

# FOMEN – FOCUS ON MEN

Intervention and Education Program on Gender  
Sensitization and Gender Based Violence Prevention  
with Male Migrants and Refugees

Manual



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This publication has been produced with the financial support of the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Program under grant agreement number: REC-RDAP-GBV-AG-2018 –856614

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The project is co-financed in Austria by the Province of Styria – Social Affairs, Work and Integration and co-financed in Croatia by the Government Office for Cooperation with NGOs.

The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of the FOMEN project team and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Commission, the Government Office for Cooperation with NGOs in Croatia and the Province of Styria – Social Affairs, Work and Integration.

September 2021



With financial support from the  
Rights, Equality and Citizenship  
Programme of the European Union



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- Associació Conexus: atenció, formació i investigació psicosocials (CONEXUS), Spain <https://conexus.cat/>
- Symbiosis Astikis mi Kerdoskopiki Etaireia (SYMBIOSIS), Greece <https://www.symbiosis.org.gr/>
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# Introduction

# Introduction

With this manual we present a practice-oriented guide for facilitators on the implementation of intervention and education programs to provide gender-sensitive prevention services. It was developed within the framework of the European project FOMEN (2019 – 2021), cofinanced by the Government Office for Cooperation with NGOs in Croatia and the Province of Styria – Social Affairs, Work and Integration. The project team, which consists of partners from 6 European countries (Austria, Croatia, Germany, Greece, Italy and Spain) and advisors from the “Centre for Gender & Violence Research” (University of Bristol – UK)<sup>1</sup>, developed modules and methods for educational programs with the focus on gender sensitivity and prevention of gender-based violence following intersectional approaches.

FOMEN’s intervention and education program aims to work with male migrants and refugees in the form of dialogue-oriented workshops, to encourage but also challenge their reflection on the topics of gender roles, self-care, social relations, violence prevention and caring masculinities. The program is based on the FOMEN quality standards, which were developed on the ground of needs analysis with beneficiary groups of the project (male migrants and refugees and professionals who can act as multipliers<sup>2</sup>).

The manual intends to provide support and introduce fundamentals for multipliers (e.g. teachers, trainers, counsellors, frontline workers, first accommodation operators, psychologists, social workers, educators, etc.) to prepare adequate conditions for the implementation of gender sensitive and violence preventive education programs with male migrants and refugees in all FOMEN partner-countries as well as possibly in countries beyond the project’s partnership. The manual offers methods and knowledge for self-education as well as guidance for trainings and workshops. The thematically structured modules in chapter 4 contain methods, definitions and background information on gender-reflective and violence-preventive work.

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1 FOMEN’s Advisory Board critically evaluated project proceedings, gave feedback to all outputs’ development, and provided an external review of project findings, ensuring project’s excellence and quality.

2 Multipliers are those practitioners, working with migrant and refugee men, or in violence prevention, who are in a position to use and disseminate the program to other professionals.

The quality standards presented in chapter 3 summarize the most important preconditions necessary for successful gender- and culture-sensitive program implementation. They are based on the FOMEN partner's experience in violence prevention and gender reflective education work as well as on the findings of the transnational resource and needs analysis conducted in the FOMEN project and summarized in chapter 2. The final chapter adds additional recommendations and considerations that have emerged as important through our experience of implementing the program. In addition, there is a collection of toolkits with further methods and detailed module descriptions on the [FOMEN website](#).





# FOMEN – Focus on Men

# 1 FOMEN – Focus on Men

The project “FOCUS on MEN: gender-based violence prevention work with male refugees and migrants” is a two-year European project, funded by the European Union’s Rights, Equality and Citizenship Program (project no REC-RDAP-GBV-AG-2018 - 856614). It is run by partner organizations based in six European countries and it is coordinated by “Verein für Männer- und Geschlechterthemen Steiermark (VMG)” in Austria. The project aims to promote innovative approaches in the prevention of gender-based violence among male refugees and migrants, avoiding the double discrimination suffered by this vulnerable group, that refers to the different stereotypes and barriers they face in the country that they are being hosted in and also in being restricted by their own cultural codes, religion and customs in their communities (Pittaway & Bartolomei 2018<sup>3</sup>).

Globally, migration has been on the rise significantly over the past years, characterized by a crisis of refugee reception as well as increased forced displacement, an unprecedented situation since WWII (UNFPA 2016). As <sup>4</sup>people flee from war and conflict, and become displaced, the breakdown of social structures and the unfamiliar living environments and requirements challenge traditional gender relations, social norms and ties (Lindsey-Curtet, Holst-Roness, & Anderson 2004<sup>5</sup>). This makes refugees vulnerable to further violence and discrimination.

Women are often more vulnerable and isolated than men in the host countries due to a variety of reasons (Kawar 2004<sup>6</sup>): continued exposure to all forms of gender-based violence in their home countries and during the migration journey; higher difficulty encountered when seeking asylum, especially when it comes to providing evidence or when they have suffered gender-based persecution, as they are not willing to tell or re-live their story; their child-caring role; pressure by male family members (husband, brothers, cousins, etc.); education and language, a great obstacle to the integration and cultural and economic

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3 Pittaway, E., & Bartolomei, L. (2018). Refugees, Race, and Gender: The Multiple Discrimination against Refugee Women.

4 UNFPA. (2016). UNFPA. Retrieved from <https://www.unfpa.org/annual-report-2016>

5 Lindsey-Curtet, C., Holst-Roness, F. T., & Anderson, L. (2004). Addressing the Needs of Women Affected by Armed Conflict. Geneva: ICRC.

6 Kawar, M. (2004). Gender and Migration: Why are Women more Vulnerable? Retrieved from <http://www.antigone.gr/files/en/library/selected-publications-on-migration-and-asylum/international/070603.pdf>

independence of women and girls (Reception of female refugees and asylum seekers in the EU - Case study Germany 2016<sup>7</sup>).

Violence against refugee women is extremely hard to quantify because there are a lot of hidden victims that are ashamed or afraid of punishment from their family and revictimization by the institutions of the host countries who could deny their status as refugees. It is estimated that female refugees are more likely to be victims of gender-based violence than any other female group (Freedman 2016<sup>8</sup>). Therefore, it is of paramount importance to create specialized services and improve the network of services for migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers. In general, it is important to raise awareness about gender-based violence, report more cases, create an international network of experts and provide services across multiple sectors (prevention of abuse, management of the consequences of violence, etc.), educate operators from a gender perspective to take care of the migrant population in response to prevention.

Gender Based Violence (GBV) has always been characterized by largely female victimhood and male perpetration. It is worth noting that male victimhood also happens and the consequences are devastating. GBV against men, and from men to men, is an issue since the survivors very often struggle to disclose or seek support (Chynoweth 2017<sup>9</sup>). The reason behind this difficulty lies within the toxic constructions of masculinity, that men are expected to be dominant, express anger and emotions such as fear, sadness and vulnerability are prohibited (Freedman 2012<sup>10</sup>). The often biased legal framework and the fact that the police and service providers may not know how to identify violence against men as well as the lack of empathy across them, perpetuate the unwillingness of male survivors to disclose that they have been victims and they find themselves belittled (UNHCR 2012<sup>11</sup>).

The FOMEN project addressed the issue of how migration processes and experiences collide with gender norms, especially focusing on diverse concepts

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7 Reception of female refugees and asylum seekers in the EU - Case study Germany. (2016). Retrieved from European Parliament: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2016/536497/IPOL\\_STU\(2016\)536497\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2016/536497/IPOL_STU(2016)536497_EN.pdf)

8 Freedman, J. (2016). Sexual and gender-based violence against refugee women: a hidden aspect of the refugee "crisis". Elsevier, 18-26.

9 Chynoweth, S. (2017). Sexual Violence against Men and Boys. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

10 Freedman, J. (2012). Engaging Men in the Fight Against Gender Violence: Case Studies from Africa. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. Retrieved from <https://www.palgrave.com/gp/book/9781137014733>

11 UNHCR. (2010). Gender-based Violence. Retrieved from <https://www.unhcr.org/en-au/4794b3512.pdf>

of masculinity (Connell 2005<sup>12</sup>; Hearn 1998<sup>13</sup>). It has been evident that there are variations in attitudes towards gender-based violence across different societies (Farahani 2008<sup>14</sup>). Differences in religion, ethnic origin or geographically based culture play a significant part in the perception of gender-based violence (Njibwakale 2019<sup>15</sup>). A significant impact of gender-based violence on individual health and wellbeing, whether as victims, perpetrators, or communities as a whole has become evident.

To minimize the impact of previous experiences of violence there is a need to develop gender-sensitive prevention services and to improve existing services for refugees and migrants.

Recent studies (Vess et al. 2021<sup>16</sup>) show that violence preventive interventions need to pay more attention to the specific needs, perspectives, and realities of men and women. When working with men who are refugees and migrants, we must take into account that ideas of masculinity can be shaped by violent conflicts (wars, forced displacement). The roles of men and women often change radically during a crisis which hinders a return to pre-conflict role models. Many men derive much of their sense of identity from being economic providers. A weakened economy and lack of access to the labor market deny men the opportunity to continue to fulfil their traditional duties and requirements as family breadwinners. As a result, men, young men, and boys often experience a loss of identity that contributes to extreme stress, substance abuse, and an ongoing cycle of violent behaviour, including sexual and gender-based-violence.

Consequently, programs such as FOMEN focus on psychosocial support and development of healthier, non-violent behaviours and highlighting alternative masculinity models (e.g. caring masculinities) and attempt to tap into men's needs, perspectives, and realities as much as possible using a participatory approach. Through dialogue-oriented workshops the FOMEN education program addresses both challenges and benefits of engaging men as critical agents

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12 Connell, R. W. (2005). *Masculinities*. Polity.

13 Hearn, J. (1998). *The violences of men: How men talk about and how agencies respond to men's violence to women*. Sage.

14 Farahani, F. K. (2008). Norms, attitude and sexual conduct among female college students in Tehran: implications for reproductive health policy and research. London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine.

15 Njibwakale, S. (2019). Gender-based violence. Religion in Gender-Based Violence, Immigration, and Human Rights.

16 Vess, J.; Barker, G.; Naraghi-Anderlini, S. & Hassink, A. (2021). *The Other Side of Gender Men as Critical Agents of Change*. Retrieved from <https://promundoglobal.org/resources/the-other-side-of-gender-men-as-critical-agents-of-change/>

of change to act against gender-based violence and to contribute to gender equality.

The program implements innovative methods which allow learning through shared experiences and encourages the beneficiary groups to reflect on their attitudes towards gender roles, self-care, social relations, violence prevention and caring masculinities, using creative means of expression (dialogue or art-based tools). Furthermore, the FOMEN project pursues the approach to produce and share knowledge across the EU in order to challenge the inequalities that underpin gender-based violence in both countries of origin and host countries.

As illustrated in the next chapter, the FOMEN team has identified needs, resources and good practices in relation to violence prevention work with male refugees and migrants. Based on this analysis, quality standards have been developed which constitute the basis for an implementation of gender sensitization and violence prevention programs, as presented in consecutive chapters.



# Results of Transnational Analysis



## 2 Results of Transnational Analysis

The first step of the FOMEN project was to analyze needs and resources as well as examples of good practices, regarding gender-sensitive and violence-preventive work with male migrants and refugees. Based on the analysis, the project team developed quality standards, a capacity building program for professionals and a gender sensitization and violence prevention program for male migrants and refugees with the aim to encourage their reflection on topics such as gender roles, violence prevention, self-care and caring masculinities.

Across the six partner countries the project's interdisciplinary team, together with national experts, conducted a needs assessment using qualitative and quantitative methods. These included a total of 10 experts' workshops and focus group discussions as well as 26 semi-structured interviews with professionals working with male migrants and refugees and/or in the fields of gender-awareness, masculinities, and violence prevention. An additional focus group with male refugees and migrants was held in Austria. Moreover, the same online survey was used in the six countries, translated into the different languages, to gather additional quantitative information from a wider sample, and was responded to by a total of 271 participants.

The needs and resources analysis shows that professionals from all countries, beyond the institutional differences and the different governmental policies, consider gender sensitive and violence prevention programs with male migrants and refugees as very important. Special emphasis is put on the need for a deep understanding of a migrant's / refugee's current situation and the impact of the experiences during the flight or migration process, including their understanding of gender and family roles in relation to social norms and stereotypes, both in the past and within their current circumstances.

Regarding the needs of refugee and migrant men, satisfaction of their basic needs was deemed important, such as access to asylum and mental and physical health are priorities, as well as creating safe spaces for men, where they can talk about the migratory process and exchange thoughts and experiences.

With respect to the approaches that should be followed in gender sensitive and violence preventive work, professionals from all countries agreed that work with men on violence prevention should follow a non-discriminatory approach

and, apart from their own background, diversity and categories of affiliation, the trainers should always have in mind the participants' cultural background and their experiences as migrants and refugees.

The language barrier is also an issue that was discussed extensively in both parts of the research, especially in countries where there are not many migrants and refugees (e.g. Croatia). Where there is a lack of interpreters, this is an obstacle that should be overcome. All the participants in the research highlighted the importance of language in the implementation of the project.

In all parts of the needs analysis, the participants have expressed the need of further training and capacity building of professionals who work with migrant and refugee men. Few of the participants consider themselves adequately trained and prepared to work with men for a violence prevention program, although they have expressed this need to their managers.

As it was apparent from the results of the research, a training program for professionals ought to aim to increase their own awareness first in the fields of migration and in non-discrimination, feminism, patriarchy, and masculinities. Professionals do not consider they are well informed and familiar with concepts like these, and they wish to be further trained. An educational program should use interactive tools such as role playing and case studies for this purpose.

Another need that a training program should cover is providing information to professionals about the national and European policies regarding migration, the asylum process and gender-based violence. Material easily accessible and understandable should be available to professionals who wish to work on gender sensitivity and violence prevention projects with refugee men. This could be achieved with regular trainings (online but also with physical presence) and with available links on the websites of the project<sup>17</sup>, yet also coming from other organizations.

Working with groups requires well-trained professionals who are prepared and in a position to understand the dynamics of the group and to make participants feel safe and protected. In the needs analysis most of the participants expressed their wish to be further trained on group facilitation and, again, that interactive activities should be included in training to achieve this.

During the focus group discussions some prominent projects were presented

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<sup>17</sup> <https://www.focus-on-men.eu/resources>

as examples of good practice, for instance **Men Talk**<sup>18</sup> in Austria, which offers space for dialogue-oriented exchange with male refugees targeted towards gender sensitivity and violence prevention. It is a modular dialogue series based on a concept by Alternatives To Violence (ATV, Norway). It is ongoing since 2019 in Graz/Styria, funded by the Integration Fund. A second example of good practice is the **Boys in Care**<sup>19</sup> manual, created within the framework of the European project “Boys in Care – Strengthening boys to pursue care occupations” (BiC), a project which took place in Italy. The objective of the manual is to offer information to male and female operators working with boys on how to support them in their choice of getting trained in caring professions. The aim is for operators to be able to provide professional counselling also based on gender awareness. Another example of good practice is the project **Heroes**<sup>20</sup>. Heroes is a German initiative that focuses on preventing honour killing and oppression by giving the lead to young men with a migration background who educate other young men and boys on breaking patriarchal structures and preventing gender-based violence in their community. The project is operating in several German cities and is financed by the World Childhood Foundation (HEROES, 2020). Heroes follows the concept of peer-education, in which young men and boys with a migration background will be trained to become “anti-violence” trainers themselves and train other male youngsters in intervention programs, in which they follow the so-called role-model approach. Finally, the project **Men Speak Out**<sup>21</sup> was mentioned as a further good practice example. This project aimed to engage men in the process of ending FGM and, on a larger scale, to end violence against women and promote gender equality through a human rights’ approach. Taking into account these good practice examples that were mentioned it is obvious that professionals in all the six countries agree that the most successful projects are those which ensure safe conditions, where participants feel empowered to express themselves, and encourage an active participation, at all levels, of members of migrant and refugee communities as trainers, facilitators, interpreters, opinion leaders, as well as participants.

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18 [https://vmg-steiermark.at/de/men\\_talk](https://vmg-steiermark.at/de/men_talk)

19 <https://www.boys-in-care.eu/en.html>

20 <https://www.heroes-net.de/>

21 <http://menspeakout.eu/>

# Quality Standards

### 3. Quality Standards

One of the most important FOMEN goals has been to prepare trainers to work with groups of men with experiences of migration, and most likely racism and violence. In cooperation with trainers, these men should find ways to constructively process these experiences and strengthen their resources, to deepen positive patterns of conflict resolution in order to be able to play a role in the prevention of violence themselves, if possible.

The following section compiles quality standards (available on the [FOMEN website](#)) in gender sensitive and intercultural violence preventive work to ensure adequate implementation. Based on existing best-practice programs in all FOMEN partner countries and beyond as well as on the FOMEN needs and resource analysis, it seems necessary to develop clear quality criteria for various aspects of these education programs:



## 3.1 Political Awareness of the Approach

In general, the FOMEN education program addresses three main societal complexes that are combined in a cross-cutting and, to some extent, intersectional, way:

- gender/masculinity
- ethnicity/migration/racism/interculturality
- violence

When implementing these programs, it is imperative to **reflect on the power structures** that come along with these societal areas of conflict. Given a gender system which is mainly characterized by strong inequalities following a patriarchal tradition and which is rooted in a hegemonic culture of sex/gender dualism and heteronormativity, men/masculinity are upgraded within these power structures and endowed with stronger resources (political power, economic capital, status and symbolic resources) than women/femininity<sup>22</sup>. However, it is important to know that obtaining the status of a “real man” and dominance comes with costs (such as risk-taking, unhealthy and sometimes violent lifestyles). Both costs and power privileges of men are reflected in the trainings (Messner 2000<sup>23</sup>).

Modern ethnic systems and racisms are mainly constructed on the basis of northern (European) colonialisms against the global south (mainly Africans, Arabs, Asians and natives/first nations). Similar to the gender system (and maybe even clearer and more consistently), ethnic racist systems create power regimes that are distinguished by white privileges (through resources, political power, social status, cultural and symbolic hegemonies) and devaluation and discrimination of people of colour (poverty, powerlessness and low representation, policing and criminalization, exoticism, devaluation etc.). While border regimes exclude many people of colour from resourceful and securer places, cultural value systems systematically put “white” cultural heritage over others (Miles 1989<sup>24</sup>). These different levels of exclusion, discrimination and privileges, or over- and underrating have to be reflected in the trainings.

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22 For political power, the male dominance in leadership and representation is striking, as are gender gaps in wealth, income and work hierarchies for the economic sector. For status and the symbolic level, language (like generic masculine structures) and stereotypical power ascriptions are most important (Pimminger 2012, Scambor et al. 2013)

23 Messner, M. (2000). *Politics of Masculinities. The Gender Lens*, Vol.3. UK: AltaMira Press

24 Miles, R. (1989). *Racism*. Routledge.

The same applies to the reflection of different concepts of violence, especially understanding the significance of Gender Based Violence<sup>25</sup>. Starting with a categorization which differentiates between collective, self-directed and interpersonal violence (Krug et al. 2002<sup>26</sup>) it is important to focus the discussion on the interdependence of sex/gender and interpersonal violence, as men and women are affected differently by violence in the public sphere versus violence in the domestic or family sphere. Gender Based Violence includes “... any violation of the physical or mental integrity of a person, which is connected to the victim’s and perpetrator’s gender, and that is perpetrated by the structurally more powerful person who is exploiting a power relation” (Hagemann-White 2008, our translation<sup>27</sup>). Without doubt, one of the most common forms of Gender Based Violence is men’s violence against their female partners – a type of violence which is closely connected to specific sex-based power relations in which men maintain, re-establish or demonstrate their power and dominance over women. These different concepts of violence have to be understood and reflected in the trainings.

Beyond the mentioned power regimes, other hierarchical structures and exclusions should be reflected: Heteronormativity and homophobia, class hierarchies, social positions that come with different ages and/or abilities etc. Therefore, **addressing diversity** which “aims at the recognition and appreciation of people regardless of their social, ethnic etc. background, origin, gender, sexual orientation, religious affiliation or belief, age, physical or mental abilities or other characteristics”<sup>28</sup> becomes very important in the intercultural and diverse context of working with migrant men. These men are different, they have different biographies and belief systems. To enable an adequate and effective delivery of the program, these differences should not only be appreciated, but also highlighted and, where this causes irritation, it should also be openly discussed.

Instead of only focusing on the needs (or worse: deficits and shortcomings) of participants, education programs should build on their assets and resources. The aim is to empower them, which works best by strengthening their aware-

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25 The following is based on Scambor, C. & Scambor, E. (2017). Gender Based Violence and the Role of Men (Nasilje na podlagi spola in vloge moških). In: Časopis za kritiko znanosti, Let. XLV, 2017, Številka 267. P.115-127.

26 Krug, Etienne G., Linda L. Dahlberg, James A. Mercy, Anthony B. Zwi and Rafael Lozano (2002). World Report on violence and health. Geneva: World Health Organization.

27 Hagemann-White, Carol (2008): Vorwort. In Gewalt im Geschlechterverhältnis. Erkenntnisse und Konsequenzen für Politik, Wissenschaft und soziale Praxis, Forschungsnetz Gewalt im Geschlechterverhältnis [GiG-net] (ed.), 7 – 10. Opladen: Verlag Barbara Budrich.

28 Eine Welt der Vielfalt e.V.: Diversity – was ist das? (<https://www.ewdv-diversity.de/diversity/diversity-was-ist-das/>).

ness of their own abilities. Therefore, the asset model as rooted in **Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD)** can be applied, which makes use of people's strengths, skills, and experience.<sup>29</sup> This model allows a more holistic perspective on men, giving participants the opportunity to become partners in (sexual, gender-based, homophobic, and other) violence prevention. It may also encourage participants to become leaders and/or role models in their community and deliver the message in a credible and authentic way.<sup>30</sup> Therefore, the education program needs to promote its **ownership** by the participants which gives them the opportunity to be part of the process and fosters their motivation to participate through:

- collective goal setting,
- flat hierarchies and a democratic, participatory conduct,
- giving participants leading roles within the workshop dynamics to enhance their feeling of empowerment,
- co-creating the program with the target group, in order to enhance their identification with the program and foster its sustainability.

Overall, the education program environment and approach should allow for a conduct as **safe** for all participants as possible. It is recommended to establish ground rules with participants to create also a **brave space** for participants to open up and discuss relevant and emotionally challenging issues. According to postulates of theme-centred interaction approach, "disturbances and passionate involvements take precedence" (Cohn 1975<sup>31</sup>) in order to ensure participants' attention and ability to open-up.

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29 Cf. ABCD toolkit at: <https://naaee.org/sites/default/files/whatisassetbasedcommunitydevelopment.pdf>

30 As Howard (2014) proposes for the community work and education with African-American men. (Black Male(d): Peril and Promise in the Education of African American Males).

31 Cohn, Ruth C. (1975). Von der Psychoanalyse zur themenzentrierten Interaktion. Von der Behandlung einzelner zu einer Pädagogik für alle. Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta.



## 3.2 Trainers' Competences

As stated in the paragraph before, the approach demands facilitators that are **highly qualified, politically conscious and power sensitive**. Facilitators should be aware of their own beliefs and biases and be able to distance themselves from them and focus on the group and its dynamic. They have to practice a non-discriminatory approach and avoid stigmatizing men as perpetrators (while being aware of the relatively close relation of masculinities and violence). Gender and culture awareness therefore are both crucial qualities of facilitators.

Cultural backgrounds of facilitators and participants have to be reflected in particular if the facilitators belong to groups that usually do not experience racism or ethnic/national discrimination. Multi-ethnic facilitation can also be an asset here in order to be able to credibly show and address diverse backgrounds, especially with regard to racism and biographical experience, and to identify, comprehend and tackle eventual taboos and stereotypes of the target group. Additionally, the access to a **multi-professional, intercultural competent and diverse team** can include area experts (law, sexuality, gender equality, violence prevention ...) and people who bring different skills in terms of methods (sharing methods, intervention, etc).

The trainers must have a comprehensive training in teaching about **violence**, most of all in relation to **gender and masculinity**. They have to be able to refer to current EU and UN documents and prevention guidelines<sup>32</sup>.

Regular **supervision** is essential for both facilitators and interpreters/cultural mediators to ensure continuous learning and high quality delivery and to avoid biases. Generally, facilitators should be willing to learn about approaches that enhance the quality of facilitation in the context of highly sensitive topics and group dynamics, like theme-centred interaction and non-violent communication.

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<sup>32</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/gender-based-violence/ending-gender-based-violence\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/gender-based-violence/ending-gender-based-violence_en)

### 3.3 Appropriate Framework Conditions

For the education program a **common understanding** on different levels (language, cultural patterns and belief systems) is crucial. This should not only be bridged by interpreters (and potentially by cultural mediators), but it should also be reflected throughout the training units (e.g. by reflection activities that specifically and openly address potential misunderstandings).

The access to an education program and other measures should be **low-threshold**, based on outreach work and easy access. This refers to the location (central enough, quick & easy to reach also by public transport), accessibility (think of people with special needs: elevators etc.) and safety (think of vulnerable groups).

The following **services** should be provided:

- Food and beverages should be offered (think of cultural preferences and limitations) and access to a kitchen may be helpful.
- Deliver the program in a space without disturbances from the outside (trespassing of strangers, loud sounds from the outside etc.) and without disturbing the environment (when being loud, making music/singing, etc.).
- Restrooms might be a delicate issue: For some, single-sex toilets for men and women are important, for others non-binary toilets are necessary.
- Childcare and the reimbursement of travel tickets might be helpful for participants.
- Furthermore, special needs should be asked about in advance.

Moreover, **time management** is crucial as it is a structure that keeps people in the process (attention gets lower with too much talk) and it serves equal opportunities (limits for speech by any individual). The time schedule should be matched with the specific needs of the participant groups: Enough time to go deep into the topical issues, not too long to enable participation of people with a busy schedule.

## 3.4 Sustainable Effectiveness

Participants should acquire a **confirmation of participation** so that the acquired expertise can be recognised. These certificates should list exactly content and methods in the education program. This might also be an impetus to compare the training courses with the requirements of the labour market or to offer additional modules, for example in the areas of diversity training in companies, anti-discrimination law, protection against violence in municipalities, etc. Certificates or confirmations of participation potentially contribute to a wider access to the labour market – for example, in NGOs, in commercial diversity or health management or in public administration – more likely.

The education program should aim to improve with accumulated experience of its delivery, and to do so by taking into account the feedback from participants through an evaluation. Therefore, a suitable questionnaire should be prepared for each event, which allows for feedback from participants on the individual program modules and their implementation.

The target of the education program is to support men with a history of migration in standing up against violence and, in the longer term, to act as role models for this purpose. Therefore, reach out to a major number of migrants and refugees' communities, in residences, homes, neighbourhoods and try to recruit activists who might be able to **build networks** that make a difference in and for communities.<sup>33</sup>

In order to implement the education program, its theoretical and methodological basis, the applied methods and contents as well as results and outcomes should be available to the public. For this reason, we've developed the **manual** at hand.

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<sup>33</sup> See for example Pixel project: male role models against violence – <https://16days.thepixelproject.net/16-male-role-models-helping-to-stop-violence-against-women>

# Education and Intervention Program

# 4 Education and Intervention Program

The following chapter introduces the Education and Intervention program. All modules and tools used in the program have been developed by the FOMEN team and are available on the [FOMEN website](#).

## 4.1 General Goals and Methodology

The effect of prevention is not immediately visible, and it is challenging to do prevention when short-term and measurable actions are preferred. In this context, success of prevention work often reveals itself in different settings than where the resources are deployed; indeed, they can be spread across many sectors.

Preventive work is divided into primary, secondary and tertiary prevention. Primary preventive measures are used with all people, e.g. screening, educational measures, health checks or awareness campaigns. Secondary preventive measures are used with at-risk groups. This concerns, for example, closer supervision of young children with low weight gain or discussion groups for adolescents growing up with alcoholic parents. Tertiary prevention interventions are used with people or groups who have demonstrated difficulties. The goal here is to limit the impact of harm and enable positive development.

FOMEN education programs on topics such as violence, relationships, gender equality, laws, self-care etc. are a secondary prevention measure aimed at male beneficiaries with experiences as migrants or refugees. This target group is confronted with several risk factors: e.g., with a long-time insecure future, with potential uncertainty about the whereabouts of the family in the country of origin or with violence in the country of origin (e.g. war) and/or during forced migration and related violent constructions of masculinity or with experiences of structural violence (e.g. racism). As a secondary prevention measure, these workshops are not aimed at people who have a proven problem with violence.

The modules presented in this manual are designed for a workshop implementation, conducted through culturally sensitive methods, and if necessary, offering the possibility of interpretation. The foundation of all actions should be

a respectful and appreciative approach towards the participants. Participants should be free from being stereotyped (e.g. as “violence-prone” due to their cultures of origin or migration experience) and anxieties or introversion of the target groups should be respected.

The module contents offer, among other things, the opportunity to consciously reflect on one’s own role model function and influence within a family or cultural community and to shape relationships between adults and children that are characterized by mutual respect.

In the program, competencies in dealing with violent situations are learned, which includes recognizing potentially violent situations early on and finding non-violent solutions. The participants can gain confidence in recognizing their feelings, especially powerlessness, frustration, and anger. They can more consciously reflect on their own reactions and learn to understand them better. In addition to reflecting on themselves and their own behaviour, working in groups can help participants gain a better understanding of other people’s reactions and resolve disagreements more and more by talking or in other non-violent ways. Putting one’s own feelings into words and sharing stories helps to experience healing ways of coping with violent and traumatic experiences.

Knowledge transfer and dialogues were chosen as methods because they help to make participants aware of the connections between thoughts, feelings and actions. Through self-reflection, space for the expression of one’s own thoughts and listening, one’s own attitudes and actions can be consciously reflected upon. The topics of the individual modules have been chosen in such a way that helpful strategies and non-violent ways of acting in difficult life situations can be developed. Moreover, the knowledge transfers and dialogues about these selected topics give the participants the opportunity to regulate themselves how far they want to open up to challenging topics. They should receive central information in an easily understandable form. Topic-related modules can strengthen the participants existing resources, reduce helplessness and assist them in better mastering their own everyday life and decisions.

The dialogues can be seen as an ongoing exchange of opinions that attempts to create understanding and balance opinions between participants. This form of conversation signals equality and respect in the relationships between people. Thus, the method becomes a symbol of violence prevention, since violence is a form of unequal practice of power. Equality means that all opinions of the participants are given space in the group.

## 4.2 Modules

The following chapter features eight different modules which were developed by the FOMEN team. They contain background information and methods and supporting literature. Each module focuses on a topic that is related to gender sensitivity and violence prevention in the work with male migrants and refugees. All modules follow the same structure: module objectives, learning outcomes, module overview with different sections and useful additional information, and literature references.

### 4.2.1 Module 1 – “Welcome”

#### **Aim of the Module**

The aim of the first module is to create familiarity and establish trustful relationships among the group of men and with the facilitators, interpreters and trainers. They should be informed about the background and goals of the program and about each module's content. The participants should also work out simple group rules that describe how the group would like the meetings to take place and how the cooperation should be structured. This process aims to empower participants and give them a first feeling of ownership and belonging together.

#### **Expected Learning Outcomes**

Upon completion of this module, participants should have the following knowledge and skills:

- Overview about the workshops' extent and the program's background,
- Experience in a group process (roles, communicating expectations and needs),
- Self-reflection,
- Introduction to a safe and brave space.

#### **Contents**

##### Introduction

To create trust, it is necessary to inform the participants about the background

and goals of the program and to clearly state which institution the trainers come from in order to distinguish the workshop group from other communicative situations from the participants' everyday lives (e.g. contacts with authorities, police). The role of the interpreter as a "neutral language mediator" who translates everything should also be made clear.

An introduction round should not be forgotten. The participants share with the group their names and characteristics which they might feel are important for the other participants to know about them. The facilitators can choose creative ways (e.g. name games) to facilitate participants getting to know each other. It mostly depends on the group, whether the participants already know each other or meet up for the first time.

The first module should also collect the expectations which the participants have regarding the contents of the program, e.g.: What are they looking forward to in the next sessions? Are there any specific topics they want to discuss?

#### Safe and Brave Space

As in every setting when working with groups basic group rules are required which are accepted by everyone and reflect the participants' needs. The FOMEN education programs recommend to establish not only a safe environment where the participants feel comfortable, protected and trusted, but also to focus on introducing the idea of a "brave space", in order to enable learning experiences along privileged positions (e.g. masculinity) and self-reflection of own positioning. Besides a well-structured and attentive moderation, a brave space also requires agreed rules of conduct that guide interactions with each other and are aimed at respectful behaviour:

- "Agree to disagree & controversy with civility": Different opinions are accepted, there will be further dignified discussions about where the different positions come from
- "Owning intentions and impacts": The intention of an action is separated from its effect, cases are openly discussed where the emotional well-being of others is affected
- "Challenge by choice": Participants decide themselves when to join and leave a discussion and reflect on these decisions
- "Respect": Participants show respect for others and reflect on what active respect looks like



- “No attacks”: Participants agree not to harm each other, not to dismiss criticism of statements or behavior as alleged attacks and to be open to criticism. (cf. Ali 2017<sup>34</sup>)

### **Further Reading**

- Ali, D. 2017. Safe Spaces and Brave Spaces. Historical Context and Recommendations for Student Affairs Professionals. NASPA Policy and Practice Series, 2.
- Stadlbauer, J. & Scambor, E. 2019. Men Talk - Leitfaden für Dialogreihen mit männlichen Asylberechtigten, subsidiär Schutzberechtigten & Drittstaatsangehörigen in der Steiermark. Graz: VMG.

## **4.2.2 Module 2 – “Migration”**

### **Aim of the Module**

This module aims to provide information about the legal and institutional frameworks of international protection and their implementation within the European Union and, particularly, within the country of reception. With the intent of providing knowledge about the process of integration and placing the refugees' dreams and notions of entitlement within the boundaries of a system based on international protection law, ensuing experiences of powerlessness and helplessness should be taken seriously. This module also intends to create awareness that these feelings can strongly influence actions and reactions and can possibly lead to violence. The group is invited to reflect which experiences of powerlessness and helplessness they bring from their life history of migration and what has helped them to adjust to their current surroundings. The aim is also to exchange information about coping strategies to prevent people from trivializing their own reactions.

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34 Ali, Diana. 2017. Safe Spaces and Brave Spaces. Historical Context and Recommendations for Student Affairs Professionals. NASPA Policy and Practice Series, 2.

## **Expected Learning Outcomes**

Upon completion of this module, participants should have the following knowledge and skills:

- Definitions and terminology about refugees and migrants, rooted in asylum and international protection law,
- Their rights and duties within the national and local contexts,
- Knowing the local actors, networks and institutions,
- Coping strategies when experiencing powerlessness and helplessness.

## **Contents**

### Asylum & International Protection

Based on the realities of the participants' lives the first part of this module will identify the individual's position and scope for action, rights and duties, and relationship to the authorities or other actors. Beginning with a warm-up activity, the participants may explore each other's backgrounds and name differences and commonalities in their biographies. An discussion afterwards of the relationship between the stories people tell, the opportunities an individual has, and their identities as individuals, members of families, communities, and within a nation leads to an introduction of a legal system which defines the general rights and duties of refugees and migrants, and has a powerful impact on their opportunities.

The different terminologies of people with international family histories which are applied by the authorities, actors, and policy makers should be disclosed:

- Refugee: Forced to flee a country due to persecution (Geneva Convention)
- Internally Displaced: Forced to flee but does not cross a border to leave their country
- Asylum Seeker: A refugee who is seeking protection, but no country has yet 'determined' whether or not the person meets the definition of a refugee
- Migrant: A person who moves, usually voluntarily, to live or work, either temporarily or permanently. May or may not cross a border.

Legal key terms and procedures should also be clarified which may occur in the specific national and local contexts, e.g.: legal decisions, residence permit, subsidiary protection, working permit, social security, possibilities for education/training/qualifications, housing etc.

## Showcase-Box #1

### Method: “Mapping the National and Local Actors”

The idea of the activity is to begin a process of visualizing the national and local actors (organisations or institutions) with which participants have direct, indirect and potential future connections. The participants will get an overview of a network of support and are taught what options they have as male migrants and refugees to seek help and counselling. Generally, this method aims to reduce complexity due to the variety of institutions and to invite the participants to share their experiences with each other and empower them to look for professional support when needed.

First, the group brainstorms in order to identify as many actors as possible on a local and national level. The contributions are noted on post-its which are then placed on a wall, flipchart or blackboard.

In the second step, the participants will assign the cards to the according categories:

- a) Direct: Organisations or institutions that they have personal contact with.
- b) Indirect: Organisations or institutions that someone they know has been in contact with.
- c) Potential: Organisations or institutions which relate to migration but with whom they don't have (yet) a connection.

Finally, when all post-its have been placed accordingly, the facilitators may add relevant institutions which could be of interest to the group (e.g. centers for legal advice, community work, intercultural counselling, trauma-sensitive counselling, men's counselling, counselling centers for girls and boys, family counselling etc.).

Resources: Visual actor mapping: [https://holistic-security.tacticaltech.org/media/exercises/pdfs/original/HS\\_Exercise\\_2\\_Explore\\_2-3a.pdf](https://holistic-security.tacticaltech.org/media/exercises/pdfs/original/HS_Exercise_2_Explore_2-3a.pdf)

### Coping strategies and network of support

Since the participants may outline legitimate feelings of anger and injustice during this module, the facilitators need to be explicit about these feelings and engage on this matter. On the one hand, the later modules of self-care and violence prevention will focus anyway on strategies to deal with experiences of helplessness, anger and injustice. On the other hand, if there is a shared perception of powerlessness among participants due to complexity and injustice related to the module's topic, the session should end with an empowering conclusion. It is important to not only educate the participants about their rights and duties in this matter, but also to provide them with guidance and support.

For example, people with international family histories who do not speak the official language or who also lack system knowledge often feel overwhelmed by the variety of support services. It is often the case that the participants have already had many experiences in different institutions without knowing reasons and intentions of their encounter.

### **Further Reading**

- UNHCR. (n.d.). Emergency Handbook. Version: 1.9. Retrieved from <https://emergency.unhcr.org/entry/55772/refugee-definition>
- UNHCR. (2011). Who is a Refugee? Session 3 Manual [UNHCR Protection Training Manual for European Border and Entry Officials]. Retrieved from <https://www.unhcr.org/4d944c319.pdf>
- <http://jmonnet.symbiosis.org.gr/en/2020/05/30/policy-brief-european-courts-conclude-in-a-rights-safety-net-for-refugees-and-asylum-seekers/>
- <https://reimaginingmigration.org/teaching-ideas-a-mini-unit-exploring-stories-of-movement-and-migration/>

## 4.2.3 Module 3 – “Gender and Masculinity”

### Aim of the Module

Gender is one of the key identity traits of every person and it cannot be ignored, but instead should be acknowledged, promoted, and valued. The lack of a gender perspective in migration, asylum and integration policies can have negative effects on all genders. The module aims to reflect on attitudes towards sex/gender and challenge stereotypical attitudes towards femininity and masculinity and how those gender stereotypes affect relationships and contribute to power imbalances in relationships between men and women and LGBTQI+ relationships. It also provides information about the social construction of sex/gender and allows myths about gender to be reflected upon using experience-based methods.

### Expected Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this module, participants should have the following knowledge and skills:

- Exploration of their own understanding of sex/gender and masculinity,
- Reflection of social constructions of masculinities and performance of toxic masculinity,
- Techniques to overcome such socially constructed barriers on gender and masculinities,
- Knowledge about LGBTQI+ terminology and relation,
- Awareness of benefits and advantages of gender and sexual diversity.

### Contents

These topics need to be handled with high cultural sensitivity. Giving the participants the opportunity to reflect on social constructions could be highly beneficial, however it is important to be considerate towards cultural difference and not promote European culture as “the right one”.

#### Exploring Sex/Gender

The module starts by differentiating between the terms “sex” and “gender”. The term “sex” is used to classify people as male, female, or intersex. New-borns are assigned a sex at birth based on the appearance of their genitals. A person’s sex combines physical characteristics, such as reproductive organs and

secondary sexual characteristics, and genetic characteristics. With the term “gender” we refer to behavioural patterns and further aspects that we should adopt according to our sex, as society demands. Gender is a changing and dynamic dimension that can be shaped growing up and can conform to different cultural, religious, social, and economic contexts.

In order to discuss the differences between “gender” and “sex” with the group, the facilitators and trainers could prepare a short questionnaire or quiz to retrieve the participants’ suggestions which aspects of gender are socially constructed and which are not. Statements which could be used: “Women give birth”, “Men are strong”, “Women take care of the house” or “Men are paid more than women at work”.

The term gender encompasses the social, cultural and political norms, conditions and processes in the lives of women\*, men\* and other genders (transgender\*- or inter\*- persons). Gender norms have a major impact on our actions and expectations. For example, the dominance of the male breadwinner role and female care role go hand in hand with gender norms and behavioural expectations. Those who do not fit into one of these categories for various reasons are usually ignored, “corrected,” or oppressed. The narrower the gender norms, the narrower the scope of action for individuals. Traditional gender norms are based on dichotomous gender role expectations: men are to be brave, strong and courageous; women are beautiful, emotional and attentive; “pink is for girls and blue is for boys,” etc.

While gender norms and stereotypes shape our social positions as sexed/gendered individuals, our positioning and attitudes in turn reproduce (and modify) gender norms. Gender roles are not only anchored in norms, but are also shaped by hierarchies and inequality. The inequality of sex/gender can have multiple facets, such as more powerful positions for men or lower average income and pensions for women. It may also lead to a justification of violence against women and other genders, as their identities are devalued and their entitlement for equality is being denied.

## Showcase-Box #2

### Method: "Gender Walk"

The goal is to discuss social codes of gender and stereotypes starting from personal preferences related to everyday things that they like doing or not like doing. These reflections thus allow us to talk about how gender limits personal choices, tastes and experiences. The discussion can also lead to the consequences that may occur for people who violate these codes and who are therefore considered socially "out of the gender norm".

The facilitators explain the participants the following rules: When they say the word 'Walk' they should walk around the room as fast as possible but without bumping into anyone. When they say 'stop', they should stand in front of another person, forming couples.

As soon as everyone stands, the participants will get a sentence which they can discuss in that pair for two minutes straight. After the time is up, they start to 'walk' again and 'stop' for the second statement to be shared with them.

Statements to be used:

- Something typical of my gender that I like doing
- Something typical of my gender that I don't like doing.
- Something not typical of my gender that I like doing.
- Something not typical of my gender that I would like to be able to do without judgement.

After all the statements have been discussed, everyone returns to group where the discussed statements will be reflected.

Resources: Amnesty International: Making Rights a Reality. Gender Awareness Workshops. <https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/ACT770352004ENGLISH.PDF>

## LGBTQI+

In addition to mixing up the words “sex” and “gender”, it is also easy to mix up the concepts of gender identity and sexual orientation. The language used to describe these terms varies a lot around the world and is based on age, language, and cultural references in each community. There are some phrases and words commonly used by the UN, however, most of the terms we will describe were created in the Western world. When dealing with LGBTQI+ relations we should understand our view is biased by eurocentrism and cultural relativism.

LGBTQI+: LGBT, standing for Lesbian (L), Gay (G), Bisexual (B) and Transgender (T). You may also see QQIA added, this would stand for Queer, Questioning, Intersex and Allies.

LGBTQI+ people around the world suffer hate-motivated violence, torture, detention, criminalization and discrimination in employment, home, health care and education due to gender, sexual orientation, or actual or perceived gender identity. Human rights violations - including hate crimes, abuses in detention and corrective rape - occur not only in countries that criminalize same-sex relationships or have high levels of prejudice against LGBTQI+ people, but also in countries considered more protective, such as Western European countries. LGBTQI+ people are too often subjected to torture and other forms of abuse because they fail to conform to socially constructed gender expectations.

As for traditional male and female stereotypes, this module also invites the group to challenge the social construction of homophobic and transphobic stereotypes. Following methods, dialogues and reflections, these key messages should be made clear:

- Discriminating someone because of their sexual orientation is a violation of human rights.
- Addressing homophobia in the community can challenge cultural norms but can create a more peaceful and accepting environment.
- One can be homosexual, trans and non-binary and Muslim. Religious faith and sexual orientation are not mutually exclusive.
- Understand sexual diversity as progressive values.

## Diversity of Masculinities

Masculinity is often seen as the inner essence that makes men what they are and that sets them apart from women, a set of physical, psychological, and social characteristics. However, masculinity also entails a set of beliefs and



behaviours that men adopt to prove themselves in line with the gender norms that are dominant at a given moment. Masculinity is therefore not something men possess within themselves, but it is something they do. Men face a strong social pressure to define themselves and defend themselves as “males”. They could develop traits of a toxic masculinity which are harmful to society, mainly women and children but also men themselves. The “costs” of traditional and toxic masculinity (e.g. health problems, risky lifestyle, violence), but also social privileges of men (employment positions, income, etc.) should be taken into account. However, not every man is privileged to the same extent. While some men benefit from unequal power relations, others are affected by disadvantages to a higher degree. For example, due to fulfilling or not fulfilling norms of masculinity, or due to societal power and inequality relations such as racism, classism and ableism.

The final part of this module will focus on the risks and costs of performing toxic masculinity and offer alternative perspectives with attractive benefits.

For example, indicative traits of toxic masculinity encompass:

- suppressing emotions,
- promoting heterosexuality as the unalterable norm and showing homophobic traits,
- being violent, angry, or aggressive,
- being dominant in behavior, towards women and interrupting one in conversations (imposing their opinion unasked),
- sexual aggression and self- entitlement towards women,
- seeing emotions as a sign of weakness.

The effects of such behaviors should be discussed with the group, which could lead to a list of negative consequences, e.g. suppression of emotions and invalidation of feelings → by only expressing anger they are hindered from getting in touch with their feelings, which can influence their relationships with their partners and children.

*How can we break free from toxic masculinity?* The participants should come up with ideas and solutions by themselves. Possible suggestions: Allow feelings to happen. Communicate your feelings. Be a role model to your son and community (“*How can you serve as role models in your community?*”). Teach your sons to express their feelings.

### **Further Reading**

- From Work with Men and Boys to Changes of Social Norms and Reduction of Inequities in Gender Relations: A Conceptual Shift in Prevention of Violence against Women and Girls, Rachel Jewkes, Michael Flood, James Lang, The Lancet, 2015.
- Engaging Men through Accountable Practice, International Rescue Committee, 2013.
- Gender Equity and Diversity Module Five: Engaging Men and Boys for Gender Equality, CARE, 2013.
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) refugees and asylum seekers: ICAR navigation guide De Jong A (ICAR, 2003) Provides detailed information on UK legislation and legal issues.
- From Rainbow project [http://www.rainbowproject.eu/material/it/sticks\\_and\\_stones.html](http://www.rainbowproject.eu/material/it/sticks_and_stones.html)

## **4.2.4 Module 4 – “Social and Intimate Relationships”**

### **Aim of the Module**

The aim of the module is to deal with the reality of diverse forms of relationships and sexuality and to discuss/reflect on the values and norms behind them in the group. The methods should challenge socially constructed roles and expectations and encourage participants to “look outside the box”. It should become clear that for each person something different is important in a relationship/partnership and that common values are consensually negotiated with the partner. The module should raise awareness on cultural practices in sexual partnerships and behavior towards women (or men) and encourage participants to be more mindful and active in terms of their sexual health and the one of their partners. By creating a safe space and empowering the group to open up about intimacy the stigma attached to sexuality, health care services and family services should be overcome. Moreover, it should encourage (future) fathers among the participants to engage in an active parenthood.

### **Expected Learning Outcomes**

Upon completion of this module, participants should have the following knowledge and skills:

- Ability to differentiate between social norms / expectations and sexual self-determination,
- Knowledge on sexually transmitted diseases, sex education and health services,
- Knowledge on how to respectfully treat / approach women inside and outside partnerships,
- Understanding of consent and its legal consequences in Europe when not followed,
- Understanding of child protection laws,
- Understanding of violent-free children disciplining,
- Skills on how to deal with children through empathy work,
- An overview and understanding of sexual rights in the European Union.

## Contents

The topic of sexuality and intimacy is a culturally reluctant subject, which is why it is important to assure to the participants that their information and input will not be passed on.

### Sexuality/Intimacy

This module begins with a brainstorming process to retrieve the images and concepts of sexuality which are present in the group. Depending on the contributions, but in general sexuality is often misunderstood and can be a difficult concept to fully articulate. There are many different ideas about what sexuality is and what it means. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines sexuality (2006) as follows: Sexuality is "...a central aspect of being human throughout life [which] encompasses sex, gender identities and roles, sexual orientation, eroticism, pleasure, intimacy and reproduction. Sexuality is experienced and expressed in thoughts, fantasies, desires, beliefs, attitudes, values, behaviors, practices, roles and relationships. While sexuality can include all of these dimensions, not all of them are always experienced or expressed. Sexuality is influenced by the interaction of biological, psychological, social, economic, political, cultural, legal, historical, religious and spiritual factors."<sup>35</sup>

Sexuality can have a different meaning for people in various periods of life, and

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<sup>35</sup> [https://www.who.int/health-topics/sexual-health#tab=tab\\_2](https://www.who.int/health-topics/sexual-health#tab=tab_2)

there are differences with regard to gender, age, culture and sexual orientation. The nature of one's sexuality is unique and created by a combination of biological and cultural factors and is changing over time. It's socially constructed and for this reason there are large variations across culture, ethnic groups, etc. Often when people see the word 'sexuality,' they think of sexual intercourse or other sexual activity. Sexuality is much more than sexual feelings or sexual intercourse. It is an important part of personal identity. It includes thoughts, feelings, behaviors of being male or female, as well as being in relationship that includes sexual intimacy. Sexuality is central in human existence.

## Showcase-Box #3

### Method: "Circles of Sexuality"

The activity allows the group to speak about sexuality from their point of view. It helps to cluster the range of issues related to sexuality and present a practical overview to reflect on the meaning of sexuality and own beliefs about sexuality. This method starts with brainstorming all the words that the group can think of associated with "sexuality". Each participant can either write or draw their contributions on a post-it or small paper card. Afterwards the facilitators draw 5 circles on a flipchart or blackboard. Everything related to human sexuality can fit in one or more of these circles.

#### 5 circles:

- Intimacy: Feeling emotionally close to another person and accept the closeness in return. Being intimate with somebody is feeling close, familiar and usually affectionate or loving personal relationship with another person or group.
- Sexual Identity: A person's understanding of who they are sexually, including the sense of their gender, culturally-defined gender roles, and sexual orientation.
- Sensuality: Feeling pleasure for with one's own body and other bodies, especially the body of sexual partners. Sensuality also allows us to enjoy the pleasure our bodies can give us and others. Feeling physical close to another person.
- Sexual health and reproduction: This includes information about reproduction, sexual intercourse and different sex acts, contraception, sexual expression, and reproductive sexual anatomy, among others. •

- Sexual power over others: Abusing sex or sexuality to influence, manipulate or control other people, such as seduction, harassment, sexual abuse or rape.

The group is invited to place their words and drawings in the fitting circle on the floor.

Important: It needs to be clear to the group that the last circle (sexual power over others) refers to a form of violence (Sexual Violence) and should not be perceived as part of a definition of sexuality. The facilitator can also choose to draw the circle in a different color or on a separate flipchart. The participants may discuss the following questions in smaller groups of 4-5 people each:

- *Which circles have the most words associated with them? Why?*
- *Do we tend to focus the word sexuality around some circles but ignore others?*
- *Which of the five sexuality circles feels most familiar? Least familiar? Why do you think that is so?*
- *Are there certain circles that make you feel more or less comfortable talking about? Which ones do you think carry the heaviest silence and are hardest to talk about? Why?*
- *Can you imagine talking about these with your children? With your parents? With your peers?*

After defining and discussing what sexuality means, the following questions can be used to focus on the social construction and aspects of power when it comes to sexuality: *How is sexuality associated with power? Who defines responsible sexual behavior? What do sexual rights mean? A common argument is that our culture, religion, or society won't tolerate to talk openly about sexuality. This is a powerful argument. Is it valid? What can we do to change it?*

Resources:

- <https://advocatesforyouth.org/>
- Amnesty International: Making Rights a Reality. Gender Awareness Workshops. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/ACT770352004ENGLISH.pdf>

## Relationships

Humans are social beings. We are dependent on social interactions and relationships. There are a lot of different ways how to engage or behave in friendships, partnerships, or any kind of relationships.

The group should reflect on the beliefs around social and intimate relationship and how we can improve the quality and our wellness. This could be done with an activity where the participants are divided in two groups. One selects the ten most important characteristics for a social relationship (friendship) and the other for an intimate relationship.

Another possibility would be to read out statements and the participants choose a reaction that corresponds with their opinion ("Agree", "Disagree" or "Don't know"). The statements should include gender stereotypes which are reflected in relationships, e.g. *"A man should have the final word about decisions in his home"*, *"The woman is responsible for contraception and prevention of pregnancy"*, *"I would never have a gay friend"* or *"I should openly talk with my partner about sexual health (prevention of STI/STD)"*. To dig deeper into the underlying issues every statement should be discussed. After a short debate, the participants are invited to change their positions or to convince their colleagues to change their opinions.

Two important topics which we recommend focusing on, if not already mentioned by the groups:

- *"The myth about virginity"*
- *"The power of sexual self-determination"*

Some participants may already be in a relationship or even have their own family. Some participants strive for becoming a father. In general, many men look for deep relationships with their children and want to play a more active role in their lives. But how can they do so if society promotes traditional gender roles in which women are considered the primary caregivers and men the breadwinners? Therefore, this module may also provide a space to reflect about how engaged fatherhood may look like according to the groups' imaginations.

## **Further Reading**

- Sexual health training course for interpreters, Briddon D et al (Newcastle Interpreting Service, Newcastle PCT, 2005) Student handbook, training pack and teaching materials on sexual health. Available from [www.newcastlepct.nhs.uk](http://www.newcastlepct.nhs.uk)

- Exploring ethnicity and sexual health. A qualitative study of the sexual attitudes and lifestyles of five ethnic minority communities in Camden and Islington Elam G et al (National Centre for Social Research, 1999) A qualitative study looking at sexual attitudes and behaviours among Jamaican, Black African and South Asian people living in North London. Available from [www.natcen.ac.uk](http://www.natcen.ac.uk)
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- Faith, values and sex and relationships education Blake S and Katrak Z (PSHE and citizenship spotlight series, Sex Education Forum, National Children's Bureau, 2002)
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- <https://advocatesforyouth.org/>

#### **4.2.5 Module 5 – “Self-Care”**

##### **Aim of the Module**

Experiences of powerlessness and helplessness should be taken seriously. This module aims to create an awareness that these feelings can strongly influence actions and reactions and can possibly lead to violence. The group should reflect which experiences of powerlessness and helplessness they bring from their life history and what has helped them to cope with them. Moreover, information should be provided about reactions and psychological difficulties/burdens that people can experience after traumatic experiences. The development of awareness that there can be normal reactions to difficult events should help to relieve those affected. The aim is also to exchange information about coping strategies after traumatic experiences in order to prevent people from trivializing their own reactions. By these means, gender role expectations are reflected regarding traditional-toxic masculinity and real (attainable) masculinity (caring masculinity).

## **Expected Learning Outcomes**

Upon completion of this module, participants should have the following knowledge and skills:

- Dealing with setbacks, burdens and traumatic experiences
- Strategies and resources regarding self-care
- Mental health issues
- Benefits of a caring masculinity

## **Contents**

DO NOT dive into the depths of the events which the participants have experienced. The discussion should only stay on the surface to prevent the participants from getting into the experienced feeling. It could be that physical or psychological reactions occur. Encourage the participants to say STOP if it is getting too much for them.

### Caring Masculinity

To be a man in our society does not only mean to have and show a male body, but also to take a certain place as a man. Sometimes this can mean that men distance themselves from things that are associated with women (e.g. doing housework, pushing the baby carriage, or even self-care). To appear masculine - what does that mean? To be invulnerable? To be a fearless, self-confident and courageous man? These and similar expectations of being a man set a high bar – sometimes unattainably high. Not meeting these expectations can lead to uncertainty and hardly anyone talks about it. Rather, many men confirm their masculinity to themselves and others - sometimes by taking risks that could endanger their own livelihood. For men and for their fellow men this can also become threatening if “masculinity” is confirmed e.g. by violence.

Men are confronted at an early age with compulsions and expectations which say that men must not be “weaklings” or “cowards” and that real men must not cry, but must always be tough guys and machos. The first step of this module is to collect all the emotions which the participants can think of. Then, they should list all the constraints that a “real man” must meet in his behavior. The next step is to illustrate that many emotions in daily life are not recognized and therefore ignored and that bottled-up emotions are only expressed in the form of anger or rage. In this way the participants are shown that most men have been taught to forget emotions, to suppress them or to be ashamed of them.



Especially, when men feel helpless or powerless traditional concepts of masculinity tell them to overcome them by ignoring or wiping those feelings off.

The restraint and fear of perceiving, showing and living one's own needs is very high, especially under the demands of traditional concepts of masculinity. The pressure to conform to certain images of traditional masculinity can lead to a lack of social skills in dealing with oneself and others. This can be seen, for example, in the inability to build lasting friendships and relationships, to ask for help, to admit the need for help, to assert oneself in life according to one's own wishes, and much more. Instead, arrogance and evasive behaviour are staged in boy/male groups. Caring masculinities create opportunities for men to deepen caring relationships with others and contribute to a healthier and more caring society. This has positive effects on men as well as on the existing gender order and the gender equality project.

#### Self-Care and Helplessness

Powerlessness and helplessness are something that we can experience when we are dealing with situations where we can't find solutions for our problems, when we experience things which are not familiar to us, when we cannot defend or protect ourselves, when we just don't know what to do.

It is important to stress that people can usually adapt to situations (resilience). After experiences of fear, pain or sadness, one may experience that after some time the reactions subside or pass away.

After a short introduction how terrible and traumatic events can affect our body and mental health, the group may share their observations on how people react when they are experiencing feelings of powerlessness and helplessness.

This module focuses foremost on the strategies and techniques of how the participants have been coping with such situations. Therefore, they are invited to share their knowledge and strengthen each other's approaches.

## Showcase-Box #4

### Method: "Piano of Self-Care"

This method aims to embrace the diversity of coping strategies. It raises consciousness for the significance of self-care and treating oneself well. The participants reflect on their wellbeing and mental health and share their strategies to maintain those.

Each participant receives a sheet with printed-out black and white piano keys. They are asked to think about these questions:

- *What are you doing to deal with stress, helplessness and bad memories?*
- *What's helping you coping with everyday life?*
- *What gives you energy and what helps you to make life worth living?*

On the white piano keys, the participants write down their list of self-caring strategies. As soon as each participant has labelled the keys, the slips of paper are lined up and laid out in the form of a long piano. Whenever the participants feel exhausted or powerless, they can "play a different song" on their piano. They don't always have to push the same keys, but learn about new self-caring strategies from their peers or find out about new ones for themselves.

Questions for the reflection round:

- *What do you notice when you look at the piano?*
- *Did you learn about new strategies? Is something familiar to you?*
- *How can we support each other, when we feel helpless, sad or are in a bad temper?*

Resources: Stadlbauer, J. & Scambor, E. (2019) Men Talk - Leitfaden für Dialogreihen mit männlichen Asylberechtigten, subsidiär Schutzberechtigten & Drittstaatsangehörigen in der Steiermark. Graz: VMG.

### **Further Reading**

- Huber, M. (2003): Trauma und die Folgen, Teil 1, Junfermann., sowie Dies.: Wege der Traumabehandlung, Teil 2.
- Preitler, B. (2016): An ihrer Seite sein. Psychosoziale Betreuung von traumatisierten Flüchtlingen, StudienVerlag.
- Stadlbauer, J. & Scambor, E. (2019) Men Talk - Leitfaden für Dialogreihen mit männlichen Asylberechtigten, subsidiär Schutzberechtigten & Drittstaatsangehörigen in der Steiermark. Graz: VMG.
- Zito, D./ Martin, E. (2016): Umgang mit traumatisierten Flüchtlingen. Ein Leitfaden für Fachkräfte und Ehrenamtliche, BELTZ Juventa.

## **4.2.6 Module 6 – “Violence”**

### **Aim of the Module**

An increased focus on violence and its harmful consequences can raise awareness that violence is a societal problem and can help reduce taboo and shame around the issue. The aim of the module is to provide understanding of the indicators of violence. What determines violence? How can we recognize violence? It should also initiate a dialogue about different forms of violence, but also ways of looking at the topic of violence. Moreover, gender-based violence and its related backgrounds, attitudes and consequences are also emphasised in this module.

### **Expected Learning Outcomes**

Upon completion of this module, participants should have the following knowledge and skills:

- Understanding what violence is and recognize different forms of violence, their characteristic and interrelations,
- Understanding the roots and manifestations of gender-based violence (GBV) and coercive control,
- Recognizing the consequences of violence for the victims and perpetrators,
- Understanding the use of violence as criminal offence and the related legal framework.

## **Contents**

### Characteristics of violence

Violence implies domination - the “ruling” over others. In all possible uses of the term “violence” it is about a process with a powerful and suppressive or destructive effect. There are two sides to this: the act of violence or structure of violence on the one hand, and the experience of violence or resistance to violence on the other. The experience of violence is primarily an experience of powerlessness, with the loss of agency as the central experience.

Acts of violence and structures of violence are interconnected. Personal violence is linked to social hierarchies, for example between adults and children, men and women, people who conform to clear gender role expectations and others who do not. In addition, power relations are always tied to contexts – so it is possible that individually the insult “potato” is perceived as hurtful, while it does not work the same way in society as a whole.

Many factors facilitate or prevent violence, including social and cultural permission or sanctioning of forms of violence, the social status of children, family burdens due to a lack of resources or stress, and other factors. Sex and gender stereotypes are also important in this context.

In order to summarize the characteristics of violence, a categorization of different forms of violence is recommendable. We differentiate between five forms:

- Physical violence,
- Psychological violence and emotional abuse,
- Economic abuse,
- Sexual and reproductive violence,
- Structural violence.

### Gender-Based Violence

The participants should also be introduced to the concept of gender-based violence (GBV). Basic prevalence data may illustrate that victims of violence in partner relations, particularly of severe violence, are overwhelmingly women which makes it a gender-specific phenomenon. The prevalence data should refer to global victimisation of women and men, with more details regarding physical and sexual violence. It should be emphasized that gender-based violence happens in different social settings, but that most of it is related to intimate partners and family context.

## Showcase-Box #5

### Method: “Understanding what violence is”

The participants learn to recognize violence in its different forms. Knowing and identifying violence is an indispensable way to prevent it. Gender-based violence is explicitly addressed through the given examples. The participants reflect their own assessment and experience with violence.

This method starts with a short introduction about violence and its various definitions, e.g. *“The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation.”* (WHO definition of violence)

In the next step, case vignettes are used which briefly describe scenes all involving violent behavior, but with different levels of legitimacy. Each vignette is written on a separate flip-chart paper.

The facilitators or interpreters read out a case vignette and the participants are asked to raise either a red cardboard (meaning: illegitimate, unacceptable, illegal violent behaviour) or a green one (legitimate, acceptable use of violence). After each case, two participants are invited to explain their opposite or same justification. It is the facilitators job to clarify the characteristics of violent behaviour in each specific matter.

#### Possible case vignettes:

- *“Two boxers fight in the ring.”* Discussion: boxing as a socially accepted norm, compliance with the rules, voluntariness of the setting; traditional images of men of hardness and strength.
- *“A man angrily threatens another man, ‘I’ll break your bones if you don’t stop insulting me’.”* Discussion: cycle of violence and escalation; connection between anger and emotions; threat of physical violence as a criminal offense in EU; non-violent alternatives in this situation.
- *“A police officer shoots a suspected burglar who runs away.”* Discussion: legalized use of violence; legitimate use of weapons; state authority as a social norm; possibility of a misunderstanding; police

violence and possibility of discrimination towards minorities as structural violence.

- *"A mother slaps her son for bringing home a poor grade."* Discussion: case of family physical violence; illegal to physically punish children in EU; displaced mother's aggression against the son may be due to her victimization by the father.
- *"A son calls his father 'asshole' in an argument, who then pushes him, and the son falls down."* Discussion: case of physical family violence; son's insolence and parental violence; son's behavior is psychological/emotional, father as an adult is more responsible not to continue the violence; it is illegal to physically punish children; parenting skills to discipline children without violence.
- *"A young man takes a photo of a female friend sleeping on the couch at a party; for that he lifts her dress over her waist."* Discussion: sexual violence as a criminal offence; violation of privacy, exploiting the weaker.
- *"A woman is forced by her husband to have sex."* Discussion: sexual violence; rape is always a criminal offence, including in marriage.

Resources: Stadlbauer, J. & Scambor, E. (2019) Men Talk - Leitfaden für Dialogreihen mit männlichen Asylberechtigten, subsidiär Schutzberechtigten & Drittstaatsangehörigen in der Steiermark. Graz: VMG.

The origin for GBV is anchored in the gender relations of a society. These are reflected in the attitudes and views of individuals. To address these prevailing structures, various gender stereotypical statements can be presented. Participants are then invited to share their views. Statements that can be used, for example: "A man should approach a woman first, and not the other way around", "If a woman loves her husband, she will endure his bad behavior towards herself" or "A woman is the one to adjust to the needs and wishes of a man, not the other way around."

A list of indicators and consequences, such of physical, social, mental, behavioural and financial shape, may facilitate to recognize GBV easier when encountering it in their communities and family contexts.

### Legal Framework

Finally, an overview of the legal framework regarding violence can be provided. These include equality between partners in rights and responsibilities, equal responsibility towards children, right to independent professional and economic decisions, owning personal property and deciding about it, maintaining relations with colleagues, friends, relatives and family members outside of the partnership.

Additionally, legal procedures in case of GBV should be explained, including police and criminal justice procedures, services that become involved, penalties and alternatives (counselling and therapy). This should be specifically done for the country of residence, but common EU values are mentioned as a basis for national legislation.

### **Further Reading**

- Ajduković, D., Ajduković, M., Cesar, S., Kamenov, Ž., Löw, A. & Sušac, N. (2010) *Prevenција nasilja u mladenačkim vezama /Prevention of violence in adolescent realtionships/*. Zagreb: SPA.
- Jusupović, D., Žižak, A., Ajduković, D., Kraljević, R., Ajduković, M. & Vrban, I. (2010) *Psihosocijalni tretman počinitelja nasilja u obitelji /Psychosocial treatment of perpetrators of family violence/*. Zagreb: SPA.
- Stadlbauer, J. & Scambor, E. (2019) *Men Talk - Leitfaden für Dialogreihen mit männlichen Asylberechtigten, subsidiär Schutzberechtigten & Drittstaatsangehörigen in der Steiermark*. Graz: VMG.

## **4.2.7 Module 7 – “Violence Prevention”**

### **Aim of the Module**

The aim of this seventh module is for participants to learn how to prevent the use of violence, especially in their relationships, even in situations of anger or stress. By exploring their experience of anger (and other emotions) in situations where they have used violence (or were about to do so), they will learn to identify it as soon as possible and to understand how anger tends to affect and limit the functioning of our minds and bodies. Even under stress or anger, the use of violence is always a choice. The participants will share and discuss different strategies to avoid the use of violence, such as calming their minds and bodies (e.g. through calming breathing), leaving the situation („time out“) or communicating their feelings and needs non-violently.

### **Expected Learning Outcomes**

Upon completion of this module, participants should have the following knowledge and skills:

- Self-awareness and reflection in situations of anger and identifying different signs of anger,
- Learning strategies to not act violently in situations of anger, but to calm the body and mind, express feelings and needs constructively and leave the situation if needed,
- Knowledge of anger as a human emotion and its effects on our mind and body,
- Awareness of violence as a choice.

### **Contents**

#### **Body and Mind**

This module has a strong focus on the individual experiences of their minds and bodies. It creates a space to discuss personal issues and includes methods which embrace techniques on how to calm down oneself in situations of anger or stress. The facilitators and trainers may start with activities which develop and incorporate a practice to calm the bodies and minds (e.g. “Soothing Rhythm Breathing”). The activation of the system of calm and affiliation facilitates a mental and physiological state that enables a series of pro-social behaviours, of caring and sharing, and therefore the development of an ethic of



caring for others and for themselves, an aspect that is usually little trained or developed in the praxis of hegemonic masculinity.

### Experience of Anger

Anger is a defensive threat response that evolved in our ancestors over millions of years and is designed to protect us against threats. We tend to experience anger as an emotion or feeling that we have in response to situations that threaten us or get in the way of our pursuit of what we want. Also, we tend to feel anger when we see injustice, when our movement toward something we want is blocked, or when we perceive that others are acting to harm or embarrass us. Usually, we don't choose to feel anger in these situations; it just arises in us when we feel threatened ... this is our brain trying to protect us when we feel insecure.

Because of our early learning experiences, we all differ in terms of what situations threaten us and cause us to feel angry, so it's good to learn what situations our threat system is extra sensitive to. If we have suffered violence or other traumatic and difficult situations, like discrimination and injustice, we might feel threatened and get angry more easily. Sometimes these threats can be physical, sometimes they are social ("he doesn't like me") or are related to status ("She's trying to make me look bad"), and linked to conflicts with other people, but often they are simply blocks and obstacles to what we want to do, or expect from others, which cause frustration.

The participants are invited to discover their experience of anger in situations where they felt threatened or frustrated. Guiding questions could lead to reflection of the effects of anger on different levels: on our body, attention, thinking and reasoning, imagination and fantasy, motivation and behaviour.

This highlights how anger organizes our mind, and how from that state or mentality it becomes difficult to connect with other people, to understand their needs, to be able to listen to their words, and how everything is simplified to black and white and friends or enemies.

When collecting the experiences with anger it should be emphasized how the mental aspects (attention, thinking, imagination) of anger typically involve a process of negative self-talk or winding oneself up (including negative attributions to persons involved, remembering other negative experiences with them and not focusing on the positive one, etc.) which creates a vicious cycle with the bodily experience increasing the anger and often leading to violent motivation and acts.

## Showcase-Box #6

### Method: “Cola Bottle Exercise”

This method distinguishes the emotion of anger from violence as an action we choose to use. The participants explore ways to avoid the use of violence even when angry and learn to calm their minds and bodies and, eventually, using “time out” if necessary.

The facilitators and trainers prepare a fresh and unopened cola bottle. In front of the group the cola bottle becomes shaken a few times. Then, a participant is asked to open it right away. Most probably he will decline, since he doesn’t want the cola being spilled all over the place.

The metaphor of the shaken cola bottle: the fizz symbolizes the anger and opening the lid stands for the use of violence, which creates a mess for the people close by who will ultimately have to „clean it up“. This metaphor tries to highlight that while anger is a human and necessary (from an evolutionary point of view) emotion, acting it out and letting it spill in the form of violence or abuse is always a choice and has to be avoided.

The anger stands for the fizz at the top of the bottle that spills out if opened but the black liquid underneath is often filled with other emotions which might be more difficult to identify and express (e.g., afraid, helpless, powerless, stressed, hurt, frustrated, anxious, worthless, sad, lonely, rejected, traumatized).

In the second part, a reflection round should focus on the strategies which strengthen the lid and let the fizz settle. The participants are asked to remember situations, in which they got very angry but managed to not act violently or abusively and were able to calm their minds and bodies and sooth their anger and / or express it constructively and maybe resolving the possible conflict. All strategies are collected and may be sorted under the categories “calming my body”, “calming my mind” and “acting differently”.

The idea of a “time out” is introduced as a last resort to avoid acting violently. The bottle may be shaken again to create fizz. Immediately, the bottle is being put on the floor or table, in order to let the fizz settle. In a comparable way we may always leave the “shaking” situation to settle until we’re calm again without acting out and doing harm to anyone (spilling

cola all over the place). When calm again (no fizz – no anger) we return to the situation / person / partner and share our black liquid (e.g., explaining what made us angry and why, our underlying emotions and needs, asking for and trying to understand the other person's feelings and needs and trying to reach a solution to the possible conflict).

To symbolize this part, the facilitators may take the bottle up again – now without fizz – and pour some cola into two or more glasses to share with (some of) the participants to symbolize this part. It should be made clear to the group that “time out” cannot be used to avoid a conflict, only to avoid violence.

Ressourcen:

Adapted from: King, Andrew (2017). Engaging men's responses to family violence. Australia: Groupwork Solutions.

“Take a time-out!” from the Respect Phoneline. Available at: <https://respectphoneline.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Respect-Phoneline-Take-a-time-out-leaflet-2020.pdf>

### Further Reading

- Gilbert, Paul (2009). The Compassion Mind. London: Robinson.
- Kolts, Russel (2011). The Compassionate Mind Approach to Managing Your Anger: Using Compassion Focused Therapy. London: Robinson.
- King, Andrew (2017). Engaging men's responses to family violence. Australia: Groupwork Solutions.
- “Take a time-out!” from the Respect Phoneline. Available at: <https://respectphoneline.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Respect-Phoneline-Take-a-time-out-leaflet-2020.pdf>

## **4.2.8 Module 8 – “Conclusion”**

### **Aim of the Module**

For a final time, the participants share their experiences from the workshops and recall the contents. They learn about the impressions of other group members (“what was important for them and what was important for me”). The module also focuses on developing perspectives for the future.

### **Expected Learning Outcomes**

Upon completion of this module, participants should have the following knowledge and skills:

- Self-reflected attitude towards the program,
- Awareness of contents for their future.

### **Contents**

#### Review of the program’s content

This module gives the participants a final chance to clarify open questions. They are invited to recall the program’s content and express their approach how they want to transfer newly acquired knowledge. The group could brainstorm ideas of taking their learnings forward (e.g. constituting gender-reflective meetings on a regular basis, staying in touch with the group members through informal meetings, planning a workshop/seminar for members of their community or family etc.).

#### Certificates

Participants receive a confirmation of participation so that the acquired expertise can be acknowledged. These certificates should list exactly the contents of the education program.

### **Further Reading**

- Stadlbauer, J. & Scambor, E. (2019) Men Talk - Leitfaden für Dialogreihen mit männlichen Asylberechtigten, subsidiär Schutzberechtigten & Drittstaatsangehörigen in der Steiermark. Graz: VMG



# Conclusion and Recommendations for the Implementation

# 5 Conclusion and Recommendations for the Implementation

The education and intervention program presented here offers the possibility of reaching male refugees and migrants and offering them a space to critically examine masculinity, identity, biography and their own behaviour, and that of their peers, while adhering to quality standards. The final chapter takes another complementary look at the implementation of the workshops and reflects on experiences and lessons learned from the implementation of the FOMEN program so far.

## 5.1 Sustainability

### Creating Networks

As already noted earlier in the Quality Standards, building a network of cooperation maintains sustainability of the program and facilitates the implementation of future projects. In most cases the program reaches out to migrants and refugees living in the local territory and engages with local organizations. Therefore, the facilitators should be in close contact with local services and create a synergic and coordinated network among services. Good communication with the networking partners (e.g. staff in the participants' accommodation) is important for the organization of the program: due to their close relationship with the participants their influence could be of great value for the participants' motivation to attend the meetings constantly.

The program is aimed to flexibly respond to many different needs that may arise over the course of the workshops. Thus, mapping and collaborating with key actors will be essential for both preparing and running the action (e.g. law and regulatory framework, young people's support and social inclusion activities, support for victims and perpetrator treatment, childcare facilities, job placement opportunities, language schools and interpretation services, addiction support services, pandemic risk mitigation tips and regulations, LGBTQI+ issues, and any other topics, ...). A basic framework agreement, including shared principles, among NGOs, institutions, services, and expert trainers of the specific thematic areas, could be helpful.

### **Talks & Counselling, Self-Care and Supervision**

Furthermore, in order to ensure sustainability of the program discussions about one's own feelings and reactions between the facilitators and trainers (+ interpreters) should be planned, as a precaution to reduce the risk of negative psychological consequences through severe experiences of overburdening and helplessness. This is one of the many reasons why the education program should be carried out by at least two trainers plus appropriate interpreters. Spaces in which there is room to discuss the different sides of the work, to be able to accept support and to receive input for one's own development are an important measure to maintain interest and joy in the work.

Whereas one module of this program is already focusing on self-care strategies, as facilitators, trainers and interpreters we should never disclaim our responsible needs to take a preventive stance with a view to burn-out and secondary traumatization. This means being attentive to oneself (in the sense of self-care), recognizing the first signs of burnout and setting limits. Working with people who have experienced and/or are experiencing difficulties can also touch on their own sore points, possibly violent experiences that have not yet been processed. It is normal that own wounds are touched and it is 'professional' to take care of them, to seek guidance.

For further prevention of burnouts or biases regular supervisions are essential for the whole staff involved in the program. They are also important measures to maintain high quality delivery and enable continuous learning.

## **5.2 Trainers and Facilitators**

### **Attitudes to and Reflection about Violence**

Picking up on the self-care requirements, one's own thoughts and attitudes with regard to violence play a central role in working with people on violence prevention. It is important for trainers and facilitators to have a reflective approach to their own experiences and attitudes so that they can guide the dialogues and group discussions. It is impossible to remain unaffected by the issue of violence. Being aware of one's own needs is an important cornerstone for being able to speak openly with others. Trainers with their own experience of violence can find the work challenging, but at the same time their own experience can also be seen as valuable and a strength. In this respect each person has the responsibility to assess their own limits. If trainers have not yet dealt



with their own attitudes and experiences in this area, there is a risk of unreflected reactions during the delivery of the modules, which can cause irritation or skepticism among the participants.

### **Anti-Racist-Perspective**

Furthermore, since male migrants and refugees are often confronted with double-stigmatization, the trainers and facilitators need to follow anti-racism standards. This is essential, as male migrants and refugees are often stigmatized as perpetrators, which causes prejudices within society and many professions. In order not to reproduce the “refugee-male” bias and thereby enhance a more effective approach towards the target group, facilitators should:

- Follow a non-discriminatory approach and avoid stigmatizing men as perpetrators,
- Be educated on intercultural diversity, specifically based on the target group,
- Be able to understand the social concept of being a male migrant/refugee and know how to deal with it appropriately,
- Be able to recognize biased and racist social structures that affect the livelihood of migrant and refugee men,
- Be able to understand the concept of “anti-Muslim-bias” towards refugees and migrants,
- Be able to reflect about the concept of racially based power dynamics between facilitators and male migrants/ and refugees and their impact,
- And, furthermore, be able to comprehend how the mental health and behaviour of the target group can be affected when being socialized into a system where they experience structural racism and discrimination.

From this follows that cultural mediators should be involved if facilitators and trainers do not share the cultural or ethnical background of the target group. The same goes for the language background. If facilitators and trainers do not speak at least one of the languages of the target group, translators should be involved and be fully briefed on the course and its objectives prior to it starting.

Therefore, it is reasonable that the staff involved in the program should consist of mixed and multi-professional teams (e.g. with regards to sex/gender, with regards to language ability, with regards to GBV violence prevention, etc.). Diverse team members offer different opportunities for the participants to

identify with the facilitators who might have other life-experiences and backgrounds, or language abilities. The access to a multi-professional and diverse team can include area experts (law, sexuality, gender equality, etc.) and persons which bring different skills in terms of methods and approaches.

## 5.3 Moderation and Facilitation

The following section contains suggestions for a smooth moderation and facilitation of the education groups. The responsibility of the group facilitation lies first and foremost in ensuring that the meetings focus on the established topics. The facilitators should inspire and motivate participants and focus on their strengths and opportunities, they should detect and try to resolve possible conflicts in the group as soon as possible, and they should recognize and acknowledge opinions of the participants and come up with questions to include the rest of the group (*What are the others' opinions?*).

### **Give Positive Feedback**

This means that facilitators should not intend to 'win' an argument with the other participants. They express a positive attitude towards openness and exchange of opinions. This includes an honest interest in the thoughts and experiences of the group members. In order to create trust in the group, it is extremely important to give positive feedback on topics that are shameful or a taboo. This means, for example, to praise openness and courage when someone from the group expresses opinions whose content we find difficult and which we find difficult to accept (e.g. *Thank you for sharing that, what do others think?*). Positive feedback promotes dialogue, inspires, motivates and creates a climate for learning and development.

### **Be a Role Model**

Facilitators are role models for dialogue and cooperation. Therefore, it is important that facilitators actively work on their communication and cooperation. This signals equivalence by sharing tasks and responsibilities equally among themselves, especially in the transfer of knowledge and management of the group.

As role models the work of the facilitators also symbolizes gender equality. The cooperation between the facilitators should symbolize equal communication, so it can be an advantage if more than only one gender is represented in the

group facilitation. The gender of the facilitators certainly influences the group process. This also applies to other factors, such as age, appearance, ethnicity, dress style and/or whether the facilitators have children themselves.

Facilitators are also emotionally affected by different opinions. The attempt to hide one's own feelings is usually not effective, because it can contribute to the fact that facilitators do not appear authentic, which in turn can create uncertainty. Group settings certainly offer opportunity to openly address one's own reactions as long as they are presented in a calm, respectful, non-judgmental way (*I notice that it upsets me when you think a woman should marry a man who raped her because I think about what that would be like for me. At the same time, I think it's good that you say what you mean so we can hear what others in the group think.*)

### **Strengthen the Dialogue**

Another task of the facilitators is to promote dialogues in which the participants can support each other. It is important to clearly explain the facilitators role and the forms of conversation that are promoted at the beginning. This can reduce false expectations, such as of the facilitators giving advice or participating in the discussion with their own opinions. From the beginning, participants should be made aware that it is not the responsibility of them to keep the discussion going or to give solutions - this can also mean not speaking out as soon as it gets quiet. All participants have the responsibility to contribute to success of the group sessions.

During an introduction to a new topic there is opportunity to introduce the participants' own topics or relevant current topics of the media or local society. The facilitators must assess how much time is needed for this. The more information there is, the less time there is for dialogues. And it is the dialogues that should take up the most time.

### **Continuity & Expertise**

One of the facilitators should be present at all sessions, thus ensuring continuity for the group, while the trainer/expert speaker can change (for example, by bringing in other experts for the topics of the respective modules on a regular basis). The interpreter is involved in the dialogue, the transmission of information and in moderation. Therefore, the same interpreter should ideally accompany the group continuously.

### **Personal Stories**

Participants appreciate when facilitators share something from their lives. In the beginning it is better to reveal less and only when the role as a facilitator is more familiar to the group, they can reveal more about themselves. Of course, it is not a must to share something from one's own life and each person has to decide for themselves if they want to do so. In any case, attention should be paid to how much time is needed when sharing personal things – and the participants should be in focus.

### **Reflect on how to Interrupt and Deal with Disturbances**

We all share different tolerance levels for situations when conversations are interrupted, when people talk to each other at the same time, when people disturb the workshop process or when one participant takes up more space and time than other participants. It can happen that one of the facilitators regulates the dialogues more strictly. In this case it is helpful for the further development and cooperation of the facilitators that they reflect on their responsibilities how to deal with these situations. Perhaps one person should practice interrupting more often while the other tries to hold back more often.

### **Holding Silence**

Silence within the group can be a challenge. Enduring this silence can become easier the more modules have already been delivered. If a facilitator tends to take the floor as soon as it gets quiet, a group dynamic can quickly develop where participants expect the facilitators to speak. Just as the participants should learn the format of conversation and dialogue, the facilitators should practice holding silence.

### **The Alternation of Seriousness and Lightness**

Humor, as a component of dialogues, is an important element for people to regulate their own emotional life. If individual participants repeatedly come up with humorous statements, they can be asked to try harder at serious statements. At the same time, participants who rarely use humor can get an extra smile from the trainers and facilitators when the mood is more relaxed. The acceptance of the participants in their "as is" state is a process for the facilitators which needs to be constantly developed. This requires a certain amount of experience in group discussions and a confidence in the use of guidelines, so that one can break away from it.

### **Current Topics and Issues**

Facilitators should prepare themselves for current social topics and include these for the dialogues and discussions. Facilitators' background knowledge can help participants to feel valued and to bring their points of view more actively into the dialogues.

### **Dealing with Negative Asylum Decisions and Deportations**

Potential deportations of participants in the middle of the program are difficult challenges. If this happens, the group probably feels the need to talk about what happened. The opportunity to talk should always be provided, as the group setting can be a positive experience for the participants. A negative asylum decision should not be a reason to exclude a participant from the program. This is why it is important that there are good working relationships with the network partners who may be in a position to support the group participants in relation to applications for asylum.

## **5.4 Translation and Cultural Mediation**

Für den Erfolg der Gruppenworkshops ist es notwendig, dass sich alle Teilnehmer\* in einer gemeinsamen Sprache verständigen können. Sie müssen nicht unbedingt aus demselben Land kommen. Es ist wichtig, schon vor dem ersten Treffen sicherzustellen, dass alle Teilnehmer\* die Sprache, in der der Workshop abgehalten oder gedolmetscht wird, wirklich verstehen.

### **Kommunikation zwischen Vermittler\*innen und Dolmetscher\*innen**

#### **Common Language**

For the success of the group workshops it is necessary that all participants can communicate in a common language. They do not necessarily have to come from the same country. It is important to ensure even before the first meeting that all participants really understand the language in which the workshop is being held or interpreted.

#### **Communication between Facilitator and Interpreter**

If facilitators do not speak the group's language as their first language, they must have language skills that enable them to conduct the dialogues or include the help of an interpreter. The communication between the facilitators and the

interpreters should not be a challenge due to a lack of language skills of the facilitators. If the facilitators understand the first language of the participants, that is of course fine. Groups can also be conducted in English or any other common language if all participants understand it.

It would be ideal if one and the same interpreter could be present at all modules. It is important to have a trusting relationship between the facilitators and the interpreter as well as a good preparation with regard to expectations of the translation and situations that may occur during the group meetings (e.g. role conflicts, disagreements, post-traumatic reactions).

### **Quality Standards for Interpretation and Translation**

We have elaborated the following quality standards for translation and interpretation during education programs:

- The interpreter is a well-trained and qualified interpreter.
- A professional interpreter working with migrants and refugees is not a friend, parent, secretary, psychologist, or a social worker. There should not be any contact between the participants and interpreter beyond the workshop.
- An interpreter is an intermediary in communication (enables mutual understanding), cultural mediator (helps to generate a connection between the facilitators and the group) and embodies a professional role (confidentiality which is signed in a contract).
- It is the interpreters' job to translate everything, that is said, and to act as a 'neutral language mediator' (not an advocate of the participants). This prevents the participants from entering into a dialogue with the interpreter and ask, for example, not to translate certain things or to ask for advice or their opinion. Even repeated phrases or sentences must be translated as they were expressed.
- The facilitator is responsible for explaining the role of the interpreter to the group. The communication is with the facilitator, but the interpreter enables a mutual understanding and communication. The facilitator is also responsible for taking care of the relationship with the participants. This has to be clarified at beginning of the workshops but could be repeated from time to time.
- Facilitator and interpreter should have an established relationship: mutual trust, cooperation, aligned value system, mutual understanding of roles and methods of work, aligned goals, intercultural competencies.

## 5.5 Framework and Delivery

In the implementation of previous FOMEN educational series, the following recommendations for preparation and organization of the programs have proven helpful.

### **Participants: Group Size, Age and Relations**

The group size should not exceed 20 participants. This number is ideal for reflection as a group and allows enough time for each individual to give feedback on the tasks/individual exercises.

It can be positive if there is a lot of variation in age, but it can also be good to have participants of similar age. Care should be taken when there is a lot of variation, because this creates an age hierarchy - experience shows that older people often take the floor and their opinions will carry more weight than the opinions of younger people, who may not take the floor under these circumstances.

Related persons represent a challenge. For example, the question arises to what extent two brothers or father and son want to or can discuss topics such as 'violence against children' or 'sexuality' in the same group. Father-son constellations usually silence the sons. It can also disrupt the process for the other participants. To avoid this, family members may be participating in a different group. At the same time, it can also be useful and a different learning process can begin when people hear their closest relatives discussing different topics. This needs to be considered by the facilitators before the program starts.

### **Time Frame and other Duties**

If the workshop takes longer than two hours, there should be a break of 20-30 minutes in between. It is recommended that each module is carried out in the same limited time frame. The breaks offer a good chance for exchange and socializing.

It is important that the meetings always take place at the same time and, preferably, at the same location. The workshops should not collide with other activities (e.g. attending language courses, working hours, childcare, ...). At the same time, it should be clarified during the preliminary discussions who of the participants will have to take care of their children during the modules so that appropriate offers can be arranged.

## **Location and Facilities**

A room big enough to offer the possibility for a circle of chairs is required. In addition, there must be space for flipcharts, movement (exercises) and table for food/drinks. If technical support is needed, this should also be considered in advance. The workshops should provide a confidential atmosphere (keep in mind: transparent walls, windows; thin walls and doors) – the participants should not feel observed and monitored.

A barrier-free venue would be ideal. The conditions for this are a level access to the event location, room, toilet facilities, dressing room and reception, the presence of an accessible lift/ lifting platform, safe laying and covering of pipes, cables, etc. A barrier-free meeting room is characterized by clear, simple room design, tables that can be easily accessed by wheelchairs, sufficiently accessible wheelchair spaces, sufficient width for passageways, good acoustics in the room. Standing tables and counters should be avoided.

The group meeting room should be located in close distance to the participants' accommodation. If this is not possible, ticket reimbursement for public transport is recommended to prevent incurred expenses.

## **Preparation for the Workshop**

It is necessary to be on site as a facilitator some time before the start of the group meeting to welcome the participants. Sufficient time at the beginning allows for everyone to greet each other and drink coffee or tea while everyone is arriving.

Preparations also include:

- providing ready-made flipcharts – these can be prepared before the start of the meetings or with the interpreter before each individual module
- provide blank flipcharts, pens, to-do lists, adhesive tape
- place the chairs in a circle
- provide tea, coffee, juice, water, possibly fruit, nuts and biscuits for the breaks (it is a good idea to name the food you bring along on signs in the language of the group participants – including information about the ingredients of the food)
- equipment required for the individual modules and activities

We also recommend bringing a list of local contact persons (counselling centres with interpreting facilities, etc.), which can be distributed to the participants if necessary or displayed on the flipchart.



## **Accessible/Barrier-Free Design of Workshops**

We recommend respecting the following standards:

- Easy understandable language and slow speaking,
- Reliable schedule (announce and keep breaks),
- Paying attention to comprehensibility and participation (Facilitators should ask if contents are understandable and if everyone is on board. They should allow time for questions and pay attention to speed of speech, density and amount of content),
- Avoiding abbreviations if possible, explaining them in any case and writing them down if necessary,
- Multi-sense principle: conveying information via several senses (seeing, hearing, feeling), e.g. through flipchart, PowerPoint presentation, script, but also through videos, music or physical exercises,
- Verbal description and explanation of used visual material (graphics, pictures, diagrams),
- Sufficient time for questions, repetitions, breaks.

For reasons of readability, it is advisable to ensure that the information material distributed has sufficient font size (at least 12 point), sans serif font, a high-contrast design and understandable wording (e.g. avoid foreign words or abbreviations). It is also a good idea to provide contact details for further enquiries on handouts.

Notes for PowerPoint presentations:

- Background: white
- Text: black (colorful on flipcharts)
- Font sizes - for headings: 40 - 44 p. - for text: 32 - 36 p. (min. 24 p.)
- Without symbols
- Max. 25 words per slide
- For printing: 2 foils per page
- Avoid abbreviations if possible, at least explain

Visualizations and flipchart design:

- Use block letters (not cursive)
- pay attention to readability (no serifs)
- write short sentences
- Avoid abbreviations (at least explain)

## 5.6 Approach

In the end, the approach of the education and intervention programs within the FOMEN project is to be made clear once again.

### **Education and Intervention**

Since the groups deal very thoroughly with their own attitudes and experiences during their biographies, it is important for us once again to clearly state the boundaries of the workshops. The education and intervention groups intend to encourage participation and provide a safe/brave space for participants to engage in conversation about issues such as social norms, stereotypes, justice, or violence. Therefore, it is important to clarify that the education groups described here are clearly different from therapy groups or anti-violence training groups. Participants in therapy or anti-violence training groups have an experienced and/or identified problem and they have a desire to change, so they make agreements about the goal of their own participation. Those settings take place under the expert guidance of therapists and trainers who systematically influence and guide the group process in order to achieve these goals. In terms of the education and intervention program, the facilitators' role is to create a trusting and empowering structure for the group and to support the group to focus on particular topics. It is at no point the facilitators' job to evaluate the participants or make diagnoses. More precisely, facilitators establish basic rules with the group to create a brave space for the participants to open up and discuss relevant issues, in addition to a safe space, where group rules promote structuring interactions in such a way as to create relations that are as non-discriminatory as possible. The participatory development and implementation of such interaction should provide all group members with a learning environment characterized by mutual respect and sensitivity. The focus is on learning about power inequalities and working on one's own position in different social hierarchies with the aim of self-reflection.

## **Voluntary Participation**

To meet these requirements participation in the program should be voluntary at all times. Forcing participants to participate can contribute to a feeling of powerlessness and also expresses a strongly hierarchical relationship. The personal choice to participate in group sessions may also lead to self-activity. Participants who do not want to participate cannot be forced to do so. Hence, as described in the Quality Standards, the program intends to promote its ownership by the participants which gives them the opportunity to be part of the process and to become partners in violence prevention.

## **Intersectional Perspective**

It has already been mentioned why it is beneficial to adopt an intersectional perspective on individuals and society in the work with the participants. Taking an intersectional stance means being aware of the interplay of various social positions and affiliations: What combinations of sex/gender, race/ethnicity, age, economic resources, residence status, educational level and other categories affect the trainers, interpreters and participants in the program? How do they affect them? These categories and affiliations are social constructions, but they are concretely effective in the real world. Therefore, they are to be taken seriously, while at the same time we have to question and deconstruct them. Individual identity designs always contain multiple affiliations. The facilitators and trainers should deal with this in a respectful manner in order to make them visible and usable as resources and for empowerment strategies.

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