one observes. The talk should last for about ten minutes. Afterwards the participants speak about their experiences and feelings and exchange questions and information. Then they switch roles.

The role-play should be discussed based on what has been learned up to this time; a moderator from the small group should lead the follow-up discussion. The seminar instructor then explains the importance of stepping out of the role once again.

### **Handout**

Criteria for an acceptable conversation in assistance work  
(see material for Seminar 3 in the addendum)

### **Conclusion**

Ask the group, going around in a circle: What did you learn from today's seminar?

## **Thematic block 4**

(One-day seminar)

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### **Violence in a socio-political context: causes and structures of violent relationships**

- Meaning of women's migration: the relationship between the causes and forms of the structural violence to migrants
- Causes and forms of the structural and sexual violence against migrant women who are affected by trafficking
- Forms and patterns of the trafficking in women in Europe
- Prostitution – an overview
- Causes and forms of the structural and sexual violence against migrants who work in prostitution

### **Goal**

Recognising that violence consists of more than just physical abuse.

### **Content**

In the context of a patriarchal, sexist society, structures of violence are common. Violence against migrants and especially women and girls is socially cemented in Austria and it guarantees the functioning of a racist society. The course participants have probably been subject to various forms of psychological violence. What is important here is to recognise and address this. It is important to be able to differentiate between the single act and the systematic employment of several forms of violence.

When women who prostitute themselves are offered support and given the possibility to free themselves from the dependency on the criminal person or organisation, organised crime is likewise weakened.

In addition to structural violence, violent attacks belong to a woman's daily life, and are often not seen as such by the women; they seem "normal." Through gender-specific socialisation, women have learned to live with the constant threat and infliction of power and violence. Men, on the other hand, have learned how they can achieve their apparent superiority through all kinds of violence against women.

- The connection between racism and sexism;
- Threat to existence;
- Social isolation;
- Multiple burdens in women's daily lives;

## **Theme**

### Structural situation in the facilities

## **Task**

Based on the following questions, the participants exchange their experiences with the structure and services offered by the social institutions with which they are familiar:

- resources
- difficulties
- (work in) multi-cultural teams

## **Methods**

(audio-visual materials)

Video: „*Unsichtbare Hausarbeiterinnen*“

Video: „*Me Duele El Alma*“

## **Task**

The trainer places the following questions, which are then dealt with in pairs.

- What do I now understand more about the political structure of connections of violence?
- What feelings did the video stir?
- Did I have associations and images? If so, which ones?
- Did the video set off impulses in me for the support work against violence? If so, which ones?

## **Discussion**

The guided group discussion was suitable for critically confronting the theme, researching the "causes and structural connections" from the perspective of gender difference, for example on the issue of hierarchy and forms of violence.

It was important to continually ensure that the main theme is not abandoned. Different opinions can be introduced and argued. If strongly contrasting standpoints came up, it was the task of the instructor together with the seminar liaison to summarise the positions and find the common thread running through the entire program of the training series.

In conclusion, the larger group summarised what the prospective cultural mediators had learned about the causes of relations of violence through this half-day. The instructor depicts that clearly on the flip chart.

## **Thematic block 5**

(Half-day Seminar)

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### **Between dependence and self-determination: psychological and physical reactions of the affected women**

- Working with traumatised women
- Reactions of the women who are affected by the trafficking in women and working in prostitution:
  - isolation
  - financial and emotional dependency
  - exhaustion
  - discouragement
  - threat
  - health issues etc.
  - “Stockholm-Syndrome”
- Conclusion and group evaluation

#### **Goal**

Confrontation with the affected women's psychological and physical reactions to their situations;

#### **Content**

- Obtain knowledge about the behaviour and reactions of women in the troublesome situations
- Information about the strategies of men and male 'bonds'

The victims of violent relationships often develop similar symptoms to kidnapping victims; namely, they conform with those more powerful in order to survive. The environment is perceived as having hostile and threatening tendencies because the woman does not know how the perpetrator will respond to outside reactions. This psychological reaction is described as the “Stockholm Syndrome”. (Graham/Rawlings/Rimini, 1988). This syndrome explains the acutely threatened women's ambivalence, something that is often inexplicable for outsiders.

A lecture from a feminist psychotherapist about her experiences in the work with traumatised women.

#### **Task**

Work out the grounds that necessitate collaboration with a professional woman when you are assisting women with experiences of trauma.

Working in two groups.

#### **Role play**

Role playing of a certain situation allows exploration and trying out the behavioural variants and reaction patterns of diverse persons/professionals. This is especially suitable for the thematic concentration “between dependence and self determination” because with it, a more comprehensive insight into the women’s situations can be reached. For this area of emphasis, the participants can choose their own roles.

The seminar instructor challenged the course participants to work out feelings, ambivalence and problems that surface in this support process. The results were written out on flip charts and presented at the end.

### **Conclusion and evaluation in the group of cultural mediators**

#### **Proposal for the conclusion and evaluation sheet**

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Please write your personal opinion about the following questions. Your answers to these questions contribute to our ability to continue improving the seminar series.

1. What do you find most difficult about the support work?

2. How pleased were you with the choice of themes? Mark your position in the scale from 1 (very pleased) to 5 (not pleased at all).

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

3. Your position on the seminar in keywords:

4. What did you, personally, find most important about the seminar?

5. How pleased were you with your own co-operation? Please mark your position on the scale from 1 (very pleased) to 5 (not pleased at all).

6. Your opinion in keywords:

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

7. Three statements to conclude with – which ones would you like to tell the entire group and/or the trainers?

## **Background, development and goals of LEFÖ: communication, counselling and training centre**

The organisation LEFÖ – *Lateinamerikanische Emigrierte Frauen in Österreich* (Migrant Latin American Women in Austria) – was founded in 1985 by a group of politically exiled Latin American women living in Vienna, with the aim of creating a centre of communication, information, and self-help.

The changes and development that the migration process has undergone in the last years, have been expanding and also changing LEFÖ's initial objectives. There is a growing feminisation of migration and a transformation into labour migration towards "rich" countries of Western Europe.

The 70's were marked by a great migration wave towards Europe, fleeing from military dictatorships which at that time ruled over Latin American countries. The 80's were clearly marked by neo-liberal policies at the International level, where poverty and the unemployment rate increased in the so called "third world" countries with the consequent migration towards developed countries. Poverty, feminisation of poverty, are the main reasons for the feminisation of migration.

Through many efforts it has been possible for LEFÖ to expand its structures and its field of work, having within its organisation different projects that support and accompany the migratory process of women for whom, whether they are affected or not by the trafficking in women, the main cause of migration has been the search for survival alternatives.

What does LEFÖ offer....

### **To migrant Latin American women**

- Communication centre, library, workshops on different areas and information on various seminars, meetings, lectures etc.;
- German language courses in different levels, also with the possibility of obtaining the ÖSD, which is an acknowledged Austrian language diploma;
- Courses on professional and work counselling;
- Family counselling staffed with a doctor, a lawyer and a social worker;
- Counselling within the framework of the labour market;
- Psychological counselling;

### **To women sex workers**

LEFÖ is member of a project of the European Community on health prevention for migrant sex workers since 1995:

- TAMPEP – Multinational AIDS/STD Prevention Among Migrant Prostitutes in Europe/Project.
- Street work.
- Elaboration of informative materials and folders in different languages.
- Workshops for peer educators.
- Cultural Mediation.

## **Intervention centre for women affected by trafficking / IBF**

Since January 1998, LEFÖ has been recognised as an intervention centre for migrant women affected by trafficking. The centre offers:

- Counselling and legal, social and psychological accompaniment, as well as support in the process of recovering their rights.
- Temporary housing where women receive support, accompaniment and counselling.
- Joint work with women's organisations in their countries of origin to find out new perspectives for their return.
- Counselling and accompaniment in the deportation detention centres.

## **Public Relations Activities**

- Organisation of training seminars and information campaigns.
- Annual edition of the "RUNDBRIEF" (newsletter) on issues related to immigration and trafficking in women.
- Public relations activities with the media.
- Organisation of seminars, conferences, lectures on issues of trafficking in women, racism, sexism, and migration.
- Political lobbying, both at international and national levels.
- Networking activities with other non-governmental organisations both at international and national levels.

## **Female Migration – Labour migration**

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Whenever the word "migration" is mentioned in this context, it refers to female labour migration. Female labour migration refers to the current global system that produces this kind of migration and clarifies the reason for its development.

There is a massive presence of women searching for work possibilities in Europe as a result of the global economic system that does not take into consideration women's needs.

Extreme poverty forces women to migrate looking for new alternatives to ensure and protect in some way, the lives of their family, especially of their children. This is the main reason why they migrate and this will not change while the great gap between rich and poor countries continues existing.

In rich countries there is a great demand for migrant labour, of the services that basically come from the traditional sector of women related to reproductive work: domestic work, childcare, care of the elderly, as well as sex work. The possibility of hiring this labour force from weak countries and to leave it within an illegal status at the same time, permits to gradually extinguish these fields of labour from social consciousness.

The increase of women's poverty in the Southern and Eastern countries is a structural factor in the feminisation of the migration. Immigration Laws of the Western European countries of destiny are becoming gradually more restrictive and this makes it almost impossible for migrant women to obtain a legal permit of stay and work permit. Starting from this "illegal" situation, women easily fall prey to illegal business practices, exploitation, and violent and deceitful relationships. Trafficking in women strengthens itself because of the lack of possibilities of legal work for migrant women in the countries of destiny.

## **Trafficking in Women – The New Face of Migration**

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Women labour migration cannot be confused with trafficking in women, but it is certain that almost every woman affected by trafficking has migrated looking for a job. Trafficking in women means all kinds of ill-willed businesses that aim to profit on the need of women to migrate (use, abuse, exploitation and violence, related to women's migratory process).

Generally, women who work as domestic employees, sex workers, women married to Austrians, and every woman who has the need to work under conditions of much exploitation, illegality and under violent threats, are affected.

When women migrate as a consequence of deceitful or false promises, they generally carry the load of an enormous debt, and in the country of destiny they are forced to remain in places where they do not want to be, and they are also forced to work. The deprivation of women's dignity and sexual integrity by husbands or "bosses" is what is called here trafficking in women.

It is important not to reduce the issue to the "victim" and the "guilty" but to show the reasons, causes, and mechanisms that produce trafficking in women. The big risk of migrant women is to arrive and be affected by trafficking, because this situation is strengthened, for example, by the media and/or announcements that show images of the "exotic woman", the "diligent woman"; through the marriage agencies, and the sex tourism industry. In the same way, commercialisation of the "stranger" obstructs, within society, the confrontation of the real causes of female migration and trafficking in women.

## **Migration and feminisation of poverty**

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The feminisation of poverty has a direct relation to the feminisation of migration flows. The question of the so-called "free decision" to emigrate is in a certain sense secondary, as behind this decision is the absolute necessity of survival. In addition to their economic situation, the image of life in Europe and false accounts of what awaits the women in the destination land play a central role. Illusions, which have arisen through politics, advertisements, tourism and the tales of other migrants, play a crucial role in lending credibility to preconceived notions of the new country.

Women's labour migration for the affected women always means the search for survival. It is the hope through and of work perspectives. All women affected by trafficking are migrating in search of work.

*"In the decision to migrate, the opportunities available for specific female services in the Western countries are critical. The women are specifically recruited and their desperate situation and willingness to take a risk are taken advantage of. They are in particular demand for jobs in the area of reproductive work traditionally assigned to women. As a result of societal changes, women in the West no longer do these jobs. That means that at the same time, the possibility of acquiring labour power from the economically weaker countries and allowing them to work under exploitative conditions, masks the gender relations in the Western world. The illusion of equality and the division of labour between man and woman in the so-called private household can thereby be upheld at the cost of the female migrant worker." – LEFÖ*



An important prerequisite for the work with affected women is the cultural mediator's own confrontation with the theme of trafficking in women and prostitution. In personal confrontation with the theme, most important is awareness of one's own prejudices and stereotypes because these influence and affect the work of assisting women affected by trafficking.

A prerequisite for the cultural mediators in their assistance work is to become involved in the complex thematic area oneself, as a person/woman.

Only in this way can a more well thought out, understanding contact with the affected women take place. In addition, the social complexity of trafficking in women and prostitution is more fully comprehended if a personal reference is considered at all times during the entire short training.

Because of the structural violence, which forms the basic conditions, the distinction between forced and non-forced prostitution is difficult with migrant women. If prostitution were decriminalised, it would be recognised as work and gainful employment, prostitutes would obtain rights, and only then could the violence, exploitation, abuse and stigmatisation within prostitution be eliminated and the trafficking in women effectively combated.

It is important to point out to the participants that prostitution can also be a freely chosen form of work.

The legal situation in Austria produces and supports these dependencies. No comprehensive help can be expected from the "normal authorities". Usually immediate deportation from Austria threatens.

The recognition of these political causes and connections allows cultural mediators to approach the affected women differently.

## **Lecture: What is cultural mediation?**

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*"Cultural mediators are representatives who know the motivations, the habits, the rules and regulations of the migrants or the respective cultural group as well as of the majority culture of the 'guest' country, and at the same time have access to the knowledge about the conditions, the social ethics and the "scene" in which a minority finds itself." (TAMPEP definition, migrated sex workers)*

Migration is world wide reality. Economic globalisation means increasing poverty for women in the countries of the South and East. This presents one of the structural reasons for the feminisation of migration. A new field of activity has arisen through this development: cultural mediation, cultural representation, intercultural communication, community interpretation, etc.

### **The goals of cultural mediators are:**

- Interpreting the language between two different women or groups to create or improve their interaction.
- Mediating the social and cultural values between two groups, rather than merely translating out of context.
- Forming a bridge which enables passageway from one culture to another, i.e. in both directions, allowing both sides access to the systems and laws which they do not know, thereby supporting the social situation of immigrants.

- Acting as a means of combating discrimination which allows the women access to counselling and assistance services.

Since the cultural mediators only have basic knowledge at their disposal, they must transmit all of the specific questions to experts.

Cultural mediators are also to be seen as a support as they strengthen the self-awareness and self-confidence of the women/sex workers. This is important for the area of changing behaviour and behavioural tactics. Cultural mediators support and help migrated sex workers to work more professionally, even if many women do not define themselves as sex workers. Cultural mediators are experts because they have experienced migration and sometimes also the sex industry.

### **Role and responsibility of the cultural mediators**

- To establish the contact to migrant's organisations (NGOs) in the host country as well as in the land of origin.
- To participate in theoretical discussions about the various political and social reasons as well as the consequences of living and working situations for migrants who work as prostitutes in Europe.

### **Definitions of "trafficking in women"**

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*"...when women migrate as a result of deception and false promises of intermediaries and incur high debts in the process, which places them in a situation of dependency in the destination country. These intermediaries may be professionals but can also be friends or relatives of the affected women. The dependency may consist of them being forced, against their will, to perform tasks and services or they may be brought into exploitative or slave-like working conditions which includes being restricted in their personal freedom or their right to sexual self-determination by a husband or employer." LEFÖ-definition*

Trafficking in women does not only mean that a woman is brought to Europe to work here to then return to her homeland. The theme of "trafficking in women" is usually dismissed as merely a problem of individual women: the economic networks and international dependencies which the sex work of the women from the Tricont region (Africa, Central/South America, Asia) and from the East enable and support, are too rarely subjected to comprehensive observation and critique.

"When we speak about the trafficking in women, we understand by that an extreme form of exploitation of women from the so-called 'Third World' by men from the so-called 'First World' (as either sex objects or cheap labour) and as an extreme outcrop of international power mechanisms.

Beyond that, we understand trafficking in women to include every form of business with women which takes advantage of their disadvantaged position, whether that is in the trafficking of women in the narrow sense, marriage brokerage or sex tourism. As a result we also mean every form of exploitation of women in migration, not only that which occurs through prostitution."

## **Structural reasons for remaining in violent structures**

Effective help is not possible without understanding the reasons why women have difficulty leaving abusive relationships. There are various reasons why women remain in a relationship or marriage in which their partner, husband or boyfriend abuses them, parallel to those that keep women in exploiting and dependent structures with bar-owners, traffickers, pimps etc. Still, the reasons are different for each woman. There are always personal and structural difficulties in breaking out of a violent context.

The following presents some of the reasons:

- The victims of trafficking in women are also affected by their illegal residence in Austria. The structural violence that the migrants thus experience is very difficult to change at a political level. Sometimes that has the result that women must 'also' bear so-called private violence.
- There are two conditions which normally apply to those affected by trafficking in women: they are victims in connection with the act of "human trafficking" as well as potential witnesses to assure the legal persecution of the perpetrators!
- Trafficking in women is a form of structural exploitation and violence. Insecure residency and the threat of deportation force women to stay with men, bar-owners, pimps etc. At the same time, women who are affected are not only weakened; they have developed several survival strategies for dangerous situations. They have learned to protect themselves. Adaptation can be a survival strategy.
- The cultural mediators should be able to clearly understand that the lack of structural possibilities for assistance, resources and living quarters are often the reason why women remain in abusive relationships. Obtaining a secure, long term inexpensive place to live is often hopeless.

## **Between empathy and dissociation Feminist positions in assistance work**

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Empathy and Dissociation: two prominent, contradictory attitudes.

### **Fundamental considerations**

- Empathy arises within a relationship and in a process that accompanies a woman
- Warmth, which is not possessive, does not appropriate
- Sensitive understanding of situations, thoughts and feelings
- Power of empathy
- The woman is at the centre of attention
- Partiality, trustworthiness
- People-centred and task-centred
- Support of the woman
- Concentration on the affected woman, "sticking with it"
- Attention to borders, time, security, protection
- Attention to the entire group and each individual
- Separation from others: working groups/competencies/structures/jobs

- A cultural mediator is not necessarily a psychotherapist, a psychotherapist is not necessarily a cultural mediator
- Voicing one's own insecurities and difficulties
- Pay attention to the woman's energy when speaking; do not talk for too long
- Do not only listen for details, but rather grasp and understand the whole idea and what is essential
- Be open for that which is less comfortable, do not order into your own system of thought
- Know your own value system and possible prejudices, confront them
- Clarify concept of "abilities" of women
- Perceive abilities, articulate and confirm them
- Emphasise women's "positive" attitudes
- Perceive women's relationships to themselves as well as one's own possible discouragement of the women and set attention, observance and dignity against it
- Urge and support women's self organisation
- Highlight the women's strengths
- Active listening
- Further questions: *Did I understand correctly, that...?*
- Make a short summary
- Stick with it, do not be distracted
- Do not interpret
- Take moments for eye contact
- Verbal and non-verbal behaviour when accompanying women

Cultural mediators must pay attention that they themselves obtain help and that resources are available to them such as team support, supervision and continued training.

### Material for **3**: Lectures and Input

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## **Criteria for an acceptable conversation in assistance work**

### Consensual agreement

In counselling and assisting women it must be a principle that action will only take place with their consent. The affected must have the power of decision and the control over what happens. According to the respective arrangements and institutions it is important to explain to the migrants the tasks and requirements of one's own institution. In that way one's own behaviour as a cultural mediator is made transparent and can be assessed by the women.

- Pay attention to the individual woman as well as the group of women
- Let the women speak and/or become emotional when the women want to
- Believe the women and tell them that you do
- Listen with concentration but do not continue to question or "drill" them
- Do not make any decisions for a woman
- Do not force the women to take on a certain behaviour
- Do not judge a woman's life or decisions
- Perceive any of the women's possible injuries, but do not make any interpretations
- Do not stir any false hopes in the woman
- Refer to the professional counsellors in the counselling centre and in the intervention centres, etc.

## **The Seminars Team**

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### **Project coordinator**

Maria Cristina Boidi (Lefö)

### **Concept/ Implementation**

DSA<sup>in</sup> Gabriele Bargehr,  
Supervisor (ÖVS)

### **Seminar Participants/Speakers**

Staff of the intervention site for those affected by trafficking in women

- Eva Kaufmann, Psychologist
- Evelyn Probst, Psychologist
- Maria Cristina Boidi, co-ordinator from Verein LEFÖ
- Veronica Munk, Co-ordinator Project TAMPEP-Germany
- Gabriele Marth, Social Scientist
- Elisabeth Berger and Ms. Neidhart, AIDS-Hilfe Vienna
- Katharina Echsel, Lawyer
- Gamze Ongan, Peregrina Vienna
- Uta Ludwig, Bella Donna Frankfurt
- Charlotte Aykler, Psychotherapist

## **Second Period**

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### **International Meetings**

- TAMPEP General Meeting  
Vienna/Austria, January 26-28, 2001
- AGISRA, Network  
Frankfurt-Main/Germany, October 27-29, 2000

### **TAMPEP Co-ordination-Meetings**

- Airoli /Italy, May 6-10, 2000
- Vienna/Austria, September 28-30,2000
- Vienna/Austria, January 28-29,2001

### **AIDS and Mobility/TAMPEP/ Co-ordination Meetings**

- Vienna, Austria/ November 2 - 3, 2000
- Vienna, Austria/ May, 2 – 3 – 4, 2001

### **The Team in Austria**

- |                         |                |
|-------------------------|----------------|
| ▪ Maria Cristina Boidi  | Co-ordinator   |
| ▪ Doris Cordova         | Latin America  |
| ▪ Faika Anna El-Nagashi | Eastern Europe |
| ▪ Edith Schwarzbauer    | Finances       |