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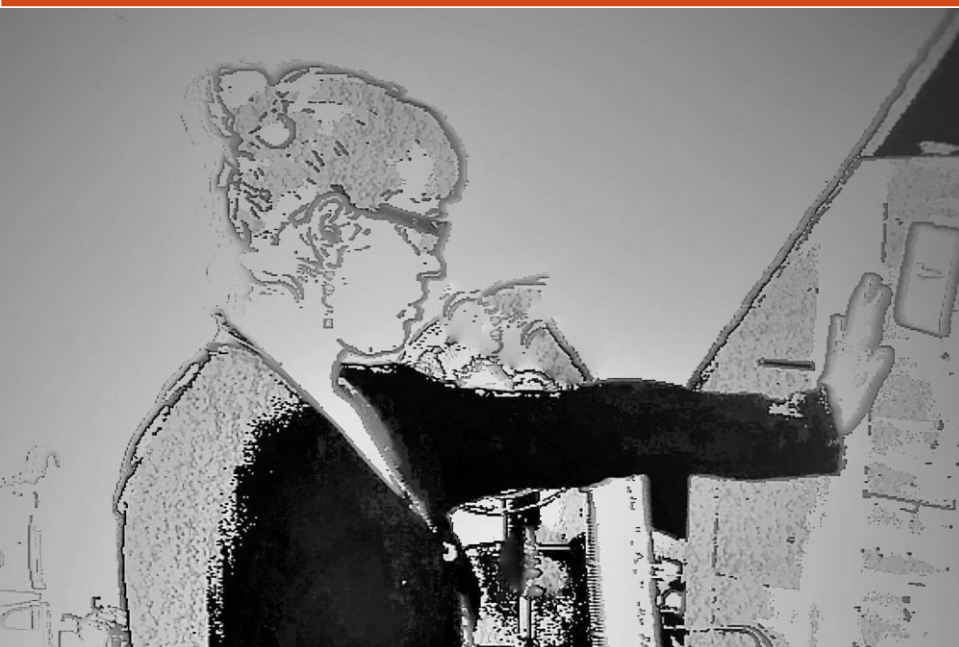
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Transcultural center
for mental and physical health and integration



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Conference documentation

Draw the Line



Conference from 18th of April in Graz, 2018

Conference documentation

Draw the Line

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DRAW THE LINE

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The project „Draw the Line“

On 18 April 2018, after two years international cooperation, the project “Draw the Line” presented in Graz, Austria, the results of its work and shared its experiences. The conference was hosted in the main hall of the city of Graz and reunited organizations from six European partner countries and local organizations.

“Draw the Line”, empowering immigrant women to prevent gender based violence in Europe was funded by the European Union and the city of Graz.

What follows is the outline of the project and its concluding conference.

Rationale

The UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women offered the first official definition of the term “Gender-based Violence”: “Any act of gender-



based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivations of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.”

In Europe much effort is put into identifying and dealing with violence against women within and outside the family. As European society becomes more and more multicultural, violence against immigrant women needs to be addressed from a specific perspective.

Sexual violence and harassment is reported by immigrant women in different settings, whether at work, at places of study or young adolescents in schools. Very often immigrant women perform menial tasks and do not have a lobby to voice their demands. Due to culturally determined gender roles immigrant women have a higher tolerance level as well as feel ashamed to talk about sexual matters. The same applies to places of study.

Regarding children and young adolescents it is clear that the role of a mother plays an important role within the family. As a result, empowering immigrant women implies influencing the mother - child relationship especially mothers of children in their formative years. Enhancing the capacity of immigrant mothers in the upbringing of their children and increased parental involvement in the education of children with regard to the prevention of sexual violence is an important part in defending sexualized violence.

One of the problems which exist is the lack of knowledge, methods and tools as to how immigrant women themselves could prevent violence as well as use methods of self-protection in the wake of violence or abuse. Very often professional help appears too late and empowering immigrant women to take important initial steps independently would be of great value.

Gender based violence and violence in all its facets are understood and interpreted in many different ways, depending on the individual, cultural and social backgrounds. There is a large difference between the definition of sexual violence in the western world which does not tally with culturally accepted behaviors in other countries and cultures. And the other way around, there are many accepted western behaviors that do not tally with the newcomers universes. Important is that all women can take decisions which enable them to identify, stop and live free of violence. Understanding how the cultural background influences woman's approach to violence is imperative to support them.

From this perspective, “Draw the Line” supports immigrant women to become their own advocates and further to train them to function as community leaders. That could prove to be the most sustainable method to raise awareness about gender based violence and the many ways to prevent sexual violence among immigrant women.

Enhancing the capacity of immigrant mothers in the upbringing of their children and increased parental involvement in the education of children with regard to the prevention of sexual violence is an important issue. Transfer information and knowledge is for “Draw the Line” as important as the tools and concrete methods to prevent and deal with harassment, violence and or abuse. Since very often-professional help comes too late (or not at all) empowering immigrant women to independently take the initial steps should be of great value.

“Draw the line” addresses the topic on a European level from the exchange of practical knowledge between the organizations specialized in the needs of immigrant women from six different countries (Austria, England, Poland, Spain, Bulgaria and Greece). The creation of training modules and specifics tools used for all the international partners have shown good results which could be used further in other communities and countries.

The aim of “Draw the Line” is to serve as a foundation for long term initiatives that should become an integral part of the mainstream services for immigrant women.

Target group

Immigrant women living in a European context and either directly or indirectly confronted with sexual violence or are victims/survivors of violence and abuse, are the Target from the project “Draw the Line”.

Our target group has due culturally determined gender roles higher tolerance levels und feels ashamed to talk about sexual matters. They often perform only menial tasks and deal with language barriers.

Sexual violence and harassment are reported by immigrant women in different settings, whether at work, at places of study or already at young age in schools. But these women usually do not have lobby to voice their demands.

Concrete Activities

In the two years joined work, the „Draw the Line“ team developed a six modules instructional and empowering training, trained almost 90 peer-leaders and reached around 1200 women from over 34 countries in the so-called multiplier-workshops. These were offered in mother tongues to ensure many different immigrants groups were reached

The training development and the peer-leaders’ training are the heart of the project. Empowering the peer-leaders to go to their communities and empower other women is the strategy to spread out information, to raise awareness and to create a feminist self-confidence culture.

The training is organized in six modules that are delivered in six workshops. The aim is informing, discussing and practicing how to prevent gender based violence. The following are the six main themes for the Workshops:

- (1) Women Rights and law
- (2) Migrant women and sexual violence



- (3) Gender stereotypes
- (4) Communication and self esteem
- (5) Psychological and medical aspects of sexual violence
- (6) Own boundaries

Peer-leaders then organize multiplier-workshops where they transfer to other women what they have learned at the training. Thus, they have an important role: They are the bridge between the communities and the guest-land. Thus, it is of great importance how much the peer-leaders change their attitudes and values and how much they transfer knowledge to the communities; the more this happens, the more it is possible to change social norms in the perception of sexual violence.

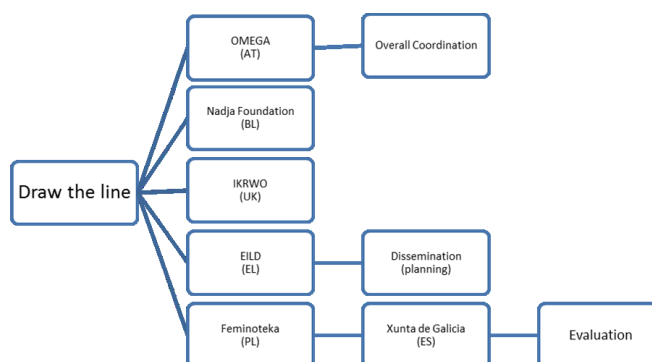
Being better informed will moreover have a long-term impact on the hundreds of women that attended the multiplier workshops. Especially being able to identify the signs of sexual harassment, if necessary, and knowing, where and how to get support and help, is a long-term achievement.

The created Manual is available in native languages; it is possible to use it for future trainings of professionals and peer leaders.

The project additionally has an effect on mothers and their children. Most peer-leaders as well as women in the multiplier-workshops are mothers, grandmothers or coming mothers, who are charged with the education of their children including the ethically and morally education, will give their new knowledge to them and watch out for gender equal education, so that they will benefit from this knowledge on a long-term perspective.

Partners and Roles

The graphic shows the responsibilities. In principal, all partners have the same tasks to accomplish except for the coordinator and the Spanish partner, who is responsible for the Evaluation. and the Greek partner, which delivered the dissemination plan and reporting.



Key Notes

Katharina Beclin: Sexual harassment in the public space.

Prevalence. Legal bases. Prevention.

Ass.-Prof.in Mag.a Dr.in Katharina Beclin

The first key note was held by Dr. Katharina Beclin. She is working at the Institute of Criminal Law and Criminology, University of Vienna. Her focus lays on: Legal fact research; juvenile delinquency; gender in criminal law and criminology, especially sexual and human trafficking; economic crime. At the beginning, Dr. Beclin spoke about frequency and asked more rhetorically, what we know about the frequency of sexual harassment? What about victims and perpetrators? Secondly, she spoke about legal provisions as victim protection; and finally about current need for action. Dr. Beclin stated at the beginning, that the extent of a phenomenon - like sexual harassment - strongly depends on the respective definition: A narrow definition includes then only a few cases – a wide definition includes many cases. What we know is that: "sexual harassment" (in Austria) is handled within the meaning of judicial criminal law:

§ 218. StGB says that sexual harassment is sentenced to imprisonment of up to six months or a fine of up to 360 daily rates if the offense is not punishable under another provision of a more severe penalty punish. The judiciary puts this term very narrow.

Some data for comparison:

In 2016, 270.000 delicts were reported, of which 1/3 were acts against life and limb. 10 % were against freedom, over 40% against foreign assets, 1.7% were sexual offenses (around 4500 delicts, 1400 (also) for sexual harassment and public charges were reported), around 800 for rape, around 200 each for sexual assault and sexual abuse of defenseless or psychologically impaired person; 80 cases for violation of sexual self-determination. Official figures on this phenomenon provide 1918 cases, 1201 clarified (63 %), 1377 cases of which 1354 men (98 %) and 629 "strangers" (46 %), 1010 victims of which are 150 (11 %) men and 275 strangers (27 %).

What influences the foreigner's share?

Readiness "in both directions": The readiness to display foreigners has increased, while foreigners rather shy away from the contact with the police. It is also a question of "Mood" as in the night in Cologne at the New Year's Eve. Foreign men are frequenting public spaces more than foreign women do. However, there are Indicated offenses as the readiness to socialize is much less. There is probably no perception as sexual harassment. However, the difficulty is to brighten that dark-field. It is a "Double Dark-field" as the persons targeted are the families; they are unreachable, because of a lack of trust, language barriers and translation. Moreover, the theme is a taboo. Results from a huge survey in Europe tell that

- 5 % of ~ 42.000 persons asked have been in the last 12 months unintentionally touched, hugged or kissed.
- Every 5th women has done that since the age of 15 years minimum at once.
- For 6% it happened at least six times in this period.



Source:

<https://www.hrweb.at/2017/12/metoo-sexuelle-belaestigung-am-arbeitsplatz>

How to fight against sexual harassment?

Dr. Beclin pointed out advantages and disadvantages of criminal proceedings, advantages and disadvantages of civil proceedings and law enforcement and mediation in equal treatment law.

She referred to various examples and real cases and as it was so actual, the Me-too campaign, which made the key note very lively.

Chris Mc Curley: Sexualized violence against women in public places.

Chris Mc Curley, Ben Hoare Bell Solicitors, Newcastle, England

Ms Mc Curley went through pictures and advertisements over the last 100 years women presence in the public spaces. It was a colorful illustrative presentation that brought some humor and overall awareness about how slow is changes motion and the need to definitely address and end sexual harassment.

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and how big the need is to definitely address and end sexual harassment.

To talk about harassment in public spaces, Mc Curley started with the definition of harassment from Equality Act 2010 of the United Kingdom's Parliament. The primary purpose of the Act is to codify the complicated and numerous array of Acts and Regulations, which formed the basis of [anti-discrimination law](#) in Great Britain. "Unwanted conduct of a sexual nature which has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them". Curley presented some vital statistics that are calling for urgent intervention measures.

- **43%** of women in London aged 18 to 34 experienced sexual harassment in 2011 (YouGov 2012)
- **83%** of American women aged 18 to 64 have been harassed by a male stranger (Penn Schoen Berland Association)
- More than **50%** of American women aged 18 to 64 have experienced 'extreme harassment' including being grabbed, touched, rubbed or followed (Penn Schoen Berland Associates, 2000)
- **83%** of Egyptian women report experiencing sexual harassment in the street (Egyptian Center for Women's Rights, 2008)
- **95%** of women in Delhi feels unsafe in public spaces (International Center for research on Women and UN Women, 2013)
- More than **80%** Canadian women have experienced male stranger harassment in public (Maximilian, Nierobissz and Welsch, 2000)
- The situation is especially bad in Asia and the Pacific. In Vietnam **87%** women have experienced some sort of sexual harassment, **79%** in India, **77 %** in Cambodia and **57%** in Bangladesh ActionRaid, 2015)

Mc Curley quoted in her presentation Jewkes, Unit Director of the Gender and Health Unit of the Medical Research Council, based in Pretoria, South Africa, who researches violence in Asia and the Pacific: "Public spaces are run by men. They perceive on ownership of all public places. Social norms enable men to feel this way and, in turn, harass women. When the streets are unsafe, it provides an excuse to keep women and young girls at home or take them out of school."

From the extreme situation in Asia and Africa, Mc Curley went to the west culture and pointed out that women started claiming public spaces not too long ago, for less than 100 years. Mc Curley signalled that even when the Hollywood movies from the 1930's, 1940's and 1960's had a positive impact on the image of women in public, the 1960's was one of the most sexist decades of the century.

Looking to the future, Mc Curley insured woman's place is in the resistance, supporting each other, saying "no", giving never up.

Dance Performance

Draw my Line!

A special highlight was the Contemporary Dance that four women specifically had created for this conference. It was amazing, touching, real, great.

Many thanks to Patrizia Zechner, Barbara Krepcik, Sonja Felber und Helga Neuhüttl



Speeches

Yvonne Seidler: Creating safe spaces. About preventing gender violence in institutions and public spaces.

Dr. Ivonne Seidler, manager of Hazissa, ONG for the prevention of gender violence, presented the research about violence in public spaces and institutions. The proposal was developed from the praxis and from non-official information about the extent sexualized violence.



One of the few and not very actualized surveys from Germany (Frings, Huxoll, 2012) collected data from 1800 institutions. 43% of the schools reported suspicion falls.

The strategy to prevent/reduce/ eliminate gender-based violence should be multidirectional and involving all organizational relational levels.

In the prevention, Dr. Seidler proposed four different action areas:

1. Primary prevention: Reduce the extent of gender violence
2. Secondary prevention: Professionalize handling with suspicious and general with gender violence cases
3. Tertiary prevention: Rework consequences and prevent re-victimization
4. Quaternary prevention: "Primum non nocere" first, to do no harm

The manager from Hazissa prevention at all levels means that organizations should pay attention not only at what is going on between co-workers, but between co-workers and clients and between the organization itself and the environment, the neighbourhood and the families from the employees. All this relationships need to be free from violence.

In the relationship with clients, the concrete previous experiences, burdens, traumata are to be considered. The group dynamic, the patterns in the communication between clients need to be thought of as well.

The clients need to experience respect, recognition, support and empowerment and for that giving them information is not enough, participation and the possibility of complaining in the organization or through an external ombudsman or -woman.

Internal, in the organization, violence prevention happens through personal development and to the clear formulation of working conditions and the work environment definition.

The organization needs to have a mission statement, a code of conduct and action guidelines. They are the foundation from the organization's culture. Transparent hierarchic structures and fluent communication are vital. Only in such an organizational culture, where secure complaint management is guaranteed, it is possible to prevent violence.

The aim is to achieve higher disclosure rates and lower risk of gender based violence.

Elli Scambor: Men talk.

Mag. Elli Scambor, Manager of the Institute for Men and Gender Studies, Member of the Austrian Society of and former university lecturer in the Master in Interdisciplinary Gender Studies at the University of Graz presented the Project „Men Talk“, 12 workshops/dialogues with adult male asylum seekers in Austria.

The project, developed on behalf of the Federal Ministry of the Interior, was implemented in 2017. Fleeing people, asylums seekers and migrants have an increased risk of being



subjected to violence or to practice violence. Multiple and diverse violence experiences make people especially vulnerable. This group is more exposed to the risk factors that lead to the helplessness or powerlessness, key concept to understand violence. Many from these men experienced war and went through

traumatic while fleeing. To that, they need to cope with the wide strain of living with a very uncertain future. It is provocative, stressing, and very challenging to arrange oneself in an unfamiliar society.

The project had four main goals:

- Raise awareness about equal rights and opportunities
- Acknowledge diversity in the society
- Increase social cohesion
- Prevent violence

The dialogues had 12 different Topics/Modules about equality, sexuality and relationships, laws, authorities and rules, children's rights, how to deal with helplessness and anger, family and violence prevention, emotions, honor and respect. Workshops were delivered in Dari, Farsi, Arabic, English and German through native speakers as translators and trainers. At each Workshop 20 to 25 men took part.

The Institute for Men and Gender Studies works from the perspective that the sociologist Michael Messner developed in order to understand masculinity in USA and the fundamental attitude behind social accepted men's privileges and hegemony.

Messner's approach understands that every politics regarding gender, especially those focusing on masculinity, should come from a triangular perspective.

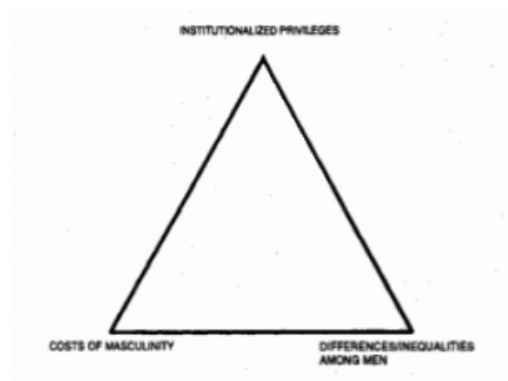
At the top corner: always keep in mind the institutionalized men's privileges

On the link corner: considerer the costs as well as the disadvantages (health, suicide rate) that gender inequalities can result.

On the right corner: Point up the differences and the unequal position among men from different groups.

What region of the triangle is emphasized depends on the way political questions are posed.

Ms Scambor emphasized the importance of keeping the three corners in mind in order to avoid unbalanced approaches. Progressive men's politics/politics of masculinities demand consideration of all three dimensions of the triangle as well as commitment to finding the balance in the middle of the triangle.



More information: <http://www.omega-graz.at>