Work on Gender Sensitivity and Violence Prevention with Men with International Family Histories

FOMEN Quality Standards

Gender Based Violence Prevention Work with Male Refugees and Migrants (REC-RDAP-GBV-AG-2018 –856614)

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Introduction

FOMEN focusses on innovative approaches in preventing gender-based violence in work with men with international family histories. The present paper compiles quality standards in gender sensitive and intercultural violence preventive work. Based on existing best-practice programs in all FOMEN partner countries and beyond as well as on the FOMEN needs and resource analysis, the interdisciplinary project team in six countries, together with national experts, assessed needs and resources and identified best practices concerning gender based violence-preventive work with men with international family histories. Based on these insights, the FOMEN team under the lead of the Austrian Association for Men's and Gender Issues Styria developed the following quality standards for gender sensitive and violence-preventive programs and also created manuals for work with multipliers and work with men (FOMEN website).

FOMEN aims at a broader understanding of preconditions to work with migrant men on this topic, who probably have experienced different sorts of racism and violence.[1]

"*FOMEN's intervention / education program aims to work with male migrants and refugees in form of dialogue-oriented seminars, to encourage but also challenge their reflection on the topics of gender roles, self-care, social relations, violence prevention and caring masculinities. These workshops will be held in several languages with interpreters and conducted through culturally sensitive methods.*"

One of the most important FOMEN goals is 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.

In the following the prerequisites for conducting education programmes with migrant men will be presented to ensure adequate implementation.[2] To this end, it seems necessary to develop clear quality criteria for various aspects of these education programmes :

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[1] In Europe there is a bad tradition of either ignoring racism or dismissing it as a fringe phenomenon because the white majority society is not affected. It must be noted that the moment this paper is drafted, a global movement against (institutional) racism follows the killing of the African-American George Floyd. The following months and years should be measured not least by whether it is possible to address racism critically in education and research programmes, more profoundly and continuously.

[2] The structure is inspired by a guideline of the Council of Europe on democratic culture and intercultural dialogue: https://rm.coe.int/a-model-of-the-competences-required-for-democratic-culture-and-intercu/16809940c3.
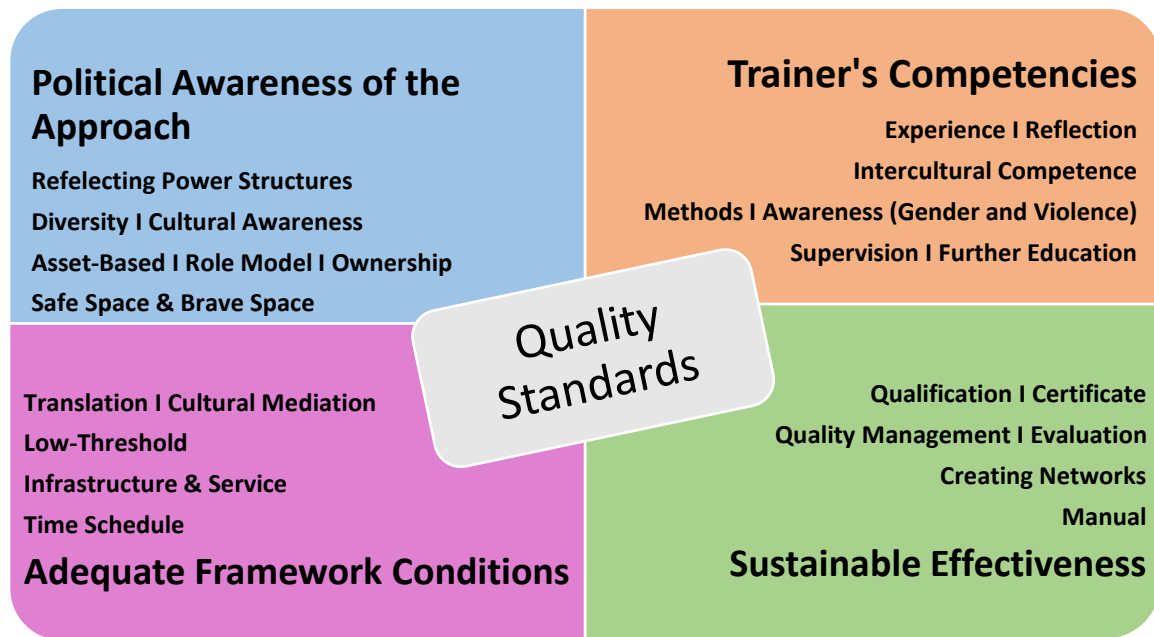
Political awareness of the approach

Reflecting power structures and dynamics

In general, the FOMEN education program for work with male refugees and migrants 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

Although in the "Trainers' Competencies" section, we will more closely describe the intersectionality between these complexes, it is important to note right away how these are related to power and inequalities in terms of opportunities and resources:

Gender inequalities and hegemonic masculinity: The gender system is mainly characterized by strong inequalities following a patriarchal tradition. Predominant cultures usually distinguish only two genders and reject other possibilities of sexual self-identification. Men/masculinity are upgraded within these dualistic systems and endowed with stronger resources (political power, economic capital, status and symbolic resources) than women/femininity.[3] However, it is important to know that obtaining the status of a "real men" 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 (cf. Messner 2000[4]).

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[3] 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, Bergmann et al. 2013).

[4] Messner, Michael (2000). Politics of Masculinities. The Gender Lens, Vol.3. UK: AltaMira Press

Racism & cultural inequalities: Modern ethnic systems and racisms are mainly constructed on the basis of northern (European) colonialisms against the global south[5] (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[6]). These different levels of exclusion, discrimination and privileges, or over- and underrating have to be reflected in the trainings.

Gender Based Violence[7]: Interpersonal Violence and its relation to gender are complex issues, and often discussions get stuck and confused by conceptual and definition problems. When it comes to men and Gender Based Violence (GBV), confusion is even more likely, and a good starting point is to provide definitions of the terms. A useful categorization of violence was provided by the World Health Organization (WHO), which differentiates between collective, self-directed and interpersonal violence (Krug et al., 2002[8]). Focusing on Interpersonal Violence, violence against partners and family members is separated from violence in the public sphere, against acquaintances or strangers. This classification is useful for the discussion of 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. In both spheres, the majority of violent acts are committed by men. The traditional feminist understanding of violence has emphasized the fact that many women are suffering from men's violence, especially (but not only) in their homes. Gender Based Violence, as defined by Hagemann-White (2008), 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: 8; our translation[9]). This definition is broad enough to cover a range of constellations of violent acts between and within the genders[10]. 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 a specific power relation 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.

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[5] Dennis, R.M. (2004). "Racism". In Kuper, A.; Kuper, J. (eds.). The Social Science Encyclopedia, Volume 2 (3rd ed.). London; New York: Routledge.

[6] Miles, Robert (1989). Racism. Routledge.

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

[8] 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.

[9] 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.*

[10] Read also the EU definition of GBV: https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/gender-based-violence/what-gender-based-violence_en

Diversity orientation and cultural awareness

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. But "diversity" is, beyond different structural positions and power hierarchies, also the plurality of people and ways of life: Addressing diversity *"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."*[11] This is even more 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.

Asset-based and role model

Instead of only focusing on the needs (or worse: deficits and shortcomings) of participants, education program should build on their assets and resources. The aim is to empower them, which works best by strengthening their awareness 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.[12] 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. Furthermore, this model gives male participants the opportunity and space to recognize their own needs. By engaging men and boys as part of the solution concerning sexual and gender-based violence prevention, and refraining from portraying them as potential perpetrators, it can give more opportunities for positive results.[13] This may also encourage participants to become leaders and/or role models in their community and deliver the message in a credible and authentic way.[14] Learning from Sufian (2015, in Flood & Howson), cultural activities, sports and other practical and fun activities or couple workshops might serve as good frameworks to engage men in violence prevention.

Ownership to and motivation of the participants

The education program should promote its "ownership" by the participants, which gives the participants 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,

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[11] Eine Welt der Vielfalt e.V.: Diversity – was ist das? (https://www.ewdv-diversity.de/diversity/diversity-was-ist-das/)

[12] Cf. ABCD toolkit at: https://naaee.org/sites/default/files/whatisassetbasedcommunitydevelopment.pdf

[13] Further information with regard to violence prevention for men of different ethnic communities offers the RISE program: https://www.lifepathsresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/Breaking-Free-from-the-Web-of-Violence.pdf.

[14] 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)

- co-creating the program with the target group, in order to enhance their identification with the program and foster sustainability of the program.

Ownership does not only contribute to more sustainable effects (see paragraph below) by allowing participants to apply their lessons learned in their communities and contexts. It may also serve as an incentive to keep the beneficiaries motivated throughout the program, even if their lives consist of much stress and strain (e.g. when living in isolated dwellings of larger groups of asylum seekers, having only scarce economic resources etc.).

Brave space and safe space

As pointed out below (paragraph on framework conditions), 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[15] for participants to open up and discuss relevant and emotionally challenging issues[16]. According to postulates of theme-centred interaction approach, "*Disturbances and passionate involvements take precedence*" (Cohn 1975[17]) in order to ensure participants' attention and ability to open-up.

Trainers' competences

Trained (experienced) professionals

As stated in the paragraph before, the approach demands facilitators that are highly qualified, politically conscious and power sensitive. They have to be informed comprehensively about the three underlying topics of migration racism/interculturality, gender/masculinity and violence/prevention. They also have to know about relations between these categories and about intersectional ways to analyze these relations. That means they should be aware of how men, women and trans* of color are affected differently by violence (and differently compared to white people). Beyond that, migration, racism, and the legal status of a person is a potential factor in having (or not having) power, social and financial resources that are a defining element of vulnerability/exposure to violence and coping resources. Similarly, this applies to gender (thinking of gaps in resources, but also of the gender status of trans*). Multi-professional teams are clearly an asset here.

Facilitators should be aware of their own beliefs and biases and be able to distance themselves from them and focus on the group and it's 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 awareness therefore is a crucial quality of facilitators.

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[15] For the distinction of brave and safe spaces see: Arao & Clemens (2013): https://www.gvsu.edu/cms4/asset/843249C9-B1E5-BD47-A25EDBC68363B726/from-safe-spaces-to-brave-spaces.pdf
[16] More can be learned from initiatives experienced with brave spaces like https://www.bravespacealliance.org/training
[17] Cohn, Ruth C. (1975). Von der Psychoanalyse zur themenzentrierten Interaktion. Von der Behandlung einzelner zu einer Pädagogik für alle. Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta

Intercultural competences

Teaching and training with people from mixed cultural and ethnic backgrounds is challenging, especially when emotional and intimate topics (like violence and gender identities) are at stake. It is necessary to reflect cultural value systems and biases, to deal with differences respectfully, while also avoiding the trap of cultural relativism (e.g. excusing patriarchal, homophobic or exclusive patterns when they appear also in ethnically stigmatized groups). Facilitators should be able to identify, comprehend and tackle eventual taboos and stereotypes of the target group.

It might be a good starting point to critically assess cultural differences in the models of Hofstede, GLOBE or others (cf. Mc Sweeney 2015[18]): Categories such as collectivity vs. individuality, hierarchy, gender prescriptions, communication patterns etc. may serve as a first orientation grid for differences in an education group.

As already pointed out before, cultural backgrounds of facilitators and participants are of critical relevance. These 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.

In order to ensure that participants can open up and take part in an active way, language barriers have to be bridged in the best possible way.

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, violence prevention …) and persons which bring different skills in terms of methods (sharing methods, intervision, etc).

Methods and awareness: Addressing violence and gender

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.[19]

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18 Brendan Mc Sweeney (2015): Hall, Hofstede, Huntington, Trompenaars, GLOBE: Common Foundations, Common Flaws, in: Transculturalism and Business in the BRIC StatesPublisher, Yvette Sáchez and Claudia Franziska Brühwiller
[19] https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/gender-based-violence/ending-gender-based-violence_en

The deconstruction of myths about gender and violence may serve as a good way into the discussion:

There are many myths concerning violence against women. Let's get our facts straight:

https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/factsheet-eu_action_to_combat_violence_against_women-2019.pdf

However, the debate has to be deepened and differentiated: Not only should the notion of Gender Based Violence go beyond definitions of violence of men against women, but comprise the gendered roots of men-to-men violence, homo- and transphobic violence and so on. It is also important to name men not only as potential perpetrators, but also as potential victims and witnesses with responsibilities and needs (and, vice versa, to name perpetrators not only as men). At the same time, the trap of relativizing the excess of male perpetration and denying hegemonic masculinity must be avoided. Show appropriate facts and figures on Gender Based Violence.

Supervision and space for reflection/further education

Regular supervision is essential for both facilitators/trainers and interpreters/cultural mediators to ensure continuous learning and high quality delivery and to avoid biases. It is also necessary for a psychological reflection and debriefing in emotionally challenging situations in order to avoid a non-productive or excessive emotional involvement or even burnout.

It is highly recommended that facilitators are competent or 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.

Appropriate framework conditions

Translation/understanding/cultural mediation

As pointed out above, a common understanding on different levels (language, cultural patterns and belief systems) are 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).

Low-threshold

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).

Infrastructure & service

- Food should be provided (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.).
- Toilets might be a delicate issue: For some, men or women toilets 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.

Time schedule

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. 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). Unclear time structure leads to a lack of clarity about the course of events and low trust in the facilitators' management ability.

Sustainable effectiveness

Qualification and confirmation of participation

Participants should acquire a confirmation of participation so that the acquired expertise can be recognised. This is relevant not least because of the difficulties faced by Persons of Colour in the areas of training and the labour market (Rözer & Werfhorst 2017[20], Carr 2016[21], Blanchett 2006[22]). Some governments already established initiatives on the improvement of migrants' and refugees' qualifications, see for example the German government's focus on "*integration through education*"[23]. Qualifications are not only relevant to get acknowledgement and support in the work against violence in communities or accommodations for refugees. It also makes potentially wider access to the labour market - for example, in NGOs, in commercial diversity or health management or in public administration - more likely. Certificates of participation are important for this purpose, which list exactly content and method 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.).

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[20] http://archive.isotis.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/ISOTIS-D1.2.-Inequalities-in-Educational-Opportunities-by-Socioeconomic-and-Migration-Background.pdf
[21] https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-658-14721-1_52
[22] https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.3102/0013189x035006024
[23] https://www.bmbf.de/de/fluechtlinge-durch-bildung-integrieren.html

Quality management, evaluation & further development

Education program should aim to improve with accumulated experience of its delivery, and to do so by taking into account the feedback from participants. Therefore, a suitable questionnaire should be prepared for each event, which allows for feedback from participants on the individual program modules and their implementation. In the long run, it should also be possible to evaluate the effectiveness of the education program by measuring the implementation by the participants, e.g. in their community work: Did it have a productive effect? What changed, and how did the education program specifically help? What should be changed in order to better help participants to implement the learnings of the program?

Creating networks

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. It is also worth mentioning the own renunciation of violence, which the trainers should commit to. Thus, a program can link changes on an individual and collective level, as Hasiym (2015)[24] describes for programs in Indonesia, which also show that actions on the structural level (men doing household chores and devaluated "female work") have a critically preventive impact on violent structures and behaviour. 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.[25]

Manual for delivery of the education program

In order to implement the education program, its theoretical and methodological basis, the applied methods and contents as well as results and outcomes available to the public, a manual is helpful. This should - in addition to the background information and derivations mentioned above - present the education program in a realistic way to facilitate implementation for a wider audience.

Here you can find the FOMEN Toolkit, Manual and description of Modules:

https://www.focus-on-men.eu/resources

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[24] In Flood, Michael & Howson, Richard (2015). Engaging men in building gender equality. Newcastle upon Tyne : Cambridge Scholars Publishing
https://catalogue.nla.gov.au/Record/6851773
[25] See for example Pixel project: male role models against violence -
https://16days.thepixelproject.net/16-male-role-models-helping-to-stop-violence-against-women