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## **BACKGROUND GRUNDTVIG Pilot Course 08 - 11 May 2008, Timisoara, Romania**

The central objective of the BACKGROUND project is the development of a course aiming at sustainably improving competencies of adult education staff in the area of violence against women in different institutional environment with the main purpose of supporting women survivors of violence. The course is developed with a modular blended learning approach consisting of a 4-week preliminary phase, a 5-day face-to-face training week with a follow-up.

The pilot course in Timisoara had the purpose to assess the grade of achievement of the aims and the objectives formulated in the project.

### **Background - Pilot Course**

#### ***The setting***

The training took place in Timisoara which is in the western part of Romania. The trainees' group consisted of nine women: seven representatives of local associations, projects or universities, one member of the blinc eG from the Netherlands and one new colleague of the Portuguese partner AMCV who recently had started to work in the association. From the beginning, the group had a very high level of awareness for the issue of domestic violence and the motivation was great! This led to a very open and positive learning atmosphere.



The pilot course being slightly shorter in all its phases than the G3 course, the BACKGROUND-Team put a main

focus on all topics related closely to the phenomenon of domestic violence and on communication training, which is a key issue in all aspects of our life. It is also crucial in this context and played an important role in our training course.

#### ***The training***

##### **Preliminary phase:**

The ePhase started one week prior to the face-to-face session with a general introduction to women's rights by giving an overview about the obstacles to gender equality and action needed to overcome them. Moreover, information on the phenomenon of domestic violence was delivered as well as an introduction to different communication styles accompanied by a quiz for self-assessing the personal communication style of participants.

### Face-to-Face Session:

The face-to-face session was introduced with awareness training dealing with common myths like “domestic violence is due to poverty or lack of education” and why they are wrong: domestic violence happens in all kinds of families and relationships. Persons of any class, culture, religion, sexual orientation, marital status, age, and sex can be victims or perpetrators of domestic violence.

Great importance was attached to using a broad variety of didactical methodologies aiming at delivering not only an interesting and enriching training but also at giving trainees the space to share their knowledge and experiences. Case studies illustrated the cycle of violence with its different phases and helped to recognise specific signs of violence.

Role plays and practical exercises were conceived to combine communication training with domestic violence related issues.

Furthermore, strategies of the perpetrator were made clear: the acts of violence are driven by motives and strategic considerations and do not happen by chance, but they are intrinsic to a system of power and control.

The impact on women and children was illustrated in order to make trainees aware of the fact that domestic violence is not a private matter but affects the family and the whole society. It became clear that nothing can be done alone - trainees got an overview about available services and resources to which they can address to when being confronted with cases of domestic violence.



### Follow-up:

At the end of the f2f session, participants expressed the common wish to continue the collaboration. Therefore, communication tools (skype and online rooms) were introduced and specific tasks related to intervention models or methodologies for supporting and training of women survivors of violence were given. The results are discussed in an online conference with the whole group. Individual support is given by the trainers via skype.

### ***The feedbacks***

From the gathered data derives that the training in Timisoara was successful with regard to its aims and helpful for the participants. They stated they obtained a good knowledge of the topic itself and a common frame of understanding, so that they felt better prepared to react when confronted with cases of domestic violence.

*“I wanted to find out how I can manage a domestic violence situation - Now I know the steps, I know how a perpetrator can be and manifest, but I also know that there are no rules to manage such kind of situation.”*

The vast majority of participants considered that, in terms of achieving training outcomes, expectations had been met or largely met.

In terms of the general organisation and management of the pilot course (accommodation, teaching aids and resources, etc), participants appeared to be very satisfied with the way in which the course was being organised and managed, with all agreeing that the training was being well-managed, the trainers were professional and used a variety of methods, the materials were considered helpful.

Finally, respondents had been asked to comment on what, to them, had been the most successful, helpful and enjoyable aspects of the course. In terms of perceptions of most successful aspects, most respondents commented on how useful role plays and exercises were for them. There was felt to be a good communication amongst the participants and a willingness to share experiences and ideas in order to offer mutual support.

*"I liked most the exercises and case studies that were chosen. I learned the most from the interaction with the other participants. The brainstorming was great."*

Moreover, participants were positive about the transfer of experiences to their institutions or work. In this connection again the use of role plays and exercises were mentioned by the majority.

*"The interactive way of learning", "There are things that can be adapted to our work: role plays, practical exercises".*



## Further Activities

The first edition of the G3 course will take place in Sant'Anna in Camprena, Tuscany in June 16th -20th, 2008. The preliminary phase has already started with the introduction of some web-based communication tools and eCourses delivered on the eLearning platform of the project. The team is looking forward to this new event.

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