

# Overcoming Discrimination

**Selected strategies empowering, black,  
ethnic minority and migrant women**

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**The European Women's Lobby (EWL)**





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# Preface

This unique project makes visible the diverse and dynamic strategies and actions empowering black, ethnic minority and migrant women in six Member States of the European Union. The project fills an important gap in information, at both the national and European level, on race and gender issues, and makes a significant contribution to our understanding of the impact of racist and sexist barriers which prevent the full participation of black, ethnic minority and migrant women in society.

The commitment of the European Women's Lobby (EWL) to raising the concerns of black, ethnic minority and migrant women is well-established and is evidenced by the following; its statutes state a commitment to representing the interests of the most marginalised groups of women in society; the commissioning of the first Europe-wide report on the situation of black and migrant women "Confronting the Fortress – black and migrant women in the European Union", published by the European Parliament in 1995. The EWL also has a permanent working group on race and gender issues, one of only two, set up in 1991, which has been instrumental in the development of this project.

This project gives a unique insight into the variety and types of organisations combating racism and sexism, and on the obstacles which they encounter. The findings also inform us about the priority areas for action: social exclusion; lack of legal status; violence; access to the labour market and lack of visibility. The EWL hopes that the checklist on good practice on race and gender issues will serve to sensitise and to inspire organisations active in this field.

The EWL believes that this project is timely and has an important contribution to make to the development of anti-racist measures at both the national and the European level. The EWL looks forward to engaging in debate with key players on the issues raised.

**Denise Fuchs**  
*President*  
*European Women's Lobby*



# Introduction

## **Objectives of the Project**

The objective of this project is to make visible innovative strategies implemented by a variety of organisations, empowering black, ethnic minority and migrant women to challenge and to confront the structural barriers to their full participation in society. This objective was identified through direct contact with grassroots organisations which tend to be very active, but their work remains hidden from mainstream society.

Our research focused on strategies rather than single actions. We also decided early on that it was important to give visibility to a variety of organisations, including mainstream organisations, to encourage and inspire others to work on race and gender issues.

Finally, the project aims to promote the exchange of experience and good practice and networking between organisations across the European Union.

## **Background to the Project**

The project is rooted in work already carried out by the EWL on race and gender. The first project, commissioned by the EWL from a member organisation, the European Forum of Left Feminists, resulted in the report “Confronting the Fortress – black and migrant women in the European Union”, which was published by the European Parliament in 1995. This report covered nine of the then twelve Member States, and also included an analysis of policies on migrants and immigration at the European level.

This report broke new ground by giving a voice and visibility to black and migrant women, providing space for them to articulate their concerns as they see them. At the time, the EWL stressed that this report was the starting point for further action, research and dialogue.

## **Terminology**

The terminology used is “black, ethnic minority and migrant” and describes women of “Third World” origin, including gypsy, refugee and asylum-seeking women. Previous experience indicates that these terms best reflect the diverse groups of women living in the European Union, and are generally also used by the women themselves. The term “black”, used mostly in the UK and the Netherlands, does not refer to women of African-Caribbean origin, but denotes a political consciousness about the common experience of racism of people of “Third World” origin living in Europe.

In the profiles, we have kept the terms used by the organisations. We have used the term “indigenous” to describe people native to the Member States of the European Union.

NB. In the section on the findings, for the sake of brevity, we have only used the term “ethnic minority women”.

## **Choice of Member States selected to take part in the Project**

Six Member States (Belgium, France, Germany, The Netherlands, Spain and The United Kingdom) were selected to take part; we also decided to include organisations operating at the European level to show the importance and difficulties of transnational networking.

The choice of the Member States was determined by the following criteria: the size of the migrant population; the situation of “new migrants”;

existing examples of good practice; strategies from one Member State from the South; resources available.

The working group of the EWL decided that 30 strategies would be included in the final publication, and that these would be divided in the following way for the Member States: five each for the countries with the largest migrant population; four for the smaller countries, in which we also included Spain because of the size of the migrant population; three for European organisations.

### **How the Project was carried out**

#### ***Drafting, piloting and dissemination of the questionnaire***

The drafting of the questionnaire (see annex I) was carried out in consultation with the project consultant, the project leader and the internal working group of the EWL. It was designed with the objectives of the project in mind, but also needed to be user-friendly to encourage organisations to respond.

The guiding principles for the project were innovation and empowerment. These had to be defined in the context of the lives of black, ethnic minority and migrant women and the everyday and institutional racism which they confront. For information on the definition of these concepts, please see the relevant sections in the findings.

The questionnaire was piloted in Brussels with selected organisations, whose comments and observations were incorporated into the final version.

Over 800 questionnaires were sent out to the selected countries, using the mailing lists of the EWL, the European Commission's mailing list for the 1997 European Year Against Racism, and were also sent to addresses forwarded to the EWL by interested individuals and organisations.

We found that it took much longer than expected to receive back completed questionnaires, and follow-up work had to be carried out in all the Member States to try to find new contacts and to encourage organisations to fill in the questionnaire. The deadline was extended to give organisations more time to respond. Some grassroots organisations that would have qualified to take part declined to do so when invited, because they did not have the time.

Of the 800 questionnaires sent out, we received 80 replies back from a variety of organisations. However, even as the project ends, organisations are still contacting the EWL to find out if they can still participate. It is clear that pre-publicity for the project would have elicited a much better response to the questionnaire.

#### ***Role of the Project Consultant and the Working Groups***

The EWL approached Catherine Hoskyns, an expert on gender relations in the European Union, who had played a key role in the report "Confronting the Fortress", to act as consultant.

Two working groups provided expert support to the project. The first working group, made up of representatives of the EWL, shortlisted the organisations to be interviewed. The participants also made an inventory of the fields of action by Member State, and made recommendations on follow-up work for filling in gaps, thus achieving a better balance between Member States, different types of organisations and strategies.

The second working group, comprising external black, ethnic minority and migrant women experts on race and gender, made recommendations



to the EWL on the strategies which should be included in the final publication, and contributed to the findings. We believe that it was crucial to carry out this second consultation exclusively with black, ethnic minority and migrant women to use their expertise to verify the final selection.

For a list of the members of the two working groups, see the acknowledgements.

### ***How organisations were selected to take part***

On the basis of the replies to the questionnaires and the objectives of the project, criteria were established to shortlist the organisations that would be selected for interviews.

These criteria, which took into account the proposed definitions on innovation and empowerment, included the following: field of action (violence, legal status, employment, representation in decision-making positions, etc); type of organisation (non-governmental or institutional); type of action (campaigning, lobbying, training, etc.); transferability of strategy; group targeted; level of operation (grassroots, regional, national or European); barriers identified; links with other concerns and organisations.

### ***How the organisations were interviewed***

All the profiles were based on personal interviews with the organisations. Where possible, and if relevant, the researchers tried to meet “clients” of the organisations to ask for feedback on service-delivery and support received. We have tried to give statistics, if they were available, wherever relevant. However, the fact that statistics do not always exist, underlines the problems of lack of resources and visibility.

A meeting was held with the researchers to brief them on the objectives of the project and to give them guidelines for the interviews.

### ***The development of the profiles on organisations***

After consultation with key players, the following presentation was agreed upon:

- summary of the strategy and/or the organisation
- innovative elements
- background to the strategy and the organisation
- barriers identified by the contact person and the researcher
- actions undertaken
- resources, including the contribution of unpaid and voluntary work
- impact of the strategy and the organisation
- comments were added, if relevant.

### ***Limitations of the project***

The project’s objective was to publish 30 examples of good practice from the six Member States. In the end, we were able to select 29; this was due to the fact that we were unable to identify a suitable fifth organisation for Germany working with Turkish women. Due to the lack of time and resources, we were not able to resolve this problem.

Many organisations that might have qualified for inclusion in the project did not fill in the questionnaire due to lack of time and resources; these were mostly grassroots groups.

### ***Development of the Recommendations and Checklist on good practice***

Both the Recommendations and the Checklist on good practice spring from the organisations interviewed and the findings of the project.



# Findings on the strategies implemented to empower black, ethnic minority and migrant women

The actions listed here illustrate the vibrancy and diversity of strategies being developed across Europe to empower ethnic minority women. However, this is just the tip of the iceberg. Only six of the European Union Member States are covered and the emphasis on innovation has meant that many good actions have had to be excluded. As explained in the introduction, it took much longer than expected to circulate the questionnaire and for word to get around. As the project ends, we are still receiving information about new actions which meet the criteria and might well have been included.

The actions we have chosen cross many divides and stretch in some cases from the grassroots up to the decision-makers. They cover and mix social, cultural and political concerns. Leadership varies and the impetus comes in many forms and from many different places. Groups range from the fragile and the new to the more secure – and resources follow a similar pattern.

For most of mainstream society in Europe, the activity we describe and the social groups from which this activity springs remain invisible. The engagement and overlap with mainstream society is tenuous and often difficult, as the actions themselves demonstrate. Yet in some areas, real collaboration is taking place. Most strikingly, despite the depth and richness of the actions being undertaken, they have yet to give ethnic minority women a visible presence in the public arena.

Some of the reasons for this emerge from the actions themselves and their concerns, and are discussed below under “barriers confronting ethnic minority women”. First, however, we want to comment further on the different types of organisations included, the issue of resources and examine what this material suggests about the two key concepts of innovation and empowerment.

The main findings are outlined in relation to the following issues:

- 1. The type and structure of different organisations
- 2. Focus of activities
- 3. Resources
- 4. Innovative elements
- 5. Empowerment
- 6. The main barriers confronting ethnic minority women
- 7. Organising at the European level
- 8. Development issues for grassroots organisations
- 9. Conclusions

NB. In this section, for the sake of brevity, we have only used the term “ethnic minority women”; we have used the term “indigenous” to describe people native to the Member States of the European Union.

The reader should refer to the index of key words for more detailed information on particular barriers. In this section, organisations are referred to by a code, which denotes the name and Member State.

### **1) The type and structure of different organisations**

This project includes a variety of organisations, working at all levels in the Member States, to encourage and develop actions against racism. Very few organisations work on single-issue concerns; in fact, most address a variety of needs and problems.

The organisations discussed in the report fall into the following categories:

- Grassroots groups of ethnic minority women and men
- Mixed, ethnic minority and indigenous women's organisations
- Indigenous-led groups addressing issues of racism and sexism
- a trade union-linked organisation
- organisations either initiated or supported by the Catholic church
- an organisation created by a football association
- organisations initiated by governments as part of national or regional strategy for the integration of ethnic minorities
- an initiative implemented by an equality office
- European networks of ethnic minority women

Of the organisations included, three specifically stated that they work collectively; that there is no hierarchy and that decisions are taken collectively. For all three, working collectively is fundamental and reflects their commitment to feminist principles. Most of the problems cited in relation to working collectively were for external agencies, who clearly preferred to work with identified hierarchies, for reasons of accountability.

### **2) Focus of activities**

This is discussed in relation to the three main types of organisations identified above.

#### ***Organisations created and led by ethnic minority women***

Of the 29 organisations examined, 14 are led by ethnic minority women (in most cases, only ethnic minority women work in these organisations) whereas, in the other organisations, both ethnic minority and indigenous women and men work side-by-side.

Ethnic minority women-led organisations tend to be grassroots initiatives, which have been established to give support, practical help and lend visibility to the problems confronting women. Such initiatives are established for the following reasons:

- to provide appropriate services which are not available in mainstream society, on, for example, violence
- to bring about changes in traditional practices in ethnic minority communities which are seen as detrimental or harmful to women
- to challenge and confront barriers facing specific groups
- to provide support and community-based activities for a specific ethnic group
- to lobby authorities on behalf of special groups
- to establish links between ethnic minority women in different countries of the European Union and beyond

In general, most grassroots action is initiated by either individual women or a core group, who are personally motivated to bring about changes which would improve the situation and status of ethnic minority women. Some of these women have achieved personal successes which have then motivated them to fight racism on behalf of more vulnerable groups.

With the exception of the three Europe-wide organisations, the rest of the organisations work at the local, regional and national levels, although European or transnational links may also exist.

Most ethnic minority communities retain close links with their countries of origin. Moreover, in many cases, despite having lived in the European Union for decades and partly due to their exclusion from mainstream society, still consider these countries as home.

The main reasons for migration are mainly economic: the demand for cheap labour exists in Europe and migrants have responded to this to better their economic situation.

Even though many ethnic minority people are in an economically disadvantaged situation in comparison to indigenous people, they often organise themselves into groups and associations, (representing regions or countries), to raise money to improve infrastructure in their homelands.

Countries of origin also provide inspiration for ideas and actions for grassroots ethnic minority groups. For example, 25-UK, in its work on confronting domestic violence in Asian communities, draws its inspiration from the Indian feminist movement which organises pickets outside the houses of women murdered for their dowries, in order to make visible the violence, and to shame the families, of the perpetrator.

### ***Mixed, ethnic minority and indigenous women's organisations***

Mixed organisations are defined as those which include ethnic minority and indigenous women both on the staff and on the boards of organisations. There are five such organisations in the project (7-FR, 13-DE, 16-NL, 24-UK, and 26-UK). Some positive aspects of mixed organisations include the following:

- challenging racism by showing that ethnic minority and indigenous women can work together
- giving visibility to the role and contribution of ethnic minority women
- pooling resources and expertise to challenge a specific discriminatory situation
- providing appropriate services for ethnic minority women

Mixed organisations have, to varying degrees, addressed issues of everyday and institutional racism as well as redressing the power imbalances between ethnic minority and indigenous workers. For example, there is often a need to make explicit commitments to anti-racism, in both policies and working practices. Experience from the project suggests that, mixed organisations should also consider providing “space” so that all workers can discuss together how to tackle problems of racism. Such opportunities could also provide a “safe” atmosphere in which individual ethnic minority workers would be able to raise concerns about working practices and the impact which these have on them.

Only two organisations (13-DE and 26-UK) appear to have recognised the need to adopt concrete strategies to combat racism and have done so, by implementing an internal anti-racist policy, which includes a code of conduct on appropriate behaviour.

### ***Indigenous-led organisations***

Six organisations included in the project are led by indigenous women and men (2-BE, 3-BE, 12-DE, 20-SP, 21-SP, and 23-UK). Some of these do include ethnic minority workers, but have been grouped under this category

because they do not, so far, have any ethnic minority women in decision-making positions.

These indigenous-led organisations were included in the project because they are :

- taking the fight against racism into new areas of society
- providing specialist help and applying professional expertise to vulnerable groups, for example, trafficked women
- providing training to promote ethnic minority women into social decision-making positions
- providing training for refugee women to access the labour market
- providing access to welfare services

There are different reasons which explain why ethnic minorities lack visibility in indigenous-led organisations. In the case of Spain, this is because ethnic minority groups are relative newcomers. In other cases, this results from the fact that the organisations are government-funded and that clients come from vulnerable groups such as trafficked women or refugee women.

The work of indigenous-led organisations could be considerably strengthened if they recognised the need to consult with, and to promote, ethnic minorities into decision-making positions. This would :

- give credibility to their fight against racial discrimination
- empower ethnic minority women by making them more visible in society
- provide a better service delivery
- set a good example to other indigenous-led organisations

### **3) Resources**

Funding remains the single largest obstacle faced by the organisations interviewed. Despite this, grassroots organisations are not deterred from carrying out their activities and rely on an incalculable amount of unpaid and voluntary work. Only one organisation (I I-DE) stated that it pursues a specific policy of not using volunteers, because it believes that the work carried out should be paid for. Certainly, one hidden effect of this unpaid activity is that it impinges on the quality of family life of active women.

This project is unable to give any examples of good practice on the part of funders. Most funding for the actions chosen is provided on a yearly basis, which poses problems of continuity. In general, groups supported by, or initiated by, mainstream structures are more secure in their funding than grassroots groups.

A number of organisations employ workers, who are paid for under national job creation schemes. The main problem with such funding is that it only lasts for short periods of time of up to one year, which is disruptive when trying to plan long-term work.

Several organisations voiced their reluctance to apply for funding from European Commission programmes, because of the lengthy form-filling required and their inability to meet the co-funding and transnational partnership criteria.

In some countries, the availability of funding is dependent on the politics of those in power, especially at local level. Two organisations in particular seem to have faced continual difficulties in securing their funding either as a result of lobbying against them from their own communities, or because those in power were not sympathetic to their way of working or the focus of their work.

Funding sources are mostly national, with the exception of Spain, where some organisations have benefited from funds from European Commission programmes such as INTEGRA, HORIZON, NOW (New Opportunities for Women) and PROCES; other programmes used by organisations include, DAPHNE, La Strada programme (under Phare and Tacis) and the European Social Fund. Only one organisation, 29-EU benefits from grant funding from the European Commission.

#### **4) Innovative Elements**

It was important for the project to arrive at a working definition of innovation and what this actually means in the context of the everyday and institutional racism faced by ethnic minority women. The definition of innovation evolved during the course of the project and was added to at various stages by the organisations interviewed and by the two working groups that were convened to oversee the project.

Strategies can be innovatory in different contexts at different stages and are, in general, a reflection of the history of ethnic minority people and the development of their consciousness through political activity. For example, Spain is a country with recent immigration and this is reflected in the fact that many organisations working on race and gender issues are indigenous-led. This also highlights the newness of the issues and the insecure status of immigrant groups in Spain.

On the other hand, France, the Netherlands and the UK have more ethnic minority women-led organisations, which underlines the fact that grassroots activism in these countries has a longer history and that there is a different consciousness informing strategies to combat racism. Moreover, on the whole, immigrant groups have a more secure legal status in the three countries cited.

The work of 2-BE in Belgium is considered to be innovative within the Belgian context, but just across the border in France, this type of action would not be considered as innovative, because similar initiatives have existed in France for a long time already.

Our project identified the following elements as innovative :

##### ***Taking initiatives in new areas***

When searching for innovative strategies, the working group decided that the project must give visibility to actions in areas where race and gender issues have little or no visibility.

This was why the strategy developed by 23-UK to increase the participation of ethnic minority women in football as spectators and as players was included. The popularity of football makes it an important area through which action can be taken against racism and sexism and thus, by including this strategy, the project hopes to inspire football associations across the European Union to take similar actions.

The strategy of 15-NL to train women to take up decision-making positions in the social sector also falls into this category. Its actions make quite clear the need for visibility of ethnic minority women on the boards of public services in a multicultural society, and 15-NL argues that services have little relevance, if there is no consultation or involvement of the targeted groups.

### ***Trade union initiative***

Lack of access to the labour market is a huge obstacle confronting ethnic minority women and therefore, we were glad to be able to include a strategy involving a trade union. Regrettably, many trade unions have made declarations against racism and sexism, yet fail to integrate the concerns of ethnic minority women into their actual policies and programmes.

The initiative of the Spanish trade union, Comisiones Obreras (19-SP) was considered exemplary, because it aims to provide an advice service on legal problems and training for foreign workers, including women, to assist them to access better jobs.

### ***A new approach to old subjects***

The project also wanted to underline the importance of strategies which deal with “old subjects” in new ways. The “problem” of gypsy communities is centuries old. We felt that the approach of the community-based work of 18-SP with gypsy women was innovative, because it aims to empower them within the framework of their own culture.

### ***Courage in the face of huge obstacles***

In some cases, it was the creation of an organisation in itself, that was considered to be innovative. Ethnic minority women’s grassroots organisations are characterised by their long-standing commitment to empowering women in wider society and within their own communities, and have had to face huge obstacles in doing so. Such organisations tend to have been set up by a core group of women, who are personally committed to the empowerment of women, as for example in 4-BE and 25-UK.

Women in these organisations show enormous courage in the face of the obstacles which they meet in raising the concerns of marginalised women. They are fearless in the face of criticism and fight on in spite of lack of support from their own communities and the indifference shown by mainstream society.

Despite structural obstacles and lack of secure resources, such groups survive because they are led by women with vision, who possess a strong sense of justice and a determination to put an end to the barriers which prevent ethnic minority women from fulfilling their human potential in society.

### ***Good working practices between ethnic minority and indigenous women***

Developing good working practices between ethnic minority and indigenous women, where both can work side-by-side to confront racist barriers in different parts of society, is clearly a sign of innovation. The work of 7-FR, 12-DE and the 26-UK were good examples of what can be achieved in this respect.

Sometimes, when ethnic minority and indigenous women work together, the issue of power imbalances arises but is nevertheless, rarely broached. The three organisations listed above have recognised this problem and have attempted to redress power imbalances by, for example: undertaking racism awareness-training; implementing a code of conduct; making visible the role and contribution of ethnic minority women, and by enabling ethnic minority women to take the lead.

### ***Applying professional expertise to the most disadvantaged women***

Some ethnic minority women, especially those who have been traumatised by experiences of violence, need specialist help which is not normally within the means of grassroots groups. Organisations such as 3-BE, 16-NL and 11-DE act as channels for specialist services such as psychiatric counselling, which can be made available to women in need.



### ***Giving voice and visibility to groups with specific needs and special situations***

A good example of this is provided by group 10-DE which organises and supports women of African-German origin by providing space for them to exchange experiences on the realities of everyday life, explore notions of identity and by documenting the contribution and the position of African-German people in Germany.

It is not uncommon for people of mixed-race origin to identify themselves with ethnic minority communities, rather than with the indigenous population. This is partly because indigenous society tends to see and treat people of mixed-race origin as outsiders and as belonging to ethnic minority groups.

### **5) Empowerment**

In the course of this project a definition of empowerment clearly emerged, but as for the definition of innovation, it had to be qualified differently for different countries and different groups of ethnic minority women. Ethnic minority women do not form one homogenous group but rather, they have different histories, different traditions and are at different stages of “awareness” about the causes of their subordinate position in society.

From the organisations interviewed and the contributions made by the working groups, the following elements were able to be identified as empowering:

- increasing knowledge about political rights
- providing information about how to access services
- sharing experiences about the realities of everyday racism
- building self-confidence through work on assertiveness-training, the valuing of the multiple tasks which women carry out, and the recognition of their existing skills and talents
- increasing solidarity through networking between different communities of ethnic minority women
- making visible the contribution of women to the economic and cultural life in Member States
- promoting women into decision-making positions
- providing training for women to become economically independent
- increasing knowledge and awareness on the functioning of the institutions of the host societies
- promoting mentors for second and third generation young women

Most organisations also emphasised the need for “pre-training” measures to help women to build up self-confidence so that they can engage in actions and participate in mainstream society.

### **6) The main barriers confronting ethnic minority women**

The existence of structural barriers such as social exclusion; lack of an independent legal status; violence; discrimination in the labour market and the lack of visibility of ethnic minority women in all areas of society, represent the main findings of this project. Problems related to legal status and violence came up strikingly often in the work of the organisations, and measures to combat social exclusion and to access the labour market underscore many of the actions. These conclusions highlight the lack of visibility of ethnic minority women in all areas of society, but particularly in decision-making positions.

### **A) Social Exclusion**

Social exclusion emerged as a fundamental barrier confronting ethnic minority women. The most vulnerable groups are: single mothers and their children; women who are victims of trafficking and other forms of violence; refugee women; migrant women domestic workers; new migrants, undocumented workers and gypsies in Spain.

Social exclusion is further exacerbated for all groups by their low level of skills, which prevents them from accessing better jobs in the labour market; lack of recognition of qualifications and over-representation in atypical work and in the informal economy.

Social exclusion is demonstrated by:

- lack of access to basic resources and services in society, such as health care, housing, welfare benefits, and secure employment with social protection
- lack of appropriate services and discrimination in service delivery in areas such as health, education, agencies dealing with women and violence, and vocational training.

The lack of proficiency in the host country language and lack of knowledge and information about rights further compound this situation.

Social exclusion has long-term effects on the quality of life of ethnic minority groups, because of its structural nature, and the fact that it tends to be “inherited” by second and third generation children. Basically, many ethnic minority groups are caught in a cycle of poverty and deprivation that requires an integrated strategy, involving different agencies, to overcome.

### **B) Insecure Legal status**

Problems linked to the lack of legal status emerged frequently in organisations’ work. These arise in relation to, and as a result of, domestic violence; the situation of migrant women domestic workers; undocumented workers; refugee women, and individuals trying to extend residence and work permits.

Many ethnic minority women enter the Member States of the European Union with “derived rights”, that is: their right to residence is linked to their husband’s status, which means that in the event of separation, divorce or death of the husband, they may face deportation. The probationary period before individual rights are granted lasts between one and four years, depending on the Member State in question.

This lack of individual rights places women in a vulnerable position, especially in instances of domestic violence, as they are usually also economically dependent. The woman may have to suffer in silence, knowing that if she leaves, she will have no entitlement to welfare benefits in her own right and risks being deported.

The lack of legal status further reinforces stereotypical images of ethnic minority women as mere appendages to men, dependent on men in every way.

The question of legal status is an ambiguous one for ethnic minority groups. In the perception of public authorities and the general public there is little difference between legality and illegality, with the result that the rights and entitlement of some ethnic minority groups is thus called into question.

### **C) Violence against ethnic minority women**

16 of the 29 organisations interviewed deal with different forms of violence against women. In some cases, even though violence is not the explicit focus of the organisation, it is an issue which has emerged spontaneously in the course of their work. This indicates that violence is a common, but often hidden, feature in the lives of many ethnic minority women.

The most common experiences of violence are the following:

- domestic violence
- violence against female migrant domestic workers
- female genital mutilation
- violence against trafficked women
- young women forced into early or arranged marriages

Given the “hidden” nature of much of the violence experienced by ethnic minority women, the main priority is to make this issue visible in society, in research and in the collection of statistics.

However, lack of visibility is only part of the problem when confronting violence against ethnic minority women. There is also a need for organisations and agencies dealing with violence against women in general to mainstream this issue into their work, particularly as regards the accessibility and delivery of services (see 13-DE).

### **D) Access to the Labour Market**

The barriers of social exclusion and violence demonstrate that the economic empowerment of ethnic minority women should be a priority area for action at all levels of the European Union.

The work of organisations focusing on access to employment indicates that there are three main areas for action: education, training and the challenging of discrimination, particularly as regards access to employment.

#### **I) Education**

Traditionally, ethnic minority groups have placed great faith in education as a way to improve their long term situation in society, believing that education provides them with opportunities to succeed on their own merit. The problems identified in accessing education include the following:

- lack of information for parents about the functioning and the requirements of the education system
- impact of stereotyping on certain groups such as, the children of African-Caribbean and gypsy communities, and of newly-arrived migrants
- in some ethnic minority communities the education of girls is not seen as a priority and they are neither encouraged nor supported to pursue higher education. In fact, in some instances, they are actively prevented from doing so

To counteract the effects of these barriers, some ethnic minority groups have set up Saturday morning schools and after-school tuition to help their children (4-BE). It is usually concerned mothers who initiate such provisions and carry out these activities with no support or recognition from the state.

#### **II) Training**

Two organisations were concerned with providing training to help women to access better and more secure jobs, notably in the area of new technologies (see 10-DE and 26-UK). These organisations have recognised that women need up-to-date skills to increase their employability in order to compete effectively on the job market.

In Spain, the training courses offered relate to traditional areas such as the hotel and catering industries. The reason cited for this concentration on low-level skills is that the women are newly-arrived migrants and are not literate in either their own language or the language of the host country. Therefore, these are the only jobs immediately accessible and available to them, especially since indigenous people are not interested in working in such low-paid and labour-intensive sectors.

Organisations also identified the need to have pre-training courses to access training. This particularly applies to refugee women, newly-arrived women migrants and to women who are either among the long-term unemployed or work in the informal economy. Pre-training courses usually focus on confidence building; recognition of existing skills; language courses; how to look for a job; interviewing skills, etc.

### **III) Obstacles in accessing the formal labour market**

The over-representation of ethnic minority women in the informal economy, in atypical work, and in jobs in the low status “caring” sector or service industries, indicates the need for a broad range of strategies to be implemented to improve the position of ethnic minority women in the labour market.

The following were identified by organisations as the main problems in accessing the labour market:

- low level of skills confine women to work in atypical sectors and low status jobs
- the lack of an independent legal status forces women to work in the informal economy
- second and third generation young women who are professionally qualified face discrimination at many stages, but particularly at the selection-for-interview stage
- the lack of access to good quality, affordable childcare constitutes a barrier which prevents women from accessing the labour market.

### **E) Lack of Visibility**

A fundamental problem for ethnic minority women and their organisations is that they and their concerns are literally invisible to large sections of society. Consequently, their economic contribution to society is not valued and stereotypical notions about their capabilities are reinforced.

Even within mixed, anti-racist organisations, women find themselves marginalised and have to fight for space to raise their concerns.

Thus, for many grassroots organisations, making visible the specific experience of racism confronting ethnic minority women, and the promotion of women to decision-making positions, constitute priority action areas and inform their strategies to combat discrimination.

The promotion of women to decision-making positions was seen as particularly important in sectors which deliver services to a multi-racial community; visibility here could enhance service delivery and make it more relevant and appropriate to ethnic minority groups.

Two organisations (15-NL and 17-NL) recognised the need to equip women in decision-making positions with additional skills such as conflict resolution skills and strategies for influencing the decision-making process. Such skills are seen as necessary for being able to make an impact in a potentially difficult environment.

It was pointed out by some women in decision-making positions that visibility is not enough; even with a high profile job, they can find themselves isolated and in need of additional support to combat the effects of everyday and institutional racism. This indicates that organisations need to find ways of supporting lone, ethnic minority women in decision-making positions and should develop anti-racism training for indigenous workers.

### **7) Organising at the European level**

Three organisations interviewed organise at the European level (27-EU, 28-EU and 29-EU). Of these, only one, 29-EU, has a permanent structure and ongoing resources to work on race and gender issues.

The main difficulties identified by the two other organisations in attempting to work at the European level, are that this is too costly and too difficult. The lack of secure, ongoing resources to fund meetings, translate documents and provide interpretation are just some of the obstacles which they have to face. The lack of resources curtails their ability to have a sustained presence at the European level, which in turn, reduces possibilities for transnational political action on race and gender issues.

The result is that European level networking among ethnic minority women is not very visible and is given little recognition by either the European institutions or the non-governmental community, which both seem to be indifferent to grassroots concerns and actions of this kind.

### **8) Development issues for grassroots organisations**

The intense nature of grassroots activity is such that there is little time to reflect on the future development of the organisation or its workers; there are usually no resources for such developmental work anyway.

Part of the reason for the lack of reflection lies in the fact that these organisations were established by women who were willing to do unpaid work and make personal sacrifices to achieve their objectives. Such organisations face challenges when they do secure funding, because this forces them to make the transition from unpaid and voluntary work to professionalism and a more structured set up.

This may be the second stage in the development of organisations and such moves may help to attract younger women, who are less willing to do unpaid work for groups, which are seen as being on the fringes of society.

If grassroots organisations are to keep the vibrancy and the dynamism of their work, time needs to be taken to evaluate future work and priorities, and to discuss issues of personal development and training for workers. Failure to address such issues could mean “burn out” for the organisation and its workers, with the result that activities die, leaving a gap in the provision of much needed services.

One particular grassroots organisation (25-UK) which has taken the step of evaluating its work has ultimately found it to be a rewarding experience, as this has helped to clarify future priorities and better identify workers’ needs.

## **9) Conclusion**

This overview of the main findings of the project indicates that most of the barriers confronting ethnic minority women are structural in nature, but also that not all the barriers stem from the host society. Rather, some barriers result from the practices of ethnic minority communities themselves, which reinforce the subordinate position of women at home as well as outside.

Sometimes it would seem that it is not a glass ceiling which is preventing ethnic minority women from fulfilling their potential but rather, a concrete wall. However, the work of the organisations studied here indicates that cracks are starting to appear.

However, one of the main barriers preventing ethnic minority women from achieving their full potential is mainstream society's indifference to, and lack of recognition of, the work accomplished by grassroots organisations. Thus, it is imperative to give greater support and recognition to this activity; to make it visible, and to put the concerns it reveals on the political agenda.

Yet, this is more of a longer-term perspective on what is needed to improve the situation of ethnic minority women. In the short term, strengthening partnerships across different sections of society to combat everyday racism, and greater resourcing of grassroots organisations, would already considerably improve the quality of life and status of ethnic minority women, both within their own communities and within society as a whole – and Europe would be the richer for it.

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# Commission Immigration du Conseil des Femmes Francophones de Belgique (CFFB)

*(Immigration Commission of the Belgian French-Speaking Women's Committee)*

## Summary

*The Immigration Commission (IC) is one of 15 commissions in the CFFB, a co-ordination body for women's organisations in the French-speaking part of Belgium.*

*The Commission receives migrant women on a regular basis and aims to provide support and help by, for example, providing advice on legal status problems. Moreover, it uses the cases presented to lobby for reforms to be made to Belgian legislation on immigration and migrants, and also to challenge the attitude of administrators' to migrant women.*

## Innovative Elements

- providing advice to migrant women on legal status problems
- working with migrant women from different cultural backgrounds
- lobbying for the rights of migrants
- making visible migrant women and their concerns
- operating independently within a mainstream Belgian women's organisation

## Background

The IC is located in the "women's quarter" in one of the poorest communes of Brussels, and is housed in the Amazone building, which is funded by the Ministry for Labour and Employment. The Amazone provides space for women's groups from both the French-speaking and Dutch-speaking communities.

Around 60 migrant women are members of the IC, which has a president and three vice-presidents, comprising women from the Maghreb, Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa. These three communities make up most of the migrant women population in Brussels. The IC provides space for different migrant women to reflect the fact that, although migrant women share many problems, there are also significant differences, linked to their different cultures and countries of origin.

The IC has three objectives: to increase the visibility of migrant women; to facilitate the contact of migrant women with administrators; to promote and to underline the economic, cultural and social contribution of migrant women.

Problems identified and prioritised by the Commission include the following: cultural differences between migrant women and Belgian society; lack of independent legal status; lack of access to employment in the formal economy; prostitution and trafficking. The IC concludes that all these problems have a common root, the racism underlying Belgian law on immigration and migrants.

## Barriers Identified

**Legal status:** Many of the problems presented to the IC stem from the dependent legal status of migrant women, which makes them dependent on their husbands, and gives them no access to employment, except in the informal economy.

**Visibility:** The specific problems of migrant women are often hidden by the fact that they need to use intermediaries to argue for their political rights, because of language barriers.

## Actions Undertaken

**Open doors:** Every Tuesday, migrant women are welcomed by the staff of the IC to explain their problems and to receive help and information.

Follow-up work is very thorough, since these cases also form the basis for the IC's lobbying actions; the caseload of the IC has been steadily growing ever since it was first established.

Many cases are related to the dependent legal status of migrant women who came to Belgium to join their husband. Many of them work in the informal economy because, to get an employment permit, one needs a residence permit; in the case of divorce, migrant women are left without any rights at all. This situation keeps migrant women dependent on their husbands and often leads to difficulties, especially in cases of domestic violence.

**Challenging institutions:** The IC has prioritised the challenging of institutions and policy-makers in order to influence the future direction of immigration policies. The arguments of the IC are based on the daily problems encountered by migrant women as a result of legislation.

Regular delegations of migrant women from the IC visit institutions such as the Belgian Senate, the Naturalisation Commission and the Foreigner's Office to raise awareness about the concerns of migrant women. The IC has, for example, prepared a report for the Senate on the situation of women with student status or married to men with this status. This type of status can lead to difficulties for women, of which the IC has many examples. Its report was presented within the framework of the debate on new draft laws on migration and it is hoped that this will influence future policies.



**Organising conferences:** Conferences are organised on topics relevant to the situation of migrant women such as: legal status and access to employment; asylum rights; forced prostitution and trafficking in women; access to health services; drug addiction; the family life of migrant women; racism in everyday life; citizenship issues, and the right to vote. Politicians, experts and civil servants are invited to make contributions to these conferences, which also provide useful lobbying opportunities.

The IC often organises its conferences in partnership with other organisations such as the Migrants Forum of the European Union, the Latin America House, etc.

### Resources

The IC is supported by the CFFB, which receives a regular subsidy from the French-speaking community to cover running costs. The IC tries to find ad hoc funding for specific activities and relies heavily on unpaid work and the contribution of volunteers.

### Impact

Beyond the provision of direct help and information to migrant women, the work of the IC also aims to challenge the political system which has generated problems for them.

The use of IC delegations to lobby the political and administrative authorities represents an effective strategy as it increases visibility and allows migrant women to put forward their own cases instead of using intermediaries.

Publicity for the work of the Commission is by word-of-mouth; many women who have received help and support from the Commission often decide to become members to support its actions.

### Comments

The combination of direct support and political action is an interesting mix, as it incorporates both short-term and long-term strategies to improve the situation of migrant women. Its use of delegations to lobby decision-makers is considered to be innovative because this increases visibility of problems and also empowers migrant women by providing access to political structures.

The creation of the IC by the CFFB, an indigenous women's non-governmental organisation, is also considered to be innovative. The CFFB is a member organisation of the European Women's Lobby and its actions could serve to inspire its European and national members, who are largely composed of indigenous women.

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# Interprétariat et Services de Médiation (ISM)

*(Interpreting  
and Mediation Services)*

## Summary

*ISM trains and employs a team of 15 migrant women as interpreters-mediators. Their task is to facilitate communication between on the one hand, providers of public services in the medical and social fields and in schools, and on the other hand, migrant women who do not speak French. The "interpreting" services go beyond simple translation, since they also aim to increase mutual understanding between the migrant community and Belgian society.*

## Innovative Elements

- Providing quality interpretation and mediation services to facilitate intercultural dialogue
- Providing ongoing training for staff to meet new demands
- Creating employment opportunities for migrant women
- Facilitating service delivery for migrant mothers, babies and young children
- Providing access to public services for migrants and refugees

## Background

Between 1984 and 1987, an association called "Training of interpreters in medical services" organised training for women working as volunteers for the ONE (a public body in charge of providing support and care for babies and young children). This project came to an end in 1987 due to lack of funding.

In 1991, major riots erupted in the Commune of Forest in Brussels, a predominantly migrant district. This led to a new awareness of the needs of the migrant population in Brussels, and public authorities decided to allocate funding for new projects to provide support for migrants. The development of a project offering interpreting and mediation was welcomed, as it corresponded to the need for the public authorities to better comprehend the demands and needs of the Turkish and Moroccan communities in Brussels.

The ISM was established in 1994 with funding from the FIPI, "Fonds d'Impulsion à la Politique des Immigrés" (Fund to Promote Immigration Policy) to recruit and train ten women. The organisation's name was changed to include both "mediation" and "interpretation", since mediation is all about conflict resolution that is not their sole aim.

## Barriers Identified

**Access to medical and social services:** Language barriers represent a key stumbling block when dealing with and accessing public health and social services. However, there are also cultural differences which render communication between public authorities and migrants problematic. Furthermore, racism among people delivering public services is not uncommon, and stereotypes are reinforced by the lack of command of a given language.

**Lack of confidence and language barriers:** a migrant woman who does not speak the language of the host country fluently, often has to rely on relatives and friends to interpret for her. It is not uncommon for the children, in some cases, to interpret for their mothers. Language barriers cause particular problems in medical matters, where women may be forced to reveal confidential information in front of relatives or friends.

## Actions Undertaken

**Recruitment of interpreters-mediators:** 120 candidates were interviewed for ten posts by a mixed panel, including Turkish and Moroccan people, to assess the candidates' command of languages. Formal qualifications were not considered to be important- the key criterion was to assess the ability of the candidates to value their migrant origins.

**Training:** ten women were recruited and received training including basic medical training, psychological aspects of mediation work, and information about the working of the Belgian institutions. Language courses proved not to be useful, as medical terms do not tend to exist or translate into the mother tongue. Ongoing training is viewed as a real priority: the team gathers together every second Friday to discuss the difficulties which they come across whilst more specialist training is provided by psychologists, social workers, and members of the medical profession.

**Service delivery:** The interpreters/mediators services are delivered at the request of the service providers and not the beneficiaries. Their services are also systematically included in the consultations carried out by the ONE in districts with a high concentration of migrants. They also answer "ad-hoc" calls for help – a service which is increasingly in demand with 880 requests in 1997, an increase directly related to the growing number of refugees requiring these services.

Services are provided in Turkish, Armenian, Kurdish, Moroccan and Berber. However, there is a growing demand for interpretation in languages from Eastern and Central Europe (these represented 44% of the requests in 1997). The cost comes to 300 BEF per service for institutions.

### Resources

The team includes three women co-ordinators and 15 interpreters/mediators with full-time employment contracts. 35 more women provide services on an ad-hoc basis. The Brussels region and the French-speaking Community fund the organisation.

The unemployment office covers the salary of the interpreters/mediators through their job-creation schemes. Funding is a permanent problem for the organisation, since the demand for its services is steadily growing. In order to meet their running costs, the price of their service will have to be raised three-fold for the institutional users.

### Impact

In 1997, apart from the work with the ONE, ISM answered 880 "ad-hoc" calls on its services: this represents considerable growth for an organisation that was only established in 1994. The organisation is becoming well known in the medical field thanks to "word-of-mouth" recommendations, but also due to the high quality of the services offered.

This new demand has led to the launching of a new interpretation/mediation project in hospitals. Eight new interpreters/mediators have been recruited, as well as two part-time co-ordinators, all funded by job-creation schemes for unemployed people. However, the work in hospitals has proved to be more difficult as staff at all levels do not seem to understand the need for trans-cultural mediation work.

### Comments

This type of service is not new and has existed in many Member States for many years. However, the work of the ISM is particularly interesting in that it is responding in a flexible way to new demands for its services from refugees, from organisations working with women who have been trafficked as well as from economic migrants from Eastern and Central Europe.

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# PAG-ASA

(Hope)

## Summary

*Pag-Asa's objective is to rehabilitate trafficked women to help them to deal with the trauma of their experiences, cope with everyday life, and to help them to build a new life, either in Belgium or back in their countries of origin. Pag-Asa also raises awareness, in both Belgium and in the countries of origin, on the impact of trafficking on women.*

*NB the official term used by Pag-Asa is "trafficking in human beings".*

## Innovative Elements

- providing practical and emotional support to women victims of trafficking
- making visible the situation of trafficked women
- helping women through legal proceedings

## Background

In July 1994, the Belgian government issued a circular granting temporary residence permits to trafficked women. This circular was one of the recommendations made by the parliamentary inquiry on trafficking, which was set up as a result of the journalist Chris de Stoop's book: "They are so sweet sir", which exposed the problem of trafficking.

The circular allows trafficked women to stay for up to 45 days. This period is to allow women time to decide if they want to lodge an official complaint. If they decide to take the matter further, they can be granted a permit to stay for a further three months. If prosecution is successful, women can be granted a permanent residence permit, but this also depends on their level of integration into Belgian society.

Some women are reluctant to press charges because of their shame about their experiences. This is exacerbated by the fact that their families often share this sense of shame. When women are asked to talk about their experiences to prevent others being snared into trafficking, their reluctance to talk is related to the impact which this will have on their families. Some women are also ashamed of their failure to provide for their families, as their families may have made great sacrifices to send their daughters to the West to work.

Pag-Asa is one of three organisations that were established with financial aid of the government in 1994 to help trafficked women; others include Payoke in Antwerp and Suriya in Liege. Pag-Asa receives referrals from the police, groups working with refugees, and social services. In 1997 it dealt with 104 cases; 75 of these were related to women, 13 to men and 14 to minors. Trafficked women are mostly from the following countries: the Philippines, Eastern and Central Europe, and some African countries. Pag-Asa also deals with cases of trafficking in illegal labour, especially in the textile industry, and abused domestic workers employed by diplomats.

Pag-Asa also informs the general public about the situation of trafficked women, works with non-governmental organisations on issues of common concern, and lobbies institutions on the impact of various policies.

## Barriers Identified

**Mail-order brides:** Pag-Asa has had contact with women who settled in Belgium through marriages arranged via mail-order-bride catalogues and who are having problems with their husbands.

**Poverty in countries of origin:** The lure of money and jobs, and the need to support their children and families are the main reasons behind women's decisions to take up opportunities to "work" in Western Europe. Many women are also in debt to the traffickers: as they cannot afford the cost of travel to their new "jobs", they are given advances that are then deducted from their "earnings".

Some women will voluntarily go back into prostitution because they have dependants who are financially reliant on them. In one case, a woman with a handicapped child said that prostitution was her only option for earning enough money to buy treatment for her child, who lives with her mother.

**Lack of legal status:** Existing training programmes are not accessible to women because of their legal status. This is because schools do not receive subsidies for victims of trafficking; this is more of a problem in Wallonia than in Flanders where schools are automatically given subsidies for trainees with this background.

**Lack of recognition of qualifications:** Some of the women have good qualifications from their countries of origin, but these are not recognised in Belgium and many of them are not fluent in either French or Flemish and therefore, it is highly unlikely that they will get jobs equivalent to their skills and qualifications.

## Actions Undertaken

**Personal counselling:** Pag-Asa aims to support and motivate women to take control of their own lives. They explore with women the different options to identify where they have the best chance of starting a new life. This includes a discussion on which type of training, including language skills, would be best suited to their needs.

For some women, being “rescued” can lead to new problems. Some of them know that they can never return home because they may be in danger; others have to reconcile themselves to the fact that they will not see their families again, have children or marry.

Pag-Asa has three people within its team of six who are trained to counsel women. If more specialised services are needed, then this can also be arranged.

**Returning to countries of origin:** In Eastern and Central Europe, Pag-Asa has links with non-governmental organisations to help women, but in other countries this is not the case. In such cases, Pag-Asa will then approach the relevant embassies to try to find support for women.

**Preventative work in countries of origin:** Part of the problem in arresting the growth of trafficking, is to break the myth about Western Europe being a paradise; this is why preventative work is so important. With this strategy in mind, Pag-Asa has made links with some embassies, for example with the Philippine embassy, to try to raise awareness on the situation of women who have been trafficked.

Pag-Asa encourages women who have been successfully rehabilitated to help others, by speaking out about their experiences, and by talking to women who may be afraid or ashamed. In Poland and Ukraine, some women have agreed to do radio programmes to warn others about the dangers of accepting jobs in Western Europe.

**Legal Support:** Pag-Asa contacts lawyers, accompanies women to the police station to give statements and provides interpretation, if necessary.

**Sheltered accommodation:** Pag-Asa has a shelter (at a secret address) for up to 10-12 women. Here, women receive support and are encouraged to assert their independence. Women can stay in the shelter for up to one year maximum. Pag-Asa also has two “transit apartments” for women making the transition from sheltered accommodation to independent living and women can stay there for up to a maximum of one year.

Pag-Asa encourages all women to take assertiveness-training courses to increase their confidence and self-esteem.

## Resources

Pag-Asa receives money from the central government, Federal government, Brussels Regional authority, the national lottery and donations. In total, its income for 1997 amounted to 11 million BF. The number of hours worked by volunteers totals 4 1/2 full-time people per year. As for unpaid work, over a six month period alone, this would total 200 hours, valued at a rate of 600 BF per hour. The president of Pag-Asa is charged with finding resources for the organisation, but he is not paid for doing this.

## Impact

When asked how they evaluate their work, Pag-Asa responded by stating that success can be measured in many different ways: “success can be a woman laughing after two weeks”. However, their main indicator of success is given when women are successfully rehabilitated and can start a new life.

On the whole, the women who come to Pag-Asa seem to be very happy with the help that they receive. Some of the women do find it difficult to accept that there are limits to the help that Pag-Asa can give, especially in finding the type of employment they want. Those women who settle in Belgium continue to visit Pag-Asa for support at different times in their lives or to mark important events such as a wedding or the birth of a baby. Others come back because they can be sure of a sympathetic ear to listen to their problems.

Pag-Asa believes that the closed borders of Western Europe have exacerbated trafficking, as people are not able to enter legally to look for work. Thus, gaining illegal entry means turning to criminal gangs. Pag-Asa also believes that as long as economic inequalities exist between the north and south and between the east and west, trafficking will continue to exist. Moreover, it believes that even when awareness is raised in certain countries of origin, traffickers will just move on to look for victims elsewhere.

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# La Voix des Femmes

*(The Voice of Women)*

## Summary

*La Voix des Femmes (LVF) aims to raise the awareness of migrant women and girls on their social, cultural, economic and political position in their families, communities and in society. LVF also aims to equip women and girls with the necessary tools to become independent.*

*LVF provides support and counselling, literacy courses, language courses; after-school tuition for girls; visits to institutions, etc. LVF also has wider political aims, undertaking actions to raise the awareness of migrant communities and the general public on issues affecting migrant women and girls.*

## Innovative Elements

- organising awareness-raising activities aimed at the general public
- raising the awareness of migrant women and girls on their position in society
- providing services for migrant women by women
- making visible migrant women in their communities and in society in general
- providing support and counselling for migrant women

## Background

La Voix des Femmes (LVF) was established in 1987 by a group of women, mostly of migrant origin. Their aim was to bring together women, especially of migrant origin, in order to combat racist and sexist discrimination. Its services are only for women and girls, which makes it easier for Muslim women and girls to attend the centre, as some of them are not allowed by their families, to undertake activities in a “mixed” environment. Furthermore, LVF believes that this approach allows them to better cater for the specific needs of migrant women. In the beginning, LVF was run entirely by volunteers, but it now has a permanent team of four workers.

LVF is located in the Saint-Josse Commune of Brussels, which has the highest percentage of migrant people in Brussels and is also one of the poorest Communes. Originally, most of the clients were of Turkish or Moroccan origin, but more recently, women originating from Pakistan, Thailand and Belgium have started to use its services. All of the clients are from socially and economically disadvantaged backgrounds and come from all areas of Brussels.

LVF has undertaken actions against racism in collaboration with the MRAX (a Belgian organisation fighting against all forms of racism and xenophobia), with whom they are also active in the European organisation for the right of foreigners to live with their families. LVF is a member of the newly established European Anti-Racist Network.

LVF has established good relationships with the people with whom it works, such as the local authority, schools and social support centres. Local schools, in particular, are very supportive of LVF, since it tackles problems that they have been unable to resolve.

## Barriers Identified

**Lack of qualifications and lack of legal status:** Migrant women and girls often lack the basic skills needed to access the job market, which is becoming increasingly competitive. Furthermore, lack of command of the language often restricts women to working in the informal economy without any social protection at all. This problem is further exacerbated by the lack of an independent legal status, which prevents women from accessing jobs in the formal economy.

**Lack of awareness of migrant women and girls:** Migrant women and girls are often not fully aware of their position in society, which prevents them from gaining the independence needed to achieve better living conditions.

## Actions Undertaken

**Provision of training:** LVF is recognised as a training centre and provides three types of services:

- Pre-training: French courses are available for women from Turkey, Pakistan and Thailand who have been educated in their countries of origin.
- Literacy courses, especially for women of Arabic mother tongue.
- After-school support to help young girls in secondary education facing difficulties at school. This support aims to motivate girls to undertake studies at a higher level, so that they can be more independent and thus, have more control over their future.

**Awareness-raising:** LVF organises conferences on the daily problems of the migrant community such as crime, arranged marriages, gambling, alcohol and drug abuse, communication, etc.

Visits to Belgian and European institutions, including the parliament, the local authority office, Belgian Radio and Television have also been organised in order for migrant women and girls to better understand the society in which they are living. Trips abroad are organised once or twice a year.

**Support and counselling:** LVF provides support for migrant women in difficult situations due to divorce, violence in the family, debts or marriage-related problems. Many of these cases are related to the lack of legal status; girls running away from home and the breakdown of communication in families.

**Collective actions:** LVF organises activities on the occasion of the International Women's Day and the International Day Against Racism such as, painting public buses to publicise anti-racist slogans; launching balloons in the City centre, etc.

### Resources

LVF has limited resources. It has a team of four full-time workers; the rest of the work is carried out by volunteers, who give some of the training courses.

Delays in the payment of public grants of up to 18 months forces LVF to use costly bank loans. One of its difficulties stems from the fact that it wants to preserve its political neutrality, which is difficult to achieve in the Belgian system, where funding is often allocated according to the political affiliation of organisations.

LVF has answered some calls for proposals from the European Commission to implement specific projects. However, it feels that the procedures have become too complex and time-consuming making access to funds difficult for small organisations, especially trying to meet the criteria for transnational partnership and co-funding. LVF also feels that, answering such calls means running the risk of being forced to deviate from its stated objectives, to obtain European funding.

### Impact

The impact of the training can be seen as women progress through the sessions. Yet, many of them make slow progress because they have few opportunities to practise their new language and literacy skills at home or with their neighbours. Women who follow the courses for several years show better results, but these women are in the minority. Yet, this is a problem on which local schools have had little impact. Thus, the work undertaken by LVF remains indispensable.

Girls and women using the services are encouraged to participate in all the activities of the organisation, with the aim of helping them to become more independent, by taking up various responsibilities.

LVF has received good support and visibility in the media, as it was one of the first organisations set up in Brussels with the aim of raising the awareness of migrant women, to help them to become more independent. It remains the only organisation which goes beyond the provision of services, and has undertaken a political approach, by raising the awareness of the general public on issues related to migrant women.

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# Afrique Partenaires Services

*(African Partners Service)*

## Summary

*The Afrique Partenaires Service (APS) works closely with the Sahelian community from the sub-Saharan region of Africa in Paris on legal issues, health, housing and family conflicts. It began work on problems related to the practice of polygamy at the request of its women clients. The women cited overcrowding in housing as their biggest difficulty.*

*APS has estimated that there are around 2000 people who are affected by problems linked to polygamy in Paris and the surrounding area.*

## Innovative Elements

- combating the practice of polygamy in France
- employing people from the country of origin to address cultural issues and deliver services
- raising funds for development projects in villages in the countries of origin of migrants

## Background

The practice of polygamy became established in Africa because of the high infant mortality rate, which led to a low percentage of women in relation to men. The practice is still very much alive today in the sub-Saharan region of Africa.

APS believe that the French state, having granted residence permits to polygamous families and accorded rights to family reunification for the second wife and her children, has a responsibility to improve their living conditions, especially in the provision of separate living quarters. In Africa, the practice of polygamy requires separate living quarters for each woman and her children, and the man is expected to treat all his wives with respect and fairness.

Women living in polygamous families approached APS and asked them to help them find accommodation better suited to their specific needs. Some men have two to three wives and all their children sharing one flat; some families only have one room to live in. Such overcrowding means that family conflicts are a common feature of daily life and that the education of children suffers greatly, as there is nowhere for them to do their homework.

The housing problem is further compounded by the fact that landlords are reluctant to rent accommodation to large families because they fear that their properties will degrade and prices will go down. Yet, APS has managed to obtain the support of a major housing association "Le Logement Français", who agreed to provide accommodation for women in need.

## Barriers identified

**Domestic violence:** Incidents of domestic violence are a common experience for Sahelian women and many of them flee to women's refuges. The work of APS shows that this situation is further aggravated by overcrowded living conditions.

**Inter-family communications:** APS believes that family conflicts arise because of misunderstanding and miscommunication between women and men. In the experience of APS, Sahelian women have idealised French society and particularly, French men. APS believes that this idealised version of French society comes as a result of their isolation from mainstream society.

**Access to social services:** The work of the APS raises questions about the barriers related to the delivery of social services to the migrant community. Language is not the only issue; people are simply not aware of their rights and need mediators to help them access basic services.

**Combating polygamy:** In the sub-Saharan countries of Africa, women have organised themselves against the practice of polygamy, one such group has made an audio tape about their activities. This tape has been played by APS to the women coming to its offices.

## Actions undertaken

**Women's group:** APS, recognising the need for women to share common experiences and problems, organises support group meetings every Saturday morning. In these sessions, family life, health and education issues are discussed.

**Legal and welfare rights:** Staff is available three times a week to give advice on a variety of issues to both women and men; services are offered in the language of the clients (Somiké and Bambara). This is vital given that many migrant people are not able to access or negotiate services themselves because they are not fluent in French.

APS claims that legal problems make up the bulk of its workload and it works on problems such as: residence and work permits; emergency housing; applications for family allowance and social security benefits; family reunification and citizenship.



APS is actively lobbying for the recognition of the rights of the second or third wife, who, if she has to leave her husband with her children, should be granted full autonomous rights as a single parent (right of residence, access to social services, unemployment benefits, etc.).

**Work in countries of origin:** The Sahelian community has very close links and a strong sense of solidarity with villages back in their countries of origin. APS has developed actions, at the request of the community, to fight against cholera, meningitis, AIDS and the provision of “generic” medicines in villages’ shops. They even have a slogan for this work: “des médicaments aussi pour l’Afrique” (medicine for Africa as well). The community has funded a travelling theatre group in Bambara to raise awareness on AIDS prevention. They have also raised money for mills, the digging of water wells and telecommunications infrastructure. This work is directly undertaken by APS, without the help of either governmental or non-governmental development agencies.

### Resources

There are nine part-time paid members of staff; some are funded by the government job creation scheme, “Contrat Emploi Solidarité”. Two of the workers are based in Mali, where they supervise the development projects funded by the organisation. Other resources include State funding through the social services, private contributions and membership fees.

However, an incalculable number of unpaid hours are put in by the staff. In order to cut costs, the previous co-ordinator took early retirement. Nevertheless, she continues to work almost full-time on a voluntary basis.

Despite its pressing need for funds, APS refuses to accept money from any sources which, according to them, do not correspond to their concept as to how migrant people should be treated. Some donors, for example, are reluctant to fund work in the country of origin, as they believe that there are more urgent needs in France. Others donors want the work of the APS to take on board measures aimed at sending migrant people back to their countries of origin.

### Impact

The success of APS can be measured in terms of the number of people who come back again and again for advice, information and help with family problems. The organisation is well known to the Sahelian community in Paris and is frequently inundated with requests for help; people often have to wait for hours to be seen or have to come back the next day. Its office has become a meeting point for the Sahelian community.

Its work with polygamous families shows that it is sensitive to the needs of people and understands that relationships have to be built up over a period of time in order for its actions to gain recognition and be accepted. It is careful to consult with community and religious leaders, who tend to be men, but also to listen to what women are saying. For example, women in polygamous families who seek help, do not want to consider divorce, but want help to find better accommodation.

### Comments

The success of APS can be directly attributed to the fact that it works closely with the Sahelian community, with both women and men, because it believes that this is the best way to provide support.

The work on development projects in the country of origin is a particularly interesting part of this organisations work and follows a tradition important for many migrants, namely, that of showing solidarity with, and giving financial support to those “back home”.

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# Elele, Migration et Culture de Turquie

*(Elele, Migration  
and Culture from Turkey)*

## Summary

*Elele, which means “hand-in-hand” in Turkish, is a community-based organisation providing a variety of support services to the Turkish community in Paris. It undertakes many actions, but has developed two strategies which are of particular interest to this project:*

- *in 1997, it created a network to train women who wanted to set up their own businesses;*
- *it trains intercultural mediators who then act as a “bridge” between the Turkish community and French society.*

## Innovative Elements

- helping migrant women to become economically independent by providing them with business skills and by identifying business opportunities
- challenging the stereotypes of Turkish people as aggressive and hostile
- using mediators to help Turkish parents understand the way the French education system works

## Background

This organisation was created in 1984, at the initiative of Turkish women who wanted to overcome the difficulties encountered by Turkish migrant families when trying to access public services. At the request of the government, Elele became a countrywide organisation in 1991 offering training to intercultural mediators and French people dealing with Turkish families.

Elele's name reflects the philosophy behind its work, namely, to promote the participation of Turkish people in French society, and to promote mutual understanding between migrants and French society.

Elele provides a variety of support services to the Turkish community in Paris and the surrounding area. It runs an advice centre which is open on a daily basis and offers services in French and Turkish. It is also a meeting place for the Turkish community where people can come and socialise together.

## Barriers identified

**Personal development:** Elele's experience indicates that, despite their economic activities in the informal and formal economy, migrant women often lack confidence in their own creativity and skills because of their subordinate economic and social position. Living on welfare benefits or doing low-skilled work both erode confidence and make women afraid of seizing new opportunities to increase their employability.

**Stereotypes:** One of the key problems that Elele meets in its daily work is the issue of the stereotyping of Turkish people.

**Language:** Lack of fluency in French and lack of familiarity with procedures constitute barriers to migrants accessing public services. Language barriers also reduce employment opportunities open to migrant women and men.

## Actions Undertaken

Over the years, Elele has developed many different activities for Turkish women, men and children:

**Access to social services:** Elele is open during the week and welcomes clients in two languages (French and Turkish), including new families who have just arrived in France. They help families to settle in, in particular, by helping them to access social services.

**Child Education:** Elele organises activities for children of all different ages, inter alia, organising educational play activities for younger children and helping older children with their homework.

**Publications:** Elele produces a regular newsletter aimed at Turkish organisations, mediators and its members. It covers issues such as how to access nursery education, AIDS prevention, prevention of domestic accidents and the functioning of French society. It also has regular features such as the results of research and seminars, etc. Elele holds regular information days on issues raised in the newsletter.

**Business skills for migrant women:** This branch of Elele's activities was developed at the request of women who wanted to develop skills to avoid having to work in the informal economy, in low-paid, low-skilled work, often without any social protection whatsoever. Their employment opportunities are further restricted by lack of access to childcare and language barriers.

Before this project was set up, Elele, in partnership with another organisation (Echoppe), and together with sociologists, carried out some action/research with the aim of identifying the training needs and business opportunities for migrant women.

By looking at the gaps in local services, business opportunities may be identified and openings found for selling goods produced by women. This “bottom-up approach” aims to give value to women's existing skills whilst taking into account local needs and conditions – an approach which mainstream job creation agencies usually do not take. Elele also wanted to take into account constraints which family responsibilities place upon the women involved in the project.

The resulting training course teaches business skills, personal empowerment and develop-

ment skills (learning to value existing skills and experiences, and set personal goals).

Five women were selected to take part in the project and were helped to set up businesses in the following sectors:

- home tailoring service
- pottery workshop
- dress design
- workshop to make rugs, lace and embroidery.

The project started in 1997 with the training of the women and by defining business ideas. During 1998, the women will continue to receive support for as long as this is deemed necessary.

**Intercultural mediators:** Elele's aim in setting up this service was to increase the participation of Turkish people in mainstream society. The idea of intercultural mediators was developed in the United States to help relatively new migrants to access and negotiate with the host country.

Elele organises training courses for intercultural mediators who are recruited from the Turkish community; they must all have a thorough knowledge of the Turkish community, its language, its history in France and the type of problems it faces.

The department for migration and population within the Social Affairs Department and the "fond d'action sociale" (Social Action Fund) have provided funding to train four mediators over a one year period.

The mediators' role is to work among the Turkish community to increase awareness and understanding on the functioning of French society, including its education system. The mediators are also charged with the task of increasing understanding between the Turkish community and French society by raising awareness as to why people have migrated to France and by challenging stereotypes that suggest that Turkish people are aggressive and hostile.

The training is fitted into two weeks and has been repeated several times. Each training course is adapted to draw on previous experiences and take account of changing needs. For example, the course now also covers migrant rights, communication and conflict resolution.

## Resources

There is a team of 12 paid workers (8 full-time), and some volunteers. Elele benefits from several public-funding sources and also generates some income of its own from the training courses that it organises.

A partnership was established with Echoppe for the business creation project and funding was secured from the DPM (Direction de la Population et des Migrations) for the training of intercultural mediators, but this only lasted for one year.

## Impact

As with many other community-based organisations providing support to migrants, Elele has moved from offering basic services to the support of longer-term activities to bring about more fundamental changes, such as, the economic independence of women. Their nation-wide work on cultural training, carried out at the request of the government, is an indication of the fact that their work is also making an impact outside the Turkish community.

In its work with migrant women, Elele recognises that confidence building has to be an essential component of the training offered. They have also identified the fact that women require support beyond the training period alone to deal with various problems – something which has therefore been built into their services.

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# Groupe Femmes pour l'Abolition des Mutilations sexuelles – GAMS

*(Women's Group  
for the Abolition of Female  
Genital Mutilations)*

## Summary

*The aims of the GAMS are to prevent and raise awareness on practices such as female genital mutilation (FGM); forced or early marriages and polygamy, which affect women and girl children of African origin living in France. It also aims to promote positive practices such as breast-feeding among this group.*

*GAMS also endeavours to raise awareness about its work among the general public, and in particular, in the medical profession, as this has been identified as an important element in the fight against the practice of FGM.*

## Innovative Elements

- combating the practice of FGM
- carrying out its work in collaboration with the communities concerned
- using the experience of women victims of FGM to fight against this practice
- establishing links and raising awareness in the countries of origin of migrant women
- working in liaison with researchers to collect information on FGM

## Background

The GAMS was established in 1982 by a group of women professionals in the medical field (doctors, paediatricians, gynaecologists) and women who had either experienced FGM directly, or indirectly, as a result of members of their close family having undergone FGM.

GAMS found that where FGM had taken place, this was quite often performed under very poor hygiene conditions, leading to serious complications. A series of deaths of women from the effects of FGM gave strong impetus to the creation and development of GAMS.

It is estimated that in 1989 (last data available) 27.500 women and young girls in France, originating mainly from Mali, Mauritania and Senegal, had either been victims of FGM or were at risk. In the whole of Africa, 120 million women have been victims of FGM. This practice is illegal in France and jail sentences of up to 20 years can be given for this offence.

The GAMS organisation was originally based in the "Maison des Femmes" in Paris, where different women's organisations share premises. However, as this was a women-only building, this proved inappropriate, as GAMS also needs to work with men from the medical profession.

## Barriers Identified

**Health risks:** The practice of FGM often leads to serious medical complications, sometimes resulting in the death of women, since it is mostly carried out without proper medical supervision and in unhygienic conditions.

**Lack of visibility:** The last available data on the practice of FGM in France dates from 1989, which shows the lack of visibility and information on this issue. More recently, studies have been undertaken, and the World Health Organisation is also prioritising the

combating of FGM; this should lead to the production of more up-to-date information and greater visibility.

**Cultural barrier:** It has proved difficult to combat a practice which is deeply ingrained in the cultures of the women concerned: religious practices, traditions and superstition all have to be challenged and combated simultaneously.

## Actions Undertaken

The actions undertaken by GAMS include the following:

**Preventive actions:** Information sessions on the impact of FGM are organised by "Interpreters-Mediators", within centres for the protection of mothers and children (PMI). The "Interpreters-Mediators" always work in pairs and include an African and a French woman. This strategy has a two-fold objective:

- The African women have experience of FGM. Thus, they can communicate with women in their own languages and fully understand the cultural dimension of these practices. They are able to hold discussions with initiated women, something which is essential for the success of the strategy.
- The French women can demonstrate their solidarity with victims of FGM and help to raise awareness in mainstream society.

The clients are migrant families originating from the sub-Saharan region of Africa, who have been referred to GAMS by the social services or by the medical profession.

All "Interpreters-Mediators" are trained by GAMS to carry out the above work.

GAMS has recognised that there is a need to replenish the militant base of the organisation, and it hopes to recruit younger people who could also better address the needs of young girls coming to the information sessions.

**Open house:** Women are welcomed in the offices of the GAMS three days a week. Medical professionals are often invited along at the same time to discuss cases of FGM that they have come across in their work.

**Publication of information:** This takes place in the form of books and audio-visual material. Some written information exists in African languages, but this is not disseminated.

nated, since the cost would be too high; there are many languages in sub-Saharan Africa and many women from this region cannot read and write. This is why audio-visual material is preferred because it can be used with different languages in the information sessions.

**Awareness-raising:** This is a fundamental part of the work of GAMS, with this issue being actively raised in conferences, working groups and the media. However, awareness-raising in this area is a delicate task, because it has to be undertaken in such a way as to avoid feeding prejudices which already exist among the French population.

GAMS also works with women living in Africa, as FGM often involves the extended family in Africa (FGM is often carried out on girls visiting their relatives in their country of origin). The best medium for accessing remote villages to raise awareness is radio, which everybody listens to.

**Documentation Centre:** GAMS runs a documentation centre, which is said to be unique in Europe, as it provides a wide variety of information on the practice of FGM and on health issues of women and girl children. It is open to the public by appointment.

### Resources

GAMS started out with only volunteers; it did not receive any financial support until 1991, when it secured regular funding from the Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs. It has a permanent staff of five (four African women and one French woman). Volunteers run the Documentation Centre.

### Impact

Despite the lack of reliable statistics, GAMS' actions have had concrete results; FGM seems to have noticeably decreased among women living in France.

It must be stressed that GAMS is addressing a very difficult issue that has deep cultural and religious roots. The work undertaken by the "Interpreters-Mediators" requires great sensitivity and a thorough understanding of the background to FGM.

GAMS argues that its effectiveness is being curtailed by the lack of co-operation being shown by the judicial system. GAMS attempts to explain to parents of girl children that if the girls fall victim to FGM whilst on holiday in

Africa, they could be taken to court on their return to France. However, the impact of this warning is much less than it should be, since the judicial system does not necessarily follow up on legislation with action.

GAMS is the French section of the Inter-African Committee on FGM against women, which regroups 25 national Committees (there are also sections in Belgium, Sweden and the UK). A network of organisations working to fight against FGM is being developed, with members from Belgium, Germany, Canada, Australia, United Kingdom, New Zealand and France. They are planning to develop a website to disseminate information about this issue and their work in general.

Their future challenge is to find ways of working more on the "roots" of these practices and to develop education packages for young girls to help them to oppose these practices.

### Comments

GAMS' use of partnerships between women who have been victims of FGM and French women is considered to be very innovative. This is because, in order to combat entrenched practices, organisations need to work from within the communities concerned, but also, at the same time, involve indigenous people in the relevant fields, in the fight against such practices.

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# Rencontre

(Meeting)

## Summary

The core activity of Rencontre lies in the provision of training courses, with priority given to women: women represented 80% of its clients in 1997, of which 30% were of migrant origin. However, its objectives go beyond training, as it realised that women need further support, for example, with housing, in order to be able to fully integrate into society. For this reason, Rencontre also provides shared accommodation for women for a maximum of two years. Access to accommodation is subject to one main condition: all women must sign a contract, committing themselves to undertake the necessary actions to solve their problems.

## Innovative Elements

- providing training to access the labour market
- providing accommodation to women with specific housing needs
- providing support and encouragement to women to resolve their own problems
- encouraging older and younger women to share experiences and support each other

## Background

Rencontre was established in 1975, to provide intercultural training and education with a view to promoting the social, cultural and professional integration of people in difficulties, especially those of migrant origin. Rencontre is located in the area of Roubaix and Dunkirk, which originally attracted many foreign workers because of local industries such as shipbuilding, steelworks and mining. These industries are now in decline and the region has one of the highest unemployment rates in France.

The members of Rencontre, the board and the team, include migrants and French people, with the President and the Vice-President (a woman) both originating from the Maghreb countries.

In 1994, the opportunity arose to buy an old convent, which Rencontre subsequently converted into 25 rooms with shared facilities such as a kitchen, dining and living rooms, plus meeting and training rooms. Rencontre also manages 30 apartments in the centre of Dunkirk.

This service has proved to be indispensable, as existing services were not adapted to take account of the needs of women: services were either male-orientated or tailored to meet the needs of young girls. Furthermore, since 50% of the women in need are of migrant origin, it was important to create a centre in which their specific needs could be met and their cultural differences valued. This was particularly important for young girls of Maghreb origin in conflict with their families, who often find themselves alone and rejected by their families and communities and are in general, completely unprepared for independent living.

## Barriers Identified

**Lack of access to the labour market:** Women lack the necessary skills and training to access the labour market.

**Lack of appropriate services and support:** Young migrant girls and women often run the risk of facing conflict with their families if and when they demand more freedom to choose their own partners, access higher and further education, or if they rebel against the traditional lifestyles of their parents. Such women need extra support, understanding and "non-judgemental" help, to avoid isolation and exploitation.

Rencontre's experiences also indicate that the migrant population in the region is ageing and that mainstream structures tend not to cater to their specific needs. Some women aged between 50 and 65, who have been hospitalised for a long time, find it difficult to find suitable accommodation where they can be independent, but also receive some support. They often suffer from solitude and exclusion from society and many of them subsequently end up leaving the country.

## Actions Undertaken

All women accessing accommodation must sign a contract, which binds them to take action to solve their problems, action such as training; resolving legal problems; finding a job, etc. Support is provided to help women to assess the steps which they will need to take to achieve their goals. The accommodation provided is also geared towards fostering mutual support among the women, through collective work.

**The "Louise La Fay" residence:** The "Louise La Fay" centre is accessible for women, mostly of migrant origin, over 18 years old, but without any children. 70 women have benefited from support and accommodation since 1994, of which 50% have been of migrant origin. Women are referred to Rencontre by social workers and the Salvation Army.

**New inter-generation centre in a rural setting:** In 1998, Rencontre set up a new accommodation centre in a rural area. It hosts both older and younger women (between the ages of 18 and 40) needing support. Women are encouraged to exchange experiences to break their isolation and receive mutual support.

## Resources

Rencontre owns the buildings which provide accommodation and services to women. It chose to do this in order to be politically independent and to have the freedom to determine its delivery of services. It is now a large company managing considerable resources. It has a professional management structure, employing a team of twenty people, many of whom are of migrant origin.

The rental of accommodation provides 40% of the resources of the organisation; another 40% comes from the provision of training in the two centres, while the regional authorities provide the remaining 20%.

Rencontre does not identify funding issues as a problem, since its principle is that if you have a good idea and a serious project, then raising resources should not be difficult.

## Impact

The reaction of women using the services of Rencontre is usually very positive. However, the conditions to access accommodation require the respect of a contract, which includes the carrying out of collective tasks. This type of set-up does not suit everybody and some women end up leaving. But for many women, Rencontre has provided them with an opportunity to live in a multicultural setting, where cultural differences are seen as an asset and women can also learn to be resourceful and self-reliant, able to confront their own problems.

As Rencontre wants to maintain a high quality service, it does not want to be inundated with demands that it cannot meet in a professional way. Therefore, the information on its services is spread via word-of-mouth recommendations and some partner organisations.

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# Voix de Nanas

*(The Voice of the “Nanas”)*

## Summary

*The Voix de Nanas is a support organisation for migrant women and young girls, based in Roubaix in France. It provides individual support to women to help them to understand the root of their problems, and to facilitate the expression of their needs, before looking for suitable solutions.*

*This service was developed because existing social services were not able to provide appropriate help and support for the specific difficulties encountered by migrant women and girls.*

*NB “Nana” is a derogative French term for women; it is used deliberately to challenge stereotypes of migrant women.*

## Innovative Elements

- providing individual help by trained interviewers to migrant women and girls
- making visible the problems of young migrant girls who run away from home
- facilitating access to employment

## Background

The need for setting up Voix de Nanas was identified via research carried out by the migrant women’s organisation “Les Nanas Beurs”, based in Paris. The “Nanas Beurs” was established in 1985 in the aftermath of the major demonstrations organised by young migrants in 1984. It has become a major organisation, which aims to provide women with the opportunity to meet and discuss their common objectives at the political, social and cultural level.

The objective of the research was to better understand why young migrant girls were running away from home and how they could be supported. The research showed that this phenomenon was of major significance in the North of France, which is the reason why the Voix de Nanas was established in Roubaix in 1994 as a new branch of “Les Nanas Beurs”. The North of France represents an industrial region in decline, with high levels of unemployment. It has a large migrant population, which was originally attracted to the area because of industries such as textiles and shipbuilding. Support for the “Front National” is very strong in this area.

The objectives of the organisation are as follows:

- Create solidarity between women of all origins
- Defend women’s rights to education, training, employment, housing, social security, health and contraception
- Promote communication between women to exchange knowledge and know-how
- Give value to the inter-cultural heritage of migrant women
- Provide support for women’s personal development

The services provided by Voix de Nanas are for women only, as mixed offices are not considered suitable by migrant families.

The offices of Voix de Nanas are situated in the town centre to facilitate access to its services for the groups targeted.

## Barriers identified

**Runaway girls:** Young migrant girls who run away from home are vulnerable to drug addiction and prostitution. The organisation tries to raise awareness in both the migrant communities and in mainstream society on the problems confronted by such girls.

**Lack of appropriate services:** The existing social services are often not able to meet the needs of migrant women and young girls.

## Actions undertaken

**Daily surgery:** Voix de Nanas receives migrant women every working day. Personal interviews are conducted to identify the problems of women and possible solutions are then discussed. These discussions are carried out using “active listening”, a form of mediation which aims to facilitate the expression of need. The interviewers have all received training on the use of this method.

Normally, several interviews take place, because experience has shown that the initial problem presented often masks a number of other, underlying difficulties. For example, a first contact might come about as a result of difficulties in accessing administrative documents. The discussion may then progressively reveal other difficulties such as lack of access to employment or poor living conditions.

Services are advertised only by “word-of-mouth”. Voix de Nanas only receives women who make the decision to come for help themselves and does not accept cases referred to it by the social services, to avoid being perceived as a state-linked, administrative service.

**Training courses:** Literacy courses are organised to help women access training, and after-school tutorials are provided to help young migrant girls with their homework.

**Awareness-raising activities:** These are targeted at both the migrant communities and society in general, and aim to make visible the specific problems confronting women. These activities include: short films on the situation of migrants; articles in the media, including radio broadcasts on different issues related to migration.

Occasions such as International Women’s Day are used to lobby on, and demonstrate against, legislation which is detrimental to the rights of migrants.



**Cultural activities:** Cultural events are organised regularly: theatre, radio broadcasts, oriental dance courses, conferences on Touareg culture, etc. The aim is to give value to the cultural origin of migrant women.

**Fund-raising activities:** The Voix de Nanas organises fund-raising activities such as concerts, conferences, parties, etc. to raise money and to make visible its work.

### **Resources**

The Voix de Nanas has four, full-time, paid workers and ten regular volunteers. An extra ten volunteers provide occasional help. Two-thirds of the people involved are of migrant origin and speak the languages of the clients.

Financial resources come from the Regional authorities; fund-raising provides 10% of the resources needed.

### **Impact**

Voix de Nanas has a very positive image among the migrant communities, which has made it possible for it to raise awareness on the role of women in the family and society. Clearly, Voix de Nanas fills an important gap in services for migrant women: in 1997, Voix de Nanas received 1.226 women (three times more than in 1996). Voix de Nanas has estimated that 50% of the women it has supported have found jobs afterwards.

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# Adefra e.V.

## *(Organisation of African-German Women)*

### Summary

*Adefra is a forum for African-German women (women of mixed parentage) and black women in Germany. Adefra's objectives are to increase black women's self-awareness and self-determination, and to support their individual and collective campaign for equality in all areas of society. For black women, Adefra represents an important milestone in terms of breaking out of isolation and raising black consciousness.*

### Innovative Elements

- building archives on the history and experiences of black people
- raising awareness on the experience of racism encountered by black women in German society
- providing flexible training in the new information technology sector for black women by black women

### Background

Adefra is the abbreviation for Afro-deutsche-Frauen and stands for the development and diversity, as well as the power and strength, of black women. Adefra also means: "women who show courage" in Amharic. Adefra was founded in 1986 at the initiative of black women from various German cities. The idea came from a book entitled: "Farbe bekennen – Afro-deutsche Frauen auf den Spuren ihrer Geschichte" (Showing our Colours – Afro-German Women in Search of their History), published by K. Oguntoye et al., Orlanda Frauenverlag, 1986.

Initially, informal meetings were held to allow black women to exchange common experiences. Gradually, the women observed that work on political strategies was also important in fighting everyday and institutional racism in society.

Adefra is open to all women of colour, on the basis that black women are bound together by their experience of racism and sexism in white German society irrespective of their background, social upbringing, worldview or religion. Their members include women from Latin America, African-Americans and African women. Adefra also works with black men to fight racism and is a member of the "Initiative Schwarze Deutsche/Schwarze in Deutschland" (Black Initiative-Afro-Germans in Germany), in which women and men work side by side; an organisation which developed in parallel to Adefra.

The first office was opened in Munich in 1990. Obtaining recognition of Adefra's status as an organisation was fraught with conflict in dealing with the relevant public authorities, but finally in February 1996, Adefra was recognised in Frankfurt as an association meeting social needs, because the registration process was easier there.

Adefra is composed of a small group of full members (25) and about 180 women who work on various activities with Adefra. Three

times a year Adefra organises meetings to plan work and engage in dialogue.

Adefra is a member of the following networks in Germany: agisra e.V., Frauen und eine Welt, and Südströmungen (Southern Flows).

### Barriers Identified

**Social and political isolation:** The everyday experiences of racism and sexism can be an isolating experience for individuals if these experiences are not able to be shared with others in a similar position within a supportive environment.

**Lack of visibility:** The history, contribution and experiences of racism towards black people have little or no visibility in mainstream society. As a result, German people have little awareness of the way in which racism impacts on black people's lives.

**Lack of skills for gaining access to the labour market:** Black women are confronted with many different forms of racism in accessing jobs, one of which is the lack of training to develop skills which would increase their employability and ability to compete on the labour market.

### Actions Undertaken

Adefra's work is concerned with the exchange of information and experiences, providing training, and giving support to black women. They deal with the following issues: realities of life for black women; differences and contradictions among black women; development of individual and collective strategies in the fight against racism and sexism; challenging and changing racist and/or sexist structures, stereotypes and behaviour in everyday life and within institutions; black identity, history and culture and also, German history and politics in relation to black women and men.

Adefra uses a variety of different methods to implement its objectives: the initiation of anti-racist/anti-sexist educational and cultural projects via the organisation of regional, national and international meetings for black women; publications; the setting up and co-ordination of working groups; cultural events and exhibitions.

**Archive development:** The purpose of this job-creation post was to set up a documentation and information centre, where material

by and about people of colour would be collected with the focus on information and publications by African-German and black women.

The archives are intended to contribute to black people's self-awareness and identity, by examining the experiences and history of black people, especially women. In the long term, the archives will help in the development of more effective strategies aimed at genuine equality. Adefra will continue work on the archives even when financial support ends.

**Analysis of the lives of black women in Germany:** The life experiences and history of black people are not well known to the public. The purpose of this project (also supported by a job creation post) was to strengthen the position of black women and men, by reinforcing their social infrastructure. Adefra believes that it is important to gather basic data and information about the situation of African-German and black women before engaging in co-operation with the relevant authorities.

The goal of the project is to raise public awareness on the particular situation of black people. The promotion of research and development of concepts for anti-racist child rearing and education is another goal.

**The Black Butterfly Project:** is a computer-training project run by black women for black women. Such a project was needed for the following reasons:

- black women have more difficulties in obtaining qualifications and accessing the labour market
- well-qualified, professional black women are usually isolated and meet few other women in the same situation
- black women face racism in the workplace on a daily basis, in particular, in the area of training
- experience shows that black women often fail during the training process
- new technologies need to be made available and accessible to black women.

The Black Butterfly project works with laptop computers to be able to offer courses in different cities, including those where few black women live. The training is based on the multiplier effect whereby each woman passes on her know-how to other black women. The Black Butterfly project works with the Angelou Centre in the UK, a training centre set up and run by black women.

Adefra believes that it is important for black women to familiarise themselves with new technologies as it can facilitate political networking among individuals and organisations.

### Resources

Volunteers carry out most of Adefra's work. During the summer of 1996, the Munich Job Centre financed two one-year jobs as part of a job-creation scheme. Office rent and expenses such as the telephones, were paid for by the City of Munich. However, Adefra is no longer receiving any form of financial support apart from membership fees and donations. At the moment, the office and archives are located in a member's apartment. Currently, Adefra is looking for volunteers to help with administrative work and to work on grant applications.

### Impact

Adefra has provided invaluable support for African-German and black women. This support began with informal (consciousness-raising) meetings, but quickly evolved into organised political activity committed to the empowerment of black people in Germany.

It seems highly unlikely that the work of Adefra will be discontinued, since from the very beginning, volunteers carried out all the work. Also, with the development of the Black Butterfly project, Adefra has identified an innovative training resource, which if funding can be sustained, should go from strength to strength.

### Comments

The situation of women of mixed parentage is unique, the fact that they have their roots in the indigenous and black cultures is not always the enriching experience which it should be. Mainstream society views such women as "black", thus denying the "white" part of their heritage. For this reason, women of mixed parentage often look to the black community to break free from their isolation.

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# Arbeitsgemein- schaft gegen Internationale Sexuelle und Rassistische Ausbeutung (Agisra) e.V. Köln

*(Workshop on International  
Racism and Sexual Violence  
and Exploitation - Cologne)*

## Summary

*Agisra aims to support and help women confronted with various problems such as the lack of residence status; threat of deportation; isolation, physical and psychological disorders; debts, threats and violence from traffickers in human beings; pimps, clients and husbands.*

*The goal of Agisra is also to increase migrant women's self-awareness and to help them to organise themselves autonomously.*

## Innovative Elements

- making visible violence against migrant women
- providing legal advice, guidance and support for women throughout legal hearings and trials
- providing advice and support to women wishing to return to their countries of origin

## Background

Agisra, founded in 1983 by migrant and indigenous women, has as its goal "...the promotion of education and guidance for women from various regions of the world" (extract from the statutes). Its services are available to all migrant, black, Jewish and refugee women. In 1986, Agisra opened its headquarters in Frankfurt.

The Cologne office was founded in 1993 by a former member of the staff of Agisra Frankfurt, and deals primarily with trafficking and violence against migrant women. In 1995, Agisra Cologne was granted the status of an organisation of social necessity. The two Agisra associations remain in regular contact with one another.

What sets Agisra Cologne apart from its sister organisation is the fact that here only migrant women work for migrant women. The six staff members and two students have different cultural backgrounds, coming from Korea, Brazil, Poland, etc.

The aid that Agisra offers is aimed at short-term crisis intervention; over the long term, they help women with life planning and coping with everyday life. In many cases, women who come to Agisra are already in acute crisis or emergency situations. Some women are provided with guidance over a long period, while others require more immediate therapeutic help.

The migrant women who come to Agisra usually hear about its services from friends who have already had contact with the organisation or via information material distributed by the staff or provided by the authorities. In some cases, women in crisis or emergency situations are referred to Agisra by public agencies or diplomatic missions.

Agisra offers advice in several languages that is tailored to meet the women's needs. The staff work together with the women to find solutions, so that women can emerge stronger from the process.

## Barriers Identified

Agisra has identified that language problems, lack of information and mistrust of the authorities make the situation of migrant women particularly difficult in Germany.

**Violence:** Agisra works with women who have been trafficked and forced into prostitution and with women who are victims of domestic violence.

**Racism in German society:** In general, German society expects migrant people to adapt to their way of life. This expectation, Agisra argues, is a barrier because it devalues the language and the culture of migrant people.

**Language barriers:** Many of the women who come to Agisra for help do not speak German and need interpretation to access basic services, deal with public authorities and to understand legal proceedings.

## Actions undertaken

Agisra carries out the following services and activities:

- advice and information (this can be by telephone or face-to-face)
- psycho-social guidance and aid in acute crisis situations
- accompanying women to the offices of various authorities such as the employment, youth, immigration, housing and social services, lawyers, doctors and police
- accompanying women witnesses to legal hearings and trials
- providing interpretation at hearings and interviews with the police
- visiting women who are in hospital or prison.

**Safe house:** Women often need emergency accommodation and since women's shelters are usually full, Agisra has a subsidised apartment in which two women can be housed anonymously.

**Return to countries of origin:** If a woman has to or wants to return to her country of origin, Agisra will provide her with information about "places to land" and women's projects in that country or, if available, information about integration programmes for returning migrants.

**Raising awareness on violence against migrant women:** Meetings with representatives of the police and public authorities,

journalists and social services are organised to exchange information and experiences. These meetings usually cover the following topics:

- background and effects of migration on migrant women in Germany
- reasons for and types of migration
- structures of the international trade in women and sex tourism
- rights of immigrant women, foreigners, refugee policy and its impact

**Networking:** Agisra is linked to a large number of networks, projects, organisations and initiatives at regional, national and international level. For example:

- advisory offices combating trade in human beings
- neighbourhood health centres
- Coloured Women's Network in Cologne
- Düsseldorf North Rhine-Westphalia Network (women's advice centre)
- Mona Bochum, an advice service for migrant women
- La Strada
- member of the working group against the criminalisation of women migrants
- member of the North Rhine-Westphalia working group on developing advice services for women
- National Women's Network
- "No one is illegal" campaign for migrants without papers
- member of the European Network against Trafficking in Women

### Resources

Agisra receives funds to pay its rent (two small offices and a subsidised apartment) and telephone costs from the City of Cologne's specific funds for self-help groups. Two (3/4 time) posts are financed by the Landschaftsverband Rheinland (the Farming Association of Rheinland). The employment authorities pay for four full-time workers under job creation schemes.

Agisra also receives donations from individuals and organisations. Agisra has no volunteer staff members. Although a large proportion of the work is unpaid and overtime cannot be avoided, the women of Agisra Cologne are opposed to voluntary work.

Agisra must file a financial statement with the Court of Auditors of the Home Affairs Ministry of North Rhine-Westphalia each year.

### Impact

Agisra provides a lifeline to many migrant women who find themselves in acute crisis situations, usually as a result of violence. Agisra's way of working with women, exploring choices and options open to them, is empowering as it helps women to take charge of their lives under difficult situations.

Agisra's regular meetings with public authorities are indispensable in order to raise awareness on the background and situations of trafficked women.

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# Autonomes Frauenhaus Kassel/ Migrantinnen AG

*(Independent Women's  
Refuge Kassel/Migrant  
Women's Workshop)*

## Summary

*The objective of this women's refuge is to promote equality by confronting and combating violence against women, including lesbians, and by promoting networking among independent women's refuges and Feminist projects throughout Europe. The objective of the Migrant Women's Workshop (MWW), operating within the refuge, is to raise awareness and take action against racism in women's refuges.*

## Innovative Elements

- challenging racism within a women's refuge
- sensitising the collective to the needs of migrant women
- breaking down stereotypes about migrant women
- exposing the link between the dependent residence status of migrant women and domestic violence
- showing solidarity with refugee and asylum-seeking women

## Background

The Kassel Independent Women's Refuge is one of 120 in Germany and was created in 1976. Independent women's refuges work according to collective work principles that set them apart from other types of women's refuges. They are independent of political parties, churches or social welfare associations and only women work in these refuges. The refuges are open to all women under threat of, or affected by violence, regardless of their financial situation or nationality.

All members of the collective are on an equal footing and all areas of work are considered to be of equal value. There are no managers or any differences in pay according to results or educational qualifications. The only "qualifications" required to work in the refuge are an awareness of one's own role as a woman in society and a commitment to combating violence against women; former residents are able to work in the refuge if they so wish. The collective takes decisions jointly concerning day-to-day issues and the organisation of work during their weekly meetings.

Publicising their services is a permanent feature of their work and has the same value as the support and guidance given to women and children living in the house.

The Kassel refuge provides a safe haven for girls and women who have been subjected to male violence, whether physical or psychological, including abuse in the form of beatings, kicking, stabbing, burning, rape or continual oppression and humiliation. For these women, the women's refuge is usually a last resort.

Officially, the refuge has accommodation for 32 women and children. However, more women than this must usually be accommodated on a short-term basis; no woman seeking help is turned away. There is currently no time limit on residence at the refuge.

## Barriers Identified

**Racism in women's refuges:** The MWW feels that the problem of racism is seldom broached within women's refuges. They want to provide space for migrant women who encounter racism to have the opportunity to express their point of view and not to ignore and repress their experiences.

**Lack of visibility of migrant women's problems:** The MWW aims to render visible the fact that living conditions for migrant women in Germany have become more difficult as a result of policy changes. For example, changes in the asylum-seekers benefits law and to paragraph 19 of the law on foreigners means that women who do not meet length of marriage conditions run the risk of breaking the law and being treated like criminals if they flee from an abusive husband.

## Actions undertaken

The collective support women in their dealings with public authorities, to find and move to new accommodation, to apply for custody of their children and for refugee status if necessary.

**Migrantinnen AG (Migrant Women's Workshop):** This workshop was created in December 1997 and thus represents a very new entity. In some independent women's refuges, MWW already exist. The first such workshops were founded in Hamburg and Berlin about ten years ago, at the initiative of former residents.

Most of the women seeking refuge in Kassel are migrants, therefore, the refuge provides information brochures in several languages.

The MWW aims to provide the following help to migrant women in the refuge:

- provide help with language or medical problems
- ensure women's anonymity
- encourage the collective to discuss issues of racism
- break down prejudices
- change and challenge racist behaviour among members of the collective

The workshops consider it important to draw on other women's experiences, to exchange information and enter into alliances with these other women, and participate in various actions outside the refuge framework, such as: women in the labour market; Kassler Aktion Zuflucht (Kassel refuge programme);

the fight against racism and fascism. This workshop in Kassel has contacts with similar groups in Hamburg, Berlin and Giessen.

### Resources

In 1979, the women's refuge occupied an empty building because the city did not want to provide a building. A rental lease with the City of Kassel was finally negotiated, whereby the City of Kassel would pay the rent and related costs. Only in 1985 (following a change of political leadership), after years of unpaid work, did the women's refuge obtain funding for salaries from the Land of Hessen and the City of Kassel. In 1991, the women's refuge created the "Without Borders" account to provide financial support to migrant women with a legal right of residence.

In 1994, the City of Kassel terminated the rental contract. The City issued the women's refuge with a final order to vacate the premises in late December 1996 and filed a complaint in January 1997.

Following municipal elections in March 1997 and a change of political leadership to a "Red-Green" coalition, the SPD and Green parties voted against the decision to order the women's refuge to vacate its premises and began to seek a mutually satisfactory solution.

Currently, 25 women including students, four full-time workers (paid by the City of Kassel and the Land of Hessen) and one worker hired under a job-creation scheme work together in the refuge. Six workers are migrant women.

### Impact

The work of MWW does not focus on confronting racism through an ongoing sense of obligation to make indigenous women aware of their racism. Rather, they want to focus in on their own issues.

The house rules include an article on racism; however, racist behaviour inevitably occurs. Some members of the collective have attended anti-racism training sessions and occasionally, courses on racism are organised.

The MWW is also demanding greater equality within the collective. For example, they are demanding a quota system for migrant women in the collective, especially since most of the residents are migrants.

### Comments

The MWW initiative was deemed important because it draws attention to the problem of racism in women's refuges and provides some examples as to how this issue may be tackled.

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# Projekt: Berufsorien- tierung für Flüchtlings- frauen im Kurdistan Kultur und Hil- fsverein e.V.

*(Project on Vocational Training for Refugee Women)*

## Summary

*This project works with women applying for asylum status and refugee women. Unlike other training courses, participants do not need to fulfil any requirements linked to the authorities' regulations, such as having unemployment status or a particular level of training or education.*

*The objective is to help refugee women move away from domestic work and unemployment.*

## Innovative Elements

- providing vocational training for asylum-seeking and refugee women
- equipping women with skills and qualifications to find employment with good working conditions
- giving advice and help in accessing social services, including housing
- promoting the participation of asylum-seeking and refugee women as citizens in German society

## Background

The "vocational training for refugee women" project was established in Berlin in 1990. The initiators of the project realised that the lack of training and employment opportunities for refugee women were key obstacles which urgently needed to be addressed.

Language courses such as those offered by the Goethe Institute and other language schools, are only aimed at women from countries that formerly provided labour to Germany including Turkey, Spain, Tunisia and Vietnam. Refugee women generally do not meet the criteria for entry into programmes leading to formal qualifications. This project aims to bridge this gap and give refugee women the opportunity to train and prepare themselves for the job market.

The focus of the project in the early years was on traditional areas such as home economics, housekeeping and childcare. However, as of 1994, the content of the courses changed and became more tailored to match existing labour market priorities, with the introduction of new subjects related to the medical sector.

Job opportunities for migrant women appear to be better in the medical field. Firstly, there is an increased demand for migrant workers in this sector because an increasing number of migrants want to or must remain in Germany after retirement. Caregivers are needed for the elderly who really understand the particular situation of this specific group. Secondly, these are useful skills which the women will be able to take with them and use if some day they decide to return to their country of origin.

Refugee women often suffer from the consequences of their flight from their home countries. They come to Germany under different circumstances from those experienced by other migrant women. Some women did not leave their homes willingly and have little desire to be in Germany. They must find

their way around in an environment into which they have been thrust. Furthermore, some women have experienced war, torture and/or family violence, and thus require psychological help. Existing services such as the "Zentrum für Folteropfer" (Centre for Torture Victims) cannot cope.

Women learn about the course through word of mouth or from leaflets distributed in key places as well as from former participants. The staffing situation and limited finances makes it difficult to conduct a wide-ranging advertising campaign.

## Barriers Identified

**Domestic violence:** Women's right of residence is generally connected to their husbands' legal status. If a woman leaves her husband, she runs the risk of losing her right of residence.

**Accommodation in refugee homes:** This is highly problematic with too many people in too small a space, with shared bathrooms and cooking facilities.

**Lack of access to the labour market:** Refugee women face many obstacles finding jobs due to their backgrounds and uncertain situation plus a lack of recognised qualifications.

**Consequences of torture:** As some of the women have either witnessed or have themselves been subjected to torture, they require specialist intervention which is not always available due to lack of resources.

## Actions Undertaken

The project offers a ten-month course of 30 hours per week for about 20 women with a basic knowledge of German. Women apply for the course with only a brief CV, participation is free of charge, and childcare is provided during classes.

The training course uses group instruction methods and face-to-face work, role-playing, theatre, etc. The teachers have developed the curriculum themselves. As the course is directed at women of different origins and different levels of education, the content is tailored to meet specific needs.

**Legal aid:** A lawyer is available two hours a week. She answers legal questions in connection with the course, helps women with housing problems and any questions related to residence status.



**The overall course content includes the following:**

- Finding and renovating an apartment, dealing with accommodation contracts, housing benefit, using the telephone, first aid, how to deal with social welfare agencies, etc.
- German language, always in connection with practical topics.
- Recent German history, (a visit to the Sachsenhausen concentration camp is included to show the trainees that repressive regimes can be changed).
- Exploration games to help the women become more familiar with the city. The emphasis is on coping and finding one's way around. For example, how to use the library, etc.
- Getting to know one's body through massage and sport; learning to listen to one's body and develop a positive attitude towards it.
- 50% of the programme includes theoretical knowledge on anatomy, covering practical tasks such as urine testing and enhanced by "fun" activities such as building a model of the vagina. The course is rounded off by a group visit to the Berlin Feminist Health Centre.
- Job search training, including how to write a CV, interview skills etc.
- Typing, word processing and office communications.

All of these courses cover aspects of child-rearing, promotion of confidence when dealing with administration, information on residence status and coping with everyday life.

**Practical training (three weeks):** At the end of the course, each woman is placed in a hospital, laboratory, pharmacy or in an office in Berlin. The social worker looks for placements which match up with participants' interests. The experience is generally very good, with 80% of those companies offering placements reacting positively. Subsequently, the participants often have an opportunity to extend their placement or undergo training in the company.

A meeting between interested firms and the participants is held before the placement begins in order to discuss the expectations of both parties.

## Resources

The project has 5 paid workers. These include: two teachers; one full-time social worker; one paid childcare worker; one legal advisor and one cleaner, paid on an hourly basis. The teachers are all German women, the others are Kurdish women.

The project gets 55% of its funding from the "Senat für Arbeit und Frauen" (the "Senate for Employment and Women" of the Berlin state) and 45% from the European Commission's NOW programme (New Opportunities for Women) with salaries paid at German "BAT" IVb or Vc level. Financing from the Commission currently ensures the continuation of the project, however, in the future, the project will be effected by cuts in public spending. The project generally suffers from a shortage of funding, especially for buying the necessary course material.

An annual report, complete with statistics, is prepared for the donors.

## Impact

This project provides a comprehensive range of services to asylum-seeking and refugee women and takes account of the harrowing experiences of women before they arrive in Germany.

The project's membership of various networks related to migrant women and vocational training imbues its work with a dynamic approach, which in turn provides for a more finely tuned service delivery. For example, the project is a member of a network which lobbies for migrant women's projects, works to promote qualifications for migrant women and for the elimination of the obstacles which bar the way to training courses and the job market. The network also gives advice on finding sponsorship.

The project also attempts to empower women by promoting an active understanding of the way in which structures work in German society. It is also working with others on the production of a handbook for migrant women entitled: "Where do I find what?"

## Comments

Given the current lack of support and sympathy for refugees and asylum-seekers from the general public and political decision-makers, it was seen as important to lend visibility to a project working with this group in order to highlight the difficulties which they encounter on a daily basis.

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# Komitee Zelfstandig Verblijfsrecht Migranten- vrouwen

*(Committee for an Independent Right to Residence for Migrant Women)*

## Summary

*The focus of this Committee's work is on migrant women with a dependent legal status who are victims of domestic violence; women in this situation who wish to leave their abusive husbands within a three year period after marriage, risk losing their residence permit. A woman can also lose her residence rights if her husband dies within this period. The situation of such women is further worsened by the fact that they may have no recourse to welfare benefits, which may then affect their application for shelter in women's refuges.*

*The Committee's short-term objective is to influence Dutch immigration policy so that women who are victims of domestic violence may be granted their own residence status. In the long term, the Committee would like to see the abolition of the dependent residence status and see women granted an unqualified right to stay.*

## Innovative Elements

- creating partnerships of migrant and refugee women's organisations to define problems and solutions
- making visible the impact of a dependent legal status in cases of domestic violence
- carrying out successful lobbying to change Dutch immigration policy on legal status and domestic violence
- highlighting the discrepancy between policies on the emancipation of women in general and the situation of migrant women

## Background

The Committee was established in 1987 to look at the issue of dependent residence status, by Turkish and Arab women's organisations and more recently, groups working with refugees and in women's refuges have also joined the campaign. The Committee's work began with the setting up of a working group that was charged to examine this issue further, with a view to preparing texts to lobby politicians and civil servants. Campaigning activities began in 1996 and ended in April 1998.

Dutch immigration rules state that spouses must be in a marriage for three years, one of which should be as a legal resident in the Netherlands, before a marriage can be terminated. The Committee argues that this places women at a particular disadvantage and puts men in a position of power "which can be abused at will".

The Committee has condemned the double standards of Dutch policies on the emancipation of women and on migrant women which, on the one hand, promote "autonomy, personal development, integration and social participation", but on the other hand, leave migrant women in a situation of legal dependency, and vulnerable to violence.

The strategy of the Committee has been successful in changing the policy of the government on domestic violence and legal status. Since December 1997, migrant women wishing to leave a violent marriage can appeal against expulsion on humanitarian grounds. Violence is now mentioned explicitly as a factor that should be taken into account in the appeal for continued residence.

The Committee works in partnership with migrant and refugee women's organisations; in fact this partnership was created for the ex-

press purpose of campaigning for an independent legal status. Partners included the following:

- Moroccan Women's Association
- Association of Women from Turkey
- Bayanihan, organisation of Filipina women
- Platform of Refugee Women's Organisations
- Migrant Information Centre in Amsterdam
- ZAMI, the centre for black and migrant women

The Committee also works with various women's refuges; the Institute for Women and the Law; the Society Against Trafficking in Women; the Legal Clinic of the University of Amsterdam and the Amsterdam Bureau for Emancipation.

## Barriers Identified

### **The lack of independent legal status:**

The Committee argues that the lack of an independent legal status for migrant women places them at a triple disadvantage as women, as migrants and as workers.

As in other Member States, the immigration policy of the Dutch government, is based on the stereotypical assumption that migrant women are not autonomous individuals, but rather, are "appendages" of their husbands and fathers and thus, their own legal identity is not considered to be a priority. Such policies also assume that migrant women have no economic contribution to make to the host society, although poverty often drives such women into the informal economy where their contribution is then both hidden and incalculable.

## Actions Undertaken

**Lobbying activities:** The Committee has prepared texts to argue its case to politicians and civil servants. It also met with key politicians from all the big political parties to present its case.

**Providing information on the impact of legal status and violence:** The Committee has documented the impact of legal status on migrant women.

**Raising awareness:** The Committee made presentations to raise awareness on the problem of violence and legal status among people working with migrant women, for example, workers in women's refuges, lawyers, etc.

## Resources

The total budget for the working group was 1.100 Dutch Guilders and it estimates that over a year, its members will have completed 960 hours of unpaid and voluntary work. The Committee employs one person to co-ordinate all its work.

## Impact

The working group has evaluated its own work in an "Information and Discussion" seminar held in 1998, to which, policy makers and non-governmental organisations were also invited. The seminar also focused on how to "change the mentalities" of policy makers with regard to migrant women.

Although the group is very pleased with the outcome of its campaign, it is cautious about the consequences attached to the fact that it is the combination of criteria which determines continuing right to residence. Domestic violence is thus only one factor, with others including children (who is the primary carer), length of residence in the Netherlands, the level of integration into Dutch society, and the situation of single women in country of origin. Even though the campaign is now officially over, the Committee will continue to monitor the application of the new rules in partnership with the Institute for Women and the Law.

By making visible the problem of legal status and domestic violence, the campaign "triggered" discussions on this issue. In particular, the campaign highlighted the fact that the policy of the government on migrant women was untenable with its position on violence against women in general; the policy of the government was forcing migrant women to stay in a violent situation.

The Committee has also carried out work to raise awareness on the outcome of its campaign among those dealing with migrant women and domestic violence, so that they are better informed as to how they can best help women.

## Comments

The Committee's success in getting recognition of domestic violence as a factor to be taken into account in immigration policy on legal status, represents a very important victory for this group. Only one other Member State, Austria, has made such a concession: in the UK, the government is also considering similar changes, but proposals have not yet been finalised.

The granting of an independent legal status remains a priority for all the Member States of the European Union (the period before a woman is granted legal status can vary between one to four years, depending on the immigration rules of individual countries). Currently, there are no figures on how many women in the European Union are affected by a dependent legal status and domestic violence. There is an urgent need to make this issue visible at the political level, and when collecting statistics on violence against women.

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# “Profijt van Diversiteit”

*(Profiting from Diversity)*

## Summary

*The Emancipatiebureau has implemented a project to promote black and migrant women into decision-making positions on the boards of public services in the Netherlands. The project provides empowerment training to women, to ensure their effective participation in decision-making positions.*

*In conjunction with this training, the Emancipatiebureau also raises awareness among public services on the need to “profit from the diversity” of a multicultural society.*

## Innovative Elements

- providing training for black and migrant women to access decision-making positions in the public services
- organising training for black and migrant women by black and migrant women
- equipping women with political skills
- raising awareness, and lobbying public service bodies on the needs of a multicultural society

## Background

This project falls under one of the objectives of the Emancipatiebureau, which is to increase the participation of women in society; it is based in the city of Amsterdam, where almost 50% of the population is of black and migrant origin. In the Netherlands, public service bodies are directed by foundations, which have appointed boards to oversee service-delivery, as well as the implementation of policies and programmes. Only 1% of black and migrant people (of which half are women) are represented on the boards of foundations that run health, education, housing and other public services. Each foundation has an average of five to seven members: in the city of Amsterdam alone, there are between 13.000 to 14.000 foundations.

These foundations recruit board members through their own networks and “word-of-mouth” recommendations, these networks usually being white and male. The foundations set their own criteria for membership of the boards, which means that the “pool of recruitment” is limited to their own networks.

The lack of representation of black and migrant people on such boards implies that their needs are not being taken into account in both the drawing up and implementation of policies, which affect them, such as the allocation of resources.

The objectives of this ongoing project are to ensure that public services meet the needs of all consumers, and to promote black and migrant women in to key positions in the “multiculturalisation process of the city of Amsterdam”.

Research was carried out in 1995, before the project was implemented, to identify gaps and priorities in this area; this research focused on the obstacles to the participation of black and migrant women in foundations. The conclusions of the research were then used in the development of the empowerment-training course.

## Barriers Identified

**Lack of visibility:** Black and migrant women tend to be invisible in mainstream society, both in terms of their representation and recognition of their concerns. Therefore, making visible black and migrant women in decision-making positions in the public services represents a real priority, as such bodies have a direct impact on the everyday lives of women in areas as crucial as health, housing and education.

Black and migrant women are also invisible in statistics, they do not appear in the collection of statistics on “women” or in “migrants”.

**Appropriateness of public services:** Black and migrant people’s access to public services is often hampered by two factors: the racism of people delivering public services and the inappropriateness of public services in meeting their specific needs.

## Actions Undertaken

The training course started in 1998 and is aimed at black and migrant women living in Amsterdam, who are recruited via the migrant media; women’s organisations; via former participants and from the Emancipatiebureau’s own networks. Some of the women are already on boards of foundations or were previously involved.

The number of applicants for the training course always exceeds the number of places (20-25). The course takes place over seven Saturdays and the Emancipatiebureau’s aim is to organise two courses per year.

The training consists of the following:

- personal empowerment
- confidence building, women are encouraged to learn skills from each other
- how to be effective in putting across your point of view
- sharing experiences on how to combat racist and sexist obstacles encountered
- political negotiation skills
- communication and presentation skills
- conflict resolution in the work place and in everyday life
- how to deal with “tokenism”
- management skills

Discussions on the following are equally important: the process needed to change from a predominantly white to a multicultural representation in foundations and organisations;

how individuals can bring about change and how this can be linked to the common interest.

The objective of these discussions is to impress upon the individual “how their contribution can make a difference”. A discussion on the dangers of “tokenism” is also included: black and migrant women want to be invited to join boards because of their skills, not because of their origin.

The course also includes a discussion on the diversity of black and migrant communities, to increase understanding among participants about different cultural backgrounds and experiences. The objective of this particular input is to emphasise that black and migrant women can learn from each other’s experiences.

The training courses use only black and migrant women as trainers, who can also act as role models for the course participants. After completion of the course, some of the trainees are offered placements by foundations, whilst others who have gained more confidence thanks to the course, then put themselves forward for membership.

All trainees receive a diploma after completion of the course, usually presented to them by local government officials. The project considered this to be an important element for giving value to the training undertaken and making visible the objectives of the training course.

A party is organised at the end of each course, to which members of foundations are also invited: in this way, they can be lobbied and see the results of the training for themselves.

The trainees carry out an official evaluation, which also includes a discussion on the type of follow-up required.

### **Resources**

The local government funds the training courses, to the sum of 20,000 Guilders per course, but funding has to be secured separately for each cycle of training. There are two women who co-ordinate the course and five to six black and migrant women trainers. Some unpaid work is also carried out.

### **Impact**

This project makes visible the need for representation of all consumers on the boards of public services, particularly black and migrant women. Since the obstacles to such representation are structural in nature, the strategy of this project includes both long-term and short-term objectives. In the long term, the aim is to challenge and change the practices of public services that exclude black and migrant people. In the short term, this project’s objective is to train black and migrant women to take up, and participate effectively, in decision-making positions.

Lobbying of foundations constitutes an important element of this project. Meetings are organised to present the results of the training course to persuade foundations to increase their “pool of recruitment” by profiting from diversity. The project also aims to show how the participation of women can make a difference to the work of foundations. For example, in housing, women place more emphasis on a safe environment, play areas for children, etc.

Moreover, the training given is useful beyond the boardroom and serves to empower women in everyday life. One former trainee said, “I was sleeping, now the world is open to me”.

The Emancipatiebureau is currently considering setting up a network for former trainees so that they can continue to learn from each other; act as role models to new trainees; sharpen up old skills, identify new areas of support needed, exchange information, including on upcoming vacancies, etc.

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# Stichting Tegen Vrouwenhandel

**(Foundation Against Trafficking in Women)**

## Summary

*The Stichting Tegen Vrouwenhandel's (STV) primary objective is to provide a range of support services to women who are victims of trafficking. This support includes the provision of medical care, legal aid, access to social services and safe shelter.*

## Innovative Elements

- providing a range of support services to victims of trafficking
- providing training for the police to raise awareness about the impact of trafficking on victims
- lobbying and networking at the European and international levels on trafficking

## Background

Although the STV was officially established in 1987, it had already been working on the trafficking of women, on a voluntary basis, for some years. This work led naturally to lobbying activities on this issue with the result that, with the support of the Dutch government, the STV was established to provide support for victims of trafficking.

Most of the women who come to the STV are referred to it by the police. Women are granted temporary residence permits which allow them to stay for three months. The time scale was set in recognition of the fact that "women who have fallen victim to traffic and possibly also to acts of sexual violence, are only able to express themselves about these experiences after a longer period of time". The law stipulates that women must be offered legal aid, medical services and help from social services during this period.

The introduction of the B17 procedure, outlined in the ministerial circular concerning aliens, and part of the government's policy to combat trafficking in women, made it possible for victims to press charges against their exploiters. This legislation allows three months during which victims can consider pressing charges. If they decide not to, then they must leave the country.

If charges are however pressed and if prosecution is successful and the woman decides that she wants to stay in the Netherlands, then she has to apply for a permanent residence permit, which is very difficult to obtain. Although most of the women are happy to return to their countries of origin, some are afraid to go back because they fear reprisals. Some women also fear returning home because they suffer from feelings of shame about their experiences, even though they are the victims. They feel that they have brought shame upon their families and do not want to talk about their experiences even if this would help other women from falling into the same trap.

Apart from the work with victims of trafficking, the STV has also taken up a position on decriminalising prostitution. Its position is that prostitution is a job; most women who work as prostitutes do so because of their economic situation and the need to support their families. The STV argues that prostitutes fulfil a "social function in society" and therefore, should be protected from exploitation and the dangers of unregulated prostitution.

The STV believes that it is a woman's right to choose to work as a prostitute and that most women in the Netherlands who work as prostitutes have chosen to do so, but that this tends to be overlooked because people only focus on forced prostitution, i.e. trafficking. The STV's position does not influence its work with trafficked women, because these women have not chosen to work as prostitutes.

The STV has developed links with similar organisations at the European and international level to build up a perspective on the nature of trafficking and prostitution and to share expertise. It is a member of the Global Alliance Against Trafficking in Women, based in Thailand, and the European NGO Network on Trafficking in Women, established in April 1997. The STV has also dealt with cases of abuse of women domestic workers, but this is not a central part of its work.

## Barriers Identified

**Poverty in countries of origin:** The women who end up as victims of trafficking do so because they are lured to the West by the possibility of earning sufficient money to support their children and families back home. In some cases, the women are lone parents with no one else to turn to for help. Once they have left their countries of origin, their passports are usually confiscated; they are in debt to the traffickers, who demand the payment of the cost of their travel; and are generally intimidated with threats of, and actual, violence.

### **Actions Undertaken**

The STV 's activities include the following:

**Providing support services for victims of trafficking:** Helping women regain control of their lives is a central element in the work of the STV. Women are encouraged to make their own decisions, with the help and support of staff.

The STV also helps women who wish to make claims for damages to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Fund.

The STV has published information leaflets about its services in Dutch, English, Spanish, Russian, Hungarian and Thai.

**Training of the police:** The STV organises training for the police on the nature of trafficking and its impact on victims. It also gives information on the application of the B17 procedure, with which the police are not always familiar.

Such training also helps to develop a good working relationship with the police, something which is essential to help victims, and especially for the dissemination of information on its services.

### **Resources**

The funding for the STV comes from the Ministry of Health and Welfare. The STV has also received a subsidy from the La Strada programme to work in Eastern and Central Europe.

### **Impact**

The support given by the STV is crucial for the psychological rehabilitation of women. However, some women face new problems when they return to their countries of origin. They are said to be "destroyed" by the lack of support and the lack of opportunities to talk about their experiences.

Lack of resources means that the STV is not able to carry out any effective preventative work in the countries of origin, although it has developed contacts with organisations working on trafficking. An exception to this is found in the preventative work being conducted in Eastern and Central Europe, which has been made possible through funding from the La Strada programme for these countries (under the European Commission's Phare and Tacis programmes).

The main obstacles that the STV faces in its work are: the lack of financial resources; the attitude of the police to victims of trafficking; and the application of immigration laws, which mean that many women are deported, without ever coming to the attention of the STV.

### **Comments**

Internally, within the STV itself, the visibility of migrant women has been an issue, since only one of the four workers was of ethnic minority origin. The STV has addressed this issue, and that of racism in general, through team-building sessions and there are now two migrant women workers, one of whom is the director.

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# TIYE

## International

### Summary

TIYE is an umbrella organisation with 25 members comprising national organisations of black, migrant and refugee women. One of its members is a network for black and migrant women with an academic education with which TIYE provides training for young, well-qualified women who find themselves confronted with racist and sexist barriers in either higher education or in accessing the labour market.

### Innovative Elements

- confronting barriers to the labour market for young, qualified black and migrant women
- promoting economic independence
- challenging stereotypes about capabilities and skills
- using both black and migrant women and white women to give training courses
- promoting the mentoring of younger women

### Background

TIYE was officially established in 1994 in Utrecht as a non-profit making, umbrella organisation for black, migrant and refugee women living in the Netherlands. TIYE takes its name from a black Nubian queen of Egypt (the mother of Tutankhamen) who exerted political influence and considered herself to be the equal of the king.

TIYE has a small office in Utrecht, but most of the work is conducted from the homes of the people involved. At the time of the interview, they had no resources to employ a worker.

Traditionally, language barriers tend to be the main focus of actions undertaken to facilitate access to the labour market for black and migrant women. TIYE believes that this focus tends to overlook the significant number of women who are well-qualified, but have problems accessing employment because of racist and sexist barriers.

TIYE decided to implement training for young women, as a result of its experiences working at grassroots level, which indicated that there was an unfulfilled need out there. Younger women often sought advice and help informally, from older, more experienced black and migrant women.

Some of the older women in TIYE had already played a mentoring role for younger women facing problems, either at work or in higher education; problems that they did not have the experience to deal with. For example: some young black and migrant people in higher education came across invisible barriers in exams because of their "foreign origin", even if they had been born and brought up in the Netherlands. There seems to be questions about their capabilities because they are "allochtoon" (outsiders).

One such young woman who did not pass a test, for which she had studied well, came informally, to ask a member of TIYE for help. She was advised to go back to her teacher and ask for his help to try to understand the mistakes she had made. Going over the whole test again with her teacher, the student found she had increased her points from 5 out of 10 to 8 out of 10.

### Barriers Identified

**Stereotyping:** TIYE states that part of the power of stereotypes is that they "problematise people" so that if you do not succeed then it is your own fault. The stereotypes that young women are confronted with include: low level of skills; lack of command of the Dutch language and no ability. TIYE recently counselled a young black woman (with a Dutch name) who became quite de-motivated after failing to get a job despite numerous interviews, her interviewers were invariably white men. She even sought counselling and was told that she was imagining things.

Another impact of stereotyping is that Dutch people do not see any difference between black and migrant people but rather, think of them all as the same. TIYE stated that "this is the first barrier: to be seen as the same as everybody else". Young black and migrant children brought up in the Netherlands do not see themselves as different but rather, as part of mainstream society. It is a shock for some of them to discover that they do not have equality in the labour market. For example, a young woman brought up in Holland, working as a personnel manager, was told by her white employer: "you don't speak Dutch very well" and advised to follow classes. The young woman was upset by this statement and informally contacted a member of TIYE for advice. TIYE advised this young woman to go back to her employer and inform her that if she wanted her employer's Dutch to improve, then she, the employer, would have to pay for language courses at university level. But her employer backed down, because the young woman already had a degree from a Dutch university and could not be sent to study at a lower level.

**Chinese women:** TIYE has noted that Chinese women tend to be particularly isolated and lack knowledge about how to access services and how society functions. It is often assumed that Chinese women have support networks based around the family, but this is not borne out in reality. Chinese women



tend to be invisible because they often carry out unpaid work in family businesses.

TIYE is making special efforts to recruit Chinese women to their training courses. Up until now, they have not been present in training courses to access the labour market.

### **Actions undertaken**

TIYE started training courses for young women one and a half years ago in Utrecht. TIYE tries to run courses annually but the frequency of the courses depends on the resources that it manages to raise. 25 young women attended the first training course that was organised.

Since the beginning, TIYE has applied a policy of using both women and men from the black and migrant and white communities as trainers. This policy is based on attempting to find the best trainers in the relevant fields and an acknowledgement that we can all learn from each other.

TIYE calls this “managing diversity”, that is, benefiting from taking the positives from all communities; black and migrant people learn from the skills and knowledge of white trainers, who in turn, learn about the way in which racism impacts on black and migrant people. Helen Felter for TIYE said: “White women who come to train sometimes face challenges from the trainees, but this is of mutual benefit”.

The trainees with whom TIYE works are recruited from databases and from universities. The length of the training courses varies, either lasting for one day or carried out over a period of three months. The following topics are covered:

- discussion on the position of young black and migrant women in Dutch society
- discussion on personal identity
- presentation skills
- interview skills
- how to start your own business
- how to deal with crisis situations

This last point was added because, in TIYE’s experience, many young people only seek help when they have reached crisis point.

### **Resources**

1997: 18.000 ECUS

These sums have been secured from the following sources: DG V of the European Commission, under the European Year Against Racism, and the Alliance of Women. In 1998, due to the freezing of the budget lines their application was not processed.

TIYE works only with unpaid professionals, but they very much underlined the fact that they do not class themselves as volunteers. They felt that the word “volunteer” has too many negative connotations about non-professionalism and that they have too much experience to be classed as volunteers.

For the future, they hope to secure funding to employ two full-time workers.

### **Impact**

This organisation is a good example of how a need identified at the grassroots level, can be transformed into concrete action. TIYE has “professionalised” its collective experiences of combating racism and is now passing on this knowledge to the younger generation.

The mentoring role played by TIYE members is a very important one and needs to be encouraged across the Member States. Mentoring could provide invaluable support for younger women facing racism and sexism, by providing them with positive strategies and moral support to challenge barriers.

In making visible barriers faced by Chinese women, TIYE is showing its solidarity and support for the most marginalised groups in society.

TIYE acknowledges that accessing the labour market also poses a problem for young black and migrant men and would like to develop services for this group in the future.

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# Asociación Secretariado General Gitano

*(General Secretariat  
of Gypsy Associations)*

## Summary

*The Association has implemented programmes for the "promotion and support of gypsy women" to improve their quality of life and aims to empower them by increasing their self-respect and self-confidence. The work carried out fully respects the culture and values of the gypsy community.*

## Innovative Elements

- work with women on confidence-building, through gypsy mediators
- providing space to discuss issues of violence and health
- providing language courses to access vocational training
- giving advice on accessing social services
- community-based work with respect to gypsy culture and traditions

## Background

The Catholic Church created the "Asociación Secretariado General Gitano" in the 1970s. In 1978, it became an independent association breaking its links with the Church. The central office which co-ordinates the national programmes (in 10 cities) is based in Madrid.

The gypsy population has existed in Spain since the 15th century and constitutes the biggest ethnic minority group, with a population of about 800,000. The family represents the central structure in gypsy communities, older people are highly respected and act as judges in community conflicts. Solidarity is an important part of their society. For example, a new wave of very poor Romanian gypsies have made their home in the "Panbendito" neighbourhood, and on several occasions, the established gypsy community has raised money for them.

Even though gypsies represent the biggest ethnic minority group in Spain, they do not receive much attention or help. Although Spanish society considers itself to be anti-racist, this does not include gypsies, who as a result, remain socially excluded. For this reason, the Association believes that long term improvements to the situation of gypsies can only be brought about by fostering mutual respect between gypsies and Spanish society, in order to increase understanding and break down stereotypes.

The Association is trying to overcome some of the barriers faced by gypsies by carrying out community-based work, not only with women, but also with young people, to help them deal with the problems of drug abuse and unemployment.

The project visited is based in the "Panbendito" neighbourhood in south Madrid, which has a large community of gypsies. The Association is very popular in this neighbourhood and is considered as part of the community.

## Barriers Identified

**Multiple responsibilities:** The gypsy woman has the main burden of responsibility for the household, childcare, and is often the main breadwinner of the family. She is also responsible for transmitting the gypsy culture and traditions to her children. The honour and respect of the family also rests on the shoulder of the woman: "she must never make mistakes and must at all times be perfect"; the married gypsy woman has ultimate respect in gypsy society because she has fulfilled the social role assigned to her.

**Domestic violence:** This problem exists in the gypsy community and the Association uses the positives in gypsy family culture to address this issue. In the past, women accepted the violence and suffered in silence, but now women are encouraged to appeal to their parents-in-law for help. If the violence continues, the woman can go to her parents for a while to punish her husband, but she cannot take the children with her because they belong to the man.

**Stereotyping:** The Association tries to challenge the stereotypes of gypsies in Spanish society through their work, for example, challenging the assumption that gypsies do not want to work or that they steal and lie.

**Religious practices:** In the last 20 years, the Evangelical Church has replaced the Catholic religion in the gypsy community. The church is highly influential and takes a very conservative position on the role of women, purporting, for example, the view that: "you may lose your virginity if you wear trousers".

## Actions undertaken

**Services provided include the following:** training courses; mediation work between Spanish society and the gypsy community; liaison with schools, social services and the Evangelical Church. The number of women attending courses comes to around 20 to 30 per year.

**Literacy courses:** Financed by the National Women's Institute, the aim of these courses is to teach the gypsy women Spanish, thereby increasing their self-confidence and self-worth. For example, the teacher attempts to point out the many responsibilities incumbent upon gypsy women on a daily basis. The women are asked to draw the face of a clock and then fill in the various tasks that they carry out on an hourly basis.

There is also room for spontaneity and women may raise subjects that they want to know more about, for example, a woman doctor was invited to give a class about the female body.

**Accessing services:** Women are taught skills such as phoning for a doctor's appointment, filling out forms for schools, etc.

**Sewing Courses:** Free material is given to the women to make up into clothes which they can keep afterwards. Such practical outcomes are useful, as some of the women have to justify their attendance of courses to their husbands.

In the above three courses, women can come along with their children as volunteers provide childcare.

**Skills to access the labour market:**

Courses to learn a profession (hairdressing, beautician, etc) are carried out with funding from the European Commission's INTEGRA programme. Such courses are vital for the gypsy women to acquire skills to access better jobs since many of them work as street vendors or in other low-skilled areas.

**Family Planning:** This session only focuses on married women because unmarried women are not seen as needing such advice; virginity before marriage is very important in gypsy culture and is seen as a sign of respect for the husband and the community.

Traditionally, having lots of children gave women a higher social status. However, smaller families have now become more desirable and hence, there is a demand for information on birth control. This is vital, given that many women do not visit doctors during pregnancy and childbirth, mainly because they either do not know of such services, or do not know how to access them.

**Education of gypsy children:** Traditionally, gypsies have not taken advantage of the educational system because they tend to see schools as a place where their traditions and values are undermined. This Association, using mediators, aims to work with gypsy women on the positive aspects of education and act as a link between the family and the school to increase mutual understanding.

For gypsy girls, education is a low priority; they are considered to be young women at

the age of 12 and their main aim is to get married by the age of 15. In order to motivate girls to continue with their education, the Association offers prizes such as places for a dance workshop.

**Resources**

The Association is financed through the Ministry of Social Affairs, via a 0.5% percentage set-aside, drawn from the national tax on individual income (IRPF).

The total budget for the 10 cities amounts to 23 millions of pesetas, with Panbendito receiving 1,500,000 pesetas. The Association has 16 paid workers and 9 volunteers, whose contribution is vital to the running of the projects.

The Association has also benefited from funding from the European Commission's INTEGRA programme for various projects.

**Impact**

Many gypsy women started attending the courses because attendance is one of the conditions to qualify for the minimum income from the Ministry of Social Affairs, although the Association does not monitor their attendance. At first, gypsy women only came because they were obliged to do so, but now they come because they really enjoy the courses.

The Association notes that as a result of this gradual change in gypsy women, the rest of the family, including children and husbands, is also undergoing positive changes.

The two gypsy mediators working in the Association are former students and play a key role in the projects with gypsy women. The mediators emphasised the efforts which a gypsy woman has to make to get out of the house to attend the courses. The mediators job is to prepare the ground by visiting and talking with families in their own homes and in the community.

For this reason, the mediators stressed the importance of locating the project in the neighbourhood. Now the Association is facing a financial crisis and may need to move, which means that they risk losing this direct contact with the community, which gives legitimacy to their work.

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# Centre d'Informació per Treballadores Estrangeres (CITE)

*(Information Centre  
for Foreign Workers)*

## Summary

*The activities of CITE focus on providing legal advice to migrant people and undocumented workers. CITE also helps migrant women to access jobs with better working conditions, by providing specially designed training courses.*

## Innovative Elements

- making visible the role of a trade union in the fight against racial discrimination
- providing training to migrant workers to access the labour market
- providing advice on legal status problems
- promoting solidarity between indigenous and migrant workers
- providing skills for migrant women in domestic work to access better jobs

## Background

CITE was created in 1986, at the initiative of the major trade union in Spain, the Comisiones Obreras, and is registered as a non-profit making organisation. Barcelona, where CITE was created, is a wealthy, industrialised region and has attracted many migrants; 1.5% of the population of Catalonia is of non-European Union origin. Historically, this region is also known for its well-established and powerful trade union movement.

The migrant phenomenon is a fairly recent one in Spain and initially, the actions undertaken by CITE aimed to meet the most urgent needs of this population group. This strategy has now evolved to take into consideration a longer-term perspective on the integration of migrant people into Spanish society. The Comisiones Obreras aims to mainstream the fight against discrimination of migrant workers in all its activities, and to influence policy-making in the field of migration at the national and European levels.

CITE now has a network of over 100 offices throughout Spain and these offices are usually located on the premises of the union. 24 of these offices are in Catalonia alone. Initially, CITE was set up as a national network of legal advice centres but now, it also provides training courses targeted at specific migrant groups.

## Barriers Identified

**Resources for training courses:** The main difficulty lies in identifying funding for the training courses because there is no recognition of the special needs of migrant people due to their legal status. In general, the funding institutions provide occupational training aimed at the unemployed designed to help them access the labour market. However, these courses are restricted to people registered as unemployed which rules out migrant women in domestic work. Ongoing training is also provided for company workers to im-

prove their qualifications and help them progress in their careers and here, once again, very few migrant women would be eligible.

Thus, there is a need for structural changes to be made to the funding framework in order to better cater for the needs of the migrant population.

**Lack of self-confidence:** Migrant women often lack confidence in their own abilities and do not believe that they are capable of undergoing training to access better jobs.

**Domestic work and the informal economy:** Spain has women migrant workers from many different countries, in particular, Latin America, the Philippines and North Africa. Many of these workers are undocumented and tend to work as domestic helps and face exploitative working conditions, abuse and the withholding of wages and legal papers. The situation of legal domestic workers is not much better- they too face similar problems. This is because, despite the fact that domestic work is recognised in Spain, women do not have the same rights as other workers. For example, legislation exists on working hours and minimum wages but this is very difficult to enforce in this particular area .

## Actions Undertaken

The work of CITE on migrant women focuses on increasing their qualifications in order to improve their living and working conditions. Although these new job opportunities tend to focus on traditional areas, it is only within these sectors that migrant women can most easily escape from the exploitation of domestic work and the informal economy.

**Legal advice:** Migrant people are given help with a variety of legal issues such as, work and residence permits, visa applications, family reunification, etc.

**Training courses:** Some of the training courses are aimed at migrant women, where domestic workers are heavily represented, with the aim of increasing their qualifications to access better jobs. The courses available to women include:

- job search skills, designed to help Filipina women, covering subjects such as where to look for a job, C.V. writing, telephone and interview skills

- courses in cooking, focusing on Dominican women, to allow them to qualify for jobs in the hotel and catering industries
- courses on geriatric care
- language courses in Catalan and Spanish.

The services are advertised by word-of-mouth amongst the migrant population, but social services and other trade unions also make referrals.

### Resources

Besides the support provided by the Comisiones Obreras (premises, access to equipment, etc.), the network of offices has a total budget of 50 million pesetas per annum. The following bodies also provide resources to CITE:

- local authorities in each town
- Ministry of Employment
- European Commission's INTEGRA programme
- regional authorities such as the Generalitat de Catalunya.

The staff in the Catalan office is composed of 15 advisors, 5 of whom are of migrant origin. 10 volunteers provide extra support.

### Impact

There are other organisations in Spain providing legal advice and training courses for migrant people, but CITE is the only trade union-linked organisation that has included the social and economic integration of the migrant population into its overall objectives.

The Comisiones Obreras also works on raising awareness within its own structure on issues affecting migrant workers. One person is designated as responsible for all matters concerning migrants in each trade union branch in each sector where migrants are working. Issues identified are then integrated into the work of the trade union, including in collective bargaining agreements.

CITE is also a member of the National Forum for the Social Integration of Migrant People, a platform of organisations working on migrant issues that functions as a lobby and a consultation body for the Spanish government. This allows CITE to influence policy-making at the national and European levels, and voice its concerns on the consequences of the Schengen Agreement and the future impact of the Amsterdam Treaty on the rights of migrant people.

### Comments

The fact that the legal advice work of CITE continues to take precedence over its other activities through sheer demand is an indication of the precarious nature of the legal status of the migrant community in Spain, and also reflects the fact that migration is a relatively new phenomenon in Spain and that many workers remain undocumented.

In general, trade unions have a low profile in taking action to improve the working conditions of migrant women workers, because they tend to be concentrated in atypical work or in the informal economy. For this reason, it is vital to give visibility to a trade union-supported organisation which provides practical support, but also acts as a lobby to raise awareness on the situation of migrant workers, particularly those in domestic work.

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# Federación de Mujeres Progresistas

*(Federation of Progressive Women)*

## Summary

*The Federación de Mujeres Progresistas provides an advisory service on legal problems, as well as vocational training for migrant women living in the major regions of Spain. It is also a lobbying group at the national level, which seeks to raise awareness in collaboration with migrant women's groups, on the racist and sexist barriers which exist in Spanish society.*

## Innovative Elements

- empowering migrant women and their organisations, by promoting networking
- providing training to access the labour market
- making visible violence against migrant women, such as trafficking, domestic violence and female genital mutilation
- bringing a feminist perspective to the analysis of racism

## Background

In 1991, the Federación de Mujeres Progresistas started its work with migrant women living in Madrid, in collaboration with its sister organisation "Mujer y Sociedad" (Women and Society). In 1992, with funding from the Ministry of Social Affairs, it expanded its activities to Catalonia, Galicia and Andalucía.

The development of its programmes on migrant women came about as a response to the emerging needs of the growing number of women recently settled in Spain. The Federation aims to work with migrant women from a feminist perspective, and in close collaboration with migrant women's organisations. One of its objectives is to promote networking between organisations and to give women a voice on migrant issues in Spain. For example, the Federation has carried out workshops on gender issues, domestic violence with the organisation VOMADE, for Dominican women, who represent a well-established community in Spain, and who have developed an organisational structure

The biggest migrant group with whom the Federation works is made up of Latin American women, who work mainly in domestic service. The contact person pointed out that some groups, for example, Argentinean women, are rarely employed in domestic service, despite their Latin American origins, because they are considered by Spanish people to be Europeans.

The Federation also works with women from Eastern and Central Europe but in general, this group has fewer problems with social integration and enjoys more employment opportunities than other migrant women groups.

Traditionally, Spain has been a country of emigration, but recently a significant number of Spanish women have been returning to settle back in Spain. The Federation also has a project which works with such women and provides information on legal problems,

social re-integration, social security matters and health benefits.

Through its membership of the National Forum for the Social Integration of Migrant People, the Federation also lobbies at the political level for migrants' rights.

## Barriers Identified

**Violence against women:** The Federation makes visible different forms of violence against migrant women such as domestic violence, trafficking and female genital mutilation.

**Domestic work and the informal economy:** For many migrant women these two areas are the only options available for work. Many of them lack the necessary skills and language to access better jobs.

## Actions Undertaken

All migrant people, but especially migrant women, are the target group for the courses offered by the Federation. However, each region also adapts its courses to meet the needs of specific migrant communities: in Catalonia there is a large number of Moroccans and Africans; in Andalucía, the migrant community is mostly made up of Moroccans; in Madrid there is a concentration of people from Latin America and Eastern and Central Europe.

With funding from the European Commission's HORIZON programme, the migrant women projects are able to focus on providing training, legal advice and advice on how to access services.

**Advisory work:** The Federation is in charge of the so-called "network points", (24 in total across the country). These "network points" are offices which were created to provide information to migrants, and are staffed by lawyers, administrators and volunteers.

This work provides the first contact with migrant people, who come in seeking advice on schools for their children, accessing social services, etc. However, these offices mainly deal with legal status issues, including the problems of undocumented workers. These offices also provide information about local job opportunities and the skills in demand on the local labour market.

**Training:** The Federation has implemented more than 30 different types of courses including:

- Spanish language aimed at Moroccans
- social skills aimed at Latin American women
- kitchen assistant
- working as self-employed persons, aimed at Polish women
- industrial sewing, in areas where such skills are in demand by the textile industry
- hotel receptionist
- industrial cleaning
- administrative work, especially for Moroccans already settled in Spain
- construction work aimed at male seasonal workers to help them access more secure jobs.

**Childcare services:** This service is funded by the Ministry of Social Affairs and was established to assist women on low incomes (including migrant women), on a temporary basis, while they look for work.

**Programme of self-awareness:** This programme is aimed at Peruvian women and includes the setting up of a childcare network within the group.

**Jobs database:** The Federation contacts potential employers about vacancies which, depending on the area, may be in domestic service in Madrid, or in hotels in the Catalan region.

### Resources

The Federation depends on the Ministry of Social Affairs and European funding to finance its activities. It started out with an initial budget of 2,500.000 pesetas; during the HORIZON phase it received approximately 70,000.000 pesetas; and for 1998, it has 30,000.000 pesetas.

The Federation in Madrid has a staff of 15, plus teachers for each course. In each region, an average of 10 volunteers are involved. From 1995 to 1997, the Federation was able to increase its programmes for migrant women, thanks to funding from the HORIZON II programme.

### Impact

In its work with migrant women, the philosophy of the Federation has been to take a long-term perspective on these women's situation and not just provide emergency aid. It therefore focuses its activities on confidence building; providing legal aid; training to access the labour market, and political lobbying activities to make visible the problems with which migrant people are confronted in Spain.

The fact that the Federation works in different regions in Spain means that it gains a national perspective on the issues affecting migrants, but at the same time, is able to tailor its services to meet the needs of different communities.

The Federation involves migrant people in the evaluation of its work and all course participants are required to fill in a questionnaire. Informal meetings are also organised with migrant people brought together on a country of origin basis for the purpose of discussing the services offered.

The Federation is one of the few organisations that has brought issues such as trafficking in migrant women and female genital mutilation to the attention of the public; issues on which little action has been taken in Spain so far.

In its lobbying activities, the Federation has consistently drawn attention to the impact of legislation on migrant people, for example, by looking at the application of the "Foreigners Law", which allocates a certain number of work permits to undocumented workers, some of which are "sold" to migrants desperate to regularise their situation. More recently, the Federation has voiced its concerns about possible moves to curb and nullify marriages between Spanish citizens and non-European Union citizens, on the assumption that these are all merely marriages of convenience.

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# Fundació Càritas Immigració Girona

*(Gerona Immigration  
Foundation)*

## Summary

*The Càritas Immigració Fundació has the following aims: to help migrants achieve sufficient autonomy to participate in Spanish society and to influence those social and political structures involved in the integration of migrants.*

*Their philosophy is to work from an intercultural perspective, rather than using a multi-cultural approach, which they believe presupposes the automatic assimilation of minority cultures into the host culture.*

## Innovative Elements

- providing access to employment through training
- facilitating access to health services for mother and baby
- liaising between the migrant community and housing authorities and private landlords
- giving advice to migrants with legal problems
- promoting the use of videos to reach migrants who are neither literate in their own language nor in Spanish.

## Background

The Càritas Immigració Fundació based in Gerona was created by the Càritas Diocesana in 1987. Càritas Diocesana began its work with migrants within its existing programmes that were set up to help the most underprivileged sections of society. However, it became aware that there was a need for special services to assist the growing migrant population and thus, a special foundation was set up which works within the framework of Càritas but also has its own legal identity.

Ten years ago, the migrant community was mainly made up of men from sub-Saharan Africa (Senegal and Gambia) and the Maghreb countries, who came to Spain to find work. Over the last two to three years there has been a big increase in the number of migrant women, due to family reunification. Communities from the countries of origin tend to migrate to the same areas: for example, in the town of La Pera, most of the Senegalese people originate from the same town.

In the delivery of its services, the Foundation works closely together with the social services, hospitals, schools and the women's refuge of Girona.

## Barriers Identified

**Domestic violence:** Domestic violence was raised spontaneously by the students themselves during the training courses. The Foundation does not work on this issue, but co-operates with women's refuges.

**Language barrier:** Illiteracy seems to be the main barrier encountered by migrant women since hardly any of them speak Catalan or Spanish when they arrive and in fact, only a minority of them has any formal education at all. Language difficulties mean that women are confined to their own communities and are unable to access health and welfare services.

## Actions Undertaken

The following programmes are exclusively for women.

**Schools for Global Training:** These were set up in 1988 to teach literacy (in Catalan and Spanish) and were initiated by the social services, churches and migrants. There are 89 such schools with a total of 444 students, mainly from Gambia, Morocco and Senegal. Over time, these schools have adapted to meet the changing needs of the migrant population and now also include training in social and cultural issues. There are separate schools for women and men, but mixed schools are beginning to emerge at the request of migrant people.

A special manual has been produced to teach literacy, with the emphasis being placed on oral communication, simple and socially useful vocabulary and visual teaching methods. This manual has been so successful that mainstream education centres have requested copies.

The high level of illiteracy within the migrant community results from the fact that within the countries of origin, language and culture are traditionally, orally transmitted.

**Training for migrant women to access the labour market:** Between 10-15 women complete this training course per year, which has received funding from two Community programmes. With funding from the European Commission's HORIZON programme, training courses were organised with work placements in local businesses such as hotels or laundries, cleaning, cooking, etc.

Funding was obtained from the programme PROCES, to build on the previous project. Here training consists of four courses: basic Catalan language teaching; familiarity with social and cultural issues; labour market orientation and business skills.

During the HORIZON programme, childcare services were provided for the women but during the PROCES programme, this service was no longer offered due to lack of finances, and also because the programme wanted to reflect the conditions with which women are confronted in the "world of work".

**Educational videos on mother and baby:** The idea of producing a video on health issues for mother and baby was suggested by two social workers and a midwife who had



encountered language and cultural difficulties when working with women during the pre- and post-natal period. The first video was produced in 1996 and is entitled: "You and your first child here". The video is mainly aimed at young married women from Senegal and Gambia between 16-25 years old, having their first child in Spain. This video has been distributed among the migrant communities, in hospitals and non-governmental organisations. The video is produced in the following dialects: Mandinga, Fula and Saharule and has been so successful that there are requests to produce it in Arabic and other African languages now.

The Foundation also offers the following services to migrant people:

**Legal advice and a documentation service:**

Two lawyers and law students from the University of Girona help migrants with problems such as the renewal of residence and work permits, criminal court cases, family reunification, threat of expulsion, requests for visas and undocumented workers. The legal service gave advice to over 4,940 migrants in 1996.

They also help migrant people with the "Contingente 1998" procedure established by the Spanish Government to fill jobs not taken up by Spanish people. A maximum of 28,000 work permits was granted this year to foreign workers not legally resident; the number varies from year to year. These permits are geographically assigned in relation to the density of the migrant population. However, in all areas, demand for the permits always exceeds the number of permits available.

**Access to services:** A social worker together with student social workers from the University of Girona, help migrants to access and negotiate with social services. Moreover, sometimes social services also refer women who need help to the Foundation.

The Foundation is also producing a video on the Spanish education system – at the initiative of teachers, students and migrants – this will cover the procedure for admission and explain how schools work.

**Housing problems:** This service was developed to combat the difficulties encountered by migrant people in obtaining housing; the Foundation mediates between landlords and migrants and checks the conditions of contracts, etc.

Projects are evaluated orally by all trainees. The conclusions of these evaluations are always taken into account when planning future courses.

**Resources**

The Foundation is financed by the following: the Social Affairs department of the central government; the "Generalitat de Catalunya"; the autonomous Catalan government; the General Immigration Directorate and EU programmes. It does not have a fixed annual budget. The director of the Foundation is responsible for fundraising, which takes up most of his time.

There are 9-10 staff members, only one of which is a migrant woman. There are 170 volunteers, of which five are from the migrant community.

**Impact**

One of the members of staff at the Foundation is a woman from Gambia who, apart from working on the creation of the educational videos, is also in charge of receiving people. Her presence creates a cultural and linguistic link with clients thereby making the Foundation a familiar and safe place for migrant people.

The co-ordinator of the training project is aware that the jobs targeted require low qualifications and skills and are traditionally done by migrants. However, for many migrant women who have no formal education and are illiterate, these are the only jobs that are available to them, also given the fact that Catalonians are not interested in applying for such jobs.

The Foundation has proved flexible in its work and ready to adapt to the changing demands and needs of the migrant community. For example, the Foundation is looking into the possibility of helping women to obtain driving licences as their jobs require geographical mobility, and because the infrequent bus service makes it impossible to rely on public transport.

**Comment**

The Foundation is conscious of the fact that it is necessary to adopt an inter-cultural approach in its work with migrants, which for them, means that both the host society and the migrant community need mutual knowledge and respect. This approach to working with migrants is particularly important in a country where migration is a relatively new phenomenon.

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# African- Caribbean Network for Science and Technology

## Summary

*The African-Caribbean Network for Science and Technology (ACN) is a national educational charity set up by black professionals in 1995 to advance the educational achievements and career aspirations of black children. It aims to confront racist barriers in the education system which lead to the under-representation of black children in science and technology and tend to channel them into the "caring" professions and other low-paid, low-skilled work, or worse still, may render them unemployable.*

*The ACN, recognising that black girls face additional obstacles, has implemented measures to increase the number of girls taking up studies and careers in this area.*

## Innovative Elements

- providing role models for children of black people working in science and technology
- increasing the employability of African-Caribbean children by directing them into areas of study which are in demand on the labour market
- providing support for black girls studying science or technology
- helping parents to understand the British educational system and the requirements of the national curriculum
- challenging racism in schools by carrying out research to show the impact which stereotyping and low expectations can have on the performance of black children in science and technology

## Background

Ishango House, the location of the head office of the ACN, takes its name from a carved bone, discovered at Ishango on the shore of Lake Edward in Zaire, which indicates early evidence of a calendrical or numeration system used by hunting and fishing people over 8,000 years ago.

Ishango House is located on the edge of the Moss Side area of Manchester which has a predominantly black, working class population. 60% of the children who come to the centre are from single parent families, very few fathers are involved, and some children come along with their grandmothers.

The ACN was established at the initiative of Elizabeth Rasekoala, the General Secretary, who was shocked to discover, when she came as a foreign student to study at the Manchester Institute for Science and Technology, that there were no black students on the undergraduate courses. She was deeply concerned by this under-representation of blacks in science and technology and the future impact which this would have on the employability of black children in the labour market.

ACN argues that black British children of African-Caribbean origin achieve less well academically, as a group, than all other groups of pupils. This was the case even in the early 1950s and continues to be the case today. Other ethnic minority pupils do not face the same barriers and thus, have made significant educational achievements.

Furthermore, ACN states that researchers and academics who carried out work on the

performance of black children in schools failed to "give suitable guidance on the causes of under-achievement and possible strategies to eliminate them".

## Barriers Identified

**Stereotyping:** Schools are partly responsible for perpetuating the stereotype of African-Caribbean children as being good at sports and music but incapable of academic achievements. This stereotyping is further exacerbated by the fact that many of the role models available to black children stem from the sports and the entertainment industry.

## Low representation of black girls in science and technology:

African-Caribbean girls consistently achieve better results in school than boys, but despite this, tend not to pursue further education. They are said to lack aspirations and when they leave school, tend to end up getting pregnant, or enter the low skilled/low pay employment sector. If they take up further studies, they tend to undertake courses in the humanities.

## Actions undertaken

The ACN has developed an integrated strategy to confront the racist barriers which lead to the under-representation of black children in science and technology. Some of its actions include the following:

- career guidance for black children
- opportunities for black children to obtain work placements in industry
- providing in-service training for teachers to raise awareness on barriers to education
- after-school tutorials, study/revision skills and support during exam times.

## A-CWISE (African-Caribbean Women in Science, Engineering and Technology):

The aim of A-CWISE is to increase the number of black girls and women taking up careers and studies in science and technology. A-CWISE provides educational support to black female students, in the form of extra tuition; counselling on the impact of racist stereotyping; the implications of educational choices (especially at A level); advice on career opportunities and work placement opportunities in industry.

It also brings together black professionals who then act as role models and mentors for the students, providing encouragement, support and the opportunity to share experiences.

**Research:** ACN has carried out both quantitative and qualitative research to demonstrate how and why black children are under-represented in science and technology. The results of this research are then presented to local schools so that discussions can take place on what action may be taken to combat the barriers identified.

**Work with parents:** Increasing parents' understanding of the requirements of the national curriculum, for example, the fact that English, maths and science make up 70% of curriculum time, is also important. ACN argues that parents need to understand this because these subjects are crucial for the labour market.

**Motivating children to study:** Parents and children need to be aware of the consequences of leaving school without any qualifications. This is partly communicated to them via exercises carried out during Saturday morning school and entails the children doing financial calculations as to how much money they need to finance the sort of lifestyle to which they aspire. The children are also encouraged to identify the qualifications required for the type of jobs which pay the type of salary that they would like to earn.

This exercise is further backed up by a discussion on the consequences of leaving school at 16 and getting pregnant. How much unemployment benefit does a single parent with one child receive? What it mean to leave school at 16 with no qualifications and to do an unskilled job at £80 per week. The ultimate aim is to make children see the cumulative effect of going through the educational system: more qualifications generally mean more money, better job security and higher job status.

Within the framework of their activities, the ACN also lobbys the science, engineering and technology communities to take on board "race equality issues alongside those of gender".

### Resources

The budget of the ACN comes from the following sources: £47,500 over 3 years from the Single Regeneration Budget; £100,000 per year over 5 years from the European Social Fund in partnership with Liverpool Hope University College. A further £120,000 over 3 years was contributed in time and resources by the membership of the ACN.

ACN said that: "we rely heavily on the voluntary input of our members to run this programme". In addition to this, a further 6,020 hours were contributed by volunteers over a 3-year period.

### Impact

The success of the ACN has been such that it has secured funding from the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) to set up Ishango Science Clubs in Birmingham, Leicester, Nottingham, Sheffield and in the London borough of Southwark. These clubs are all based on the model developed in Manchester and Liverpool. Its success can be further gauged by the fact that indigenous parents now contact the club hoping to secure a place for their children.

The strategy of the ACN to increase the educational achievements of black children has been to target racism in schools, but ACN also realises that the active support and involvement of parents is necessary if children are to have the best chance of success. This is why parents are encouraged to share their experiences of the education system and to talk about what they would do if they had the chance to do things over again and the advice that they would give to their own children.

### Comments

The success of the ACN must be directly attributed to the committed individuals who have been determined to confront and challenge the racist barriers in the educational system which keep black children from realising their full potential. This determination comes from a commitment to ensure a better quality of life for black children in the foreseeable future, by increasing their qualifications and thus, their employability.

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# Football Unites, Racism Divides

## Summary

*Football Unites, Racism Divides (FURD) aims to increase the participation of ethnic minority girls and young women in football by means such as: providing opportunities to play football; coaching to improve skills; opportunities to take the coaching certificate; providing free ticket to Sheffield United football matches.*

## Innovative Elements

- increasing the visibility and participation of ethnic minority girls and young women in football
- raising awareness on the barriers for ethnic minority girls and young women as spectators and as participants within regional and local football associations
- working in partnership with ethnic minority community groups
- action supported by Sheffield United Football Club

## Background

The aim of FURD is to increase the participation of people from ethnic minorities in football (women and men) at the Sheffield United Football Club, and to decrease the amount of racist harassment and abuse in and around the club.

In the area surrounding the Sheffield United football ground, 43% of the local youth is from ethnic minorities, yet only 1% of people attending matches are from this group.

In a study carried out by FURD, 70% of local girls interviewed expressed an interest in playing or watching football, yet none had ever played it. This study also examined the problems of racist fans; the views of residents living around the football grounds, and the attitudes of young people from ethnic minority groups to football. It concluded that the issue of "race and football is about more than just a small number of racist fans on the fringe of a football club...The response of the agencies concerned will illustrate whether they have grasped this too and whether they are able to act on that".

The response of FURD to the conclusions of the study was to set up different initiatives to combat racism, one of which was to increase the visibility of ethnic minority girls in football. This strategy has been developed together with local football associations and youth workers, representatives of which were invited to take part in a working group which drafted a "Women and Football Development Plan" to guide the work.

Women's football is said to be the fastest growing sport in the UK and this is reflected by the fact that many professional clubs now have women's team attached. The national Football Association has adopted a charter and made a financial commitment to encourage more girls and women (including

ethnic minority groups) to play football. However, for both ethnic minority and indigenous women, football remains a male-dominated sport.

## Barriers Identified

From the experience of the project so far, it has emerged that there are different types of barriers for different ethnic minority groups.

**Asian girls:** The biggest obstacles identified are: parental disapproval; cultural restrictions linked to religion; dress code for Muslim girls; attitudes such as "girls should not get dirty"; and preconceived ideas about what girls can and cannot do.

**African Caribbean girls:** The biggest problem here is that these girls have been pushed into sports as a result of the stereotype which presumes that this is what they are good at and consequently, their academic needs and achievements have suffered.

## Actions Undertaken

When the project attempted to get local, ethnic minority girls interested in its activities by finding out "what do girls want to get out of playing football?", the most common responses were: that it is fun; to keep fit; it breaks stereotyping.

## Activities organised within the context of this project include:

A ten-week course to train young, ethnic minority girls to play football, which is advertised through youth and community centres. The training sessions are held in a sports centre with indoor facilities as the girls did not want to be "stared" at by onlookers. The courses are all run by a female coach.

The project also intends to organise "tester days" in local areas where ethnic minority girls can come for the day, get an introduction to football and finish off with a game of football.

Free tickets were provided for Sheffield United football matches.

## Resources

Currently FURD is part-funded for the period 1998-2000 by the Single Regeneration Budget, which provides £62.973 for 2 and 1/3 years. The project is now seeking other funding to continue its work.

## Impact

This strategy has achieved some concrete results, for example:

- ethnic minority girls have attended Sheffield United matches
- training courses have been organised for girls
- they have identified and sponsored young women to take the nationally recognised coaching certificate
- networking of interested groups has developed
- information and resources are being gathered on women, sport and racism
- levels of racist abuse and harassment have declined since FURD was set up

However, the project's own internal evaluation shows that interest from girls has not been as forthcoming as hoped. This has been identified as an age issue: girls need to become interested in football around the ages of 6-7 in order to be interested in playing football at a later age. Currently, the age group targeted is for girls from age 12 and upwards. The project intends to adjust its strategy accordingly.

FURD has also implemented other measures to curb racism, for example: procedures to report racist abuse; anti-racist features in the club magazine and programmes; anti-racist football-based educational work with young people in schools and youth centres; scheme for fans to register their support for the campaign.

FURD should consider developing a broader strategy to raise consciousness among indigenous men involved in football on the barriers to the participation of women. Men see football as their domain and as an opportunity to get away from women and thus, find it difficult to accept women in what they see as their "space". But, even as spectators, ethnic minority girls are seen as an oddity. An Asian community worker who took some girls to watch a football match said they got "strange" looks from other spectators.

## Comments

FURD should consider addressing the lack of visibility of ethnic minority women both in its structure and in the implementation of its strategy, rather than viewing ethnic minority women as participants alone.

Given the universal popularity of football, it represents a useful medium for fighting racism (support for the French National Front dropped during the 1998 world cup final as a result of the victory of the multi-racial French team). The strategy of FURD would be considerably enhanced if it could develop ways to take into account the different barriers facing different ethnic minority groups in society as a whole. For example, African Caribbean children need to have a variety of role models, particularly in areas where they are not visible, so that they do not become ghettoised in sports and entertainment. Sporting activities should be organised so that school work does not suffer.

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# KALAYAAN

## – Justice for Overseas Domestic Workers

### Summary

*Kalayaan has been campaigning for the recognition of an independent legal status for overseas domestic workers since 1987. It has fought for their right as workers to change employers and take legal action against abusive former employers.*

*Kalayaan has also brought to the attention of the public the different forms of abuse to which domestic workers are exposed, such as: confiscation of passports; exploitative working conditions; withholding of wages; denial of food; physical abuse; sexual abuse and virtual, or literal, imprisonment.*

*On 23 July 1998, the British Home Office Minister for Immigration announced that domestic workers would be “accorded an immigration status independent of their employer, and recognition as workers in their own right”. Workers also now have the right to change employers “for the duration of their visa, within the same category of employment” and the right to family reunion.*

### Innovative Elements

- providing a resource centre for practical help and emotional support for women domestic workers
- making visible exploitative working conditions
- working in partnership with grass roots organisations of domestic workers
- pooling expertise of ethnic minorities and indigenous groups to fight discrimination
- building alliances with a broad range of groups to garner support for their campaign
- carrying out a successful campaign to grant domestic workers their own legal status
- networking at the European level with concerned groups

### Background

Kalayaan (which means “freedom”) is the legal face of the grass roots organisation Waling-Waling (the name of a rare orchid which hides in the mountains of the Philippines), which was established as a support group for overseas domestic workers, with the help of the Commission for Filipino Migrant Workers (CFMW) in 1985.

The CFMW became aware of the problems of migrant Filipino workers in 1984, when an increasing number of women and men were fleeing from their abusive employers. Since the aim of the CFMW is to empower and organise Filipino workers, they convened a meeting to discuss strategies to combat this new problem.

The problem hinged upon the fact that domestic workers were entering Britain with their employers, without having their own legal identity. This left workers unprotected and unable to change employers without risking deportation. Since many migrants are forced into domestic service due to poverty in their countries of origin, workers often endured abuse under the assumption that they were at least earning money to support their children and families. However, in many cases, the wages of domestic workers were either withheld or not paid at all.

### Barriers Identified

**Lack of legal status:** immigration rules have now changed in the UK, but in other Member States domestic workers still do not have their own legal status.

**Invisibility:** The low status of domestic work in society and of those who do it, has contributed, to a large extent, to the abuse of workers, because both the work and the worker are invisible to society. This abuse is further “justified” by the dehumanising stereotypical images of migrant women domestic workers: they are seen as women with no personal needs of their own and with little, or no, education.

**Different levels of racism:** Domestic workers from the sub-Saharan region of Africa are said to be treated the worst by employers. In some countries, employers prefer Filipino women because there is more status attached to employing them.

**Poverty:** Economic poverty in the countries of origin is people’s main reason for migrating to work as domestics. In this way, despite the low level of pay, they are able to send money to their children and families back home.

### Actions Undertaken

**Visibility:** Kalayaan has prioritised the need to raise public awareness on the working and living conditions of domestic workers and has underlined, by giving examples, the many different ways in which they are physically and mentally abused. This exposé of the nature and the extent of the abuse suffered by domestic workers was instrumental in the broad spectrum of support that the campaign has gathered over the years.

**Research:** Extensive research has been carried out in some of the Member States on the living and working conditions of domestic workers. This research has been vital in raising visibility and for lobbying activities.

**St Francis Reception Centre:** This centre has been a haven for migrant domestic workers living and working in the London area. Here, workers can come for legal advice, emotional support and cooking facilities.

**Lobbying activities:** Kalayaan has lobbied and campaigned vigorously for an independent legal identity for domestic workers. In order to achieve its objectives, it lobbied politicians from all the political parties and enlisted the support of a wide range of organisations, including trade unions and non-governmental organisations.

Its political activities also include the mobilising of support to prevent the deportation of domestic workers fleeing abusive employers.

## Resources

Kalayaan receives funding for its activities from the following sources: the Catholic church, national non-governmental organisations, local government, the European Commission, national race and gender institutions and individual contributions.

An incalculable amount of unpaid and voluntary work is carried out by staff, members of the board, students and supporters.

## Impact

The change in immigration policy is the most important victory that Kalayaan has achieved up to now. However, despite this change in policy, Kalayaan will continue to monitor the situation of domestic workers.

In recent years, Kalayaan has formalised contacts with groups in other European countries which are also working on the rights of domestic workers with funding from the European Commission's Daphne programme. In collaboration with the European organisation SOLIDAR, it has created a European Network of Migrant Domestic Workers, with representatives from the following countries: France, Germany, Greece, Italy and Spain. The network will carry out research on the living and working conditions of domestic workers and facilitate the sharing of experiences and strategies.

## Comments

The work of Kalayaan gives a very good example of what can be achieved when grass roots organisations collaborate on an equal basis with indigenous professionals to fight discrimination. The success of Kalayaan comes from the dynamism and determination of Waling-Waling to demand justice for workers who endure abuse and hardships in order to support their families in their countries of origin.

Whilst Waling-Waling is an organisation made up of only migrant workers, Kalayaan was for many years largely made-up of indigenous professionals, whose expertise was needed to give advice to domestic workers and for political lobbying purposes. However, recently the visibility of black women in the structure of Kalayaan has increased, since a black woman has been appointed as co-ordinator.

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# Southall Black Sisters

## Summary

*Southall Black Sisters (SBS) is an advice centre for black women which campaigns to “bring about changes in the social, political, economic and cultural restrictions that have led women to our door”. The focus on violence, especially domestic violence, emerged very early on, at the request of its women clients, since agencies dealing with the issue of violence were either not sensitised to the needs of black women or did not have the expertise to give appropriate help.*

## Innovative Elements

- making visible, and campaigning against, violence towards black women
- giving advice on legal and welfare rights
- lobbying for changes to sexist and racist immigration rules
- challenging sexism in black communities

## Background

SBS was established as a women’s centre in 1979, in the London borough of Ealing and is based in Southall, which has a large Asian population. It grew from the anti-racist movement of the late seventies, which organised against the rise of the National Front and which made visible the indifference of state agencies to racist violence against black people.

A committee of 15 women, which meets once a month, manages SBS. SBS is a collective but it is considering adopting an hierarchical structure because of issues of accountability. Since grassroots organisations grew from campaigns, structures were not deemed to be important, but SBS believes that “once you start to provide a service, you need to address management issues”.

SBS has entered into partnerships with a wide range of women’s groups to achieve its objectives; it has become confident about forging such alliances, due to the strength of its own position and due to the fact that such partnerships are necessary in order to harness support from, and to raise awareness in, mainstream society.

## Barriers Identified

**Domestic violence:** Domestic violence is one of the most pressing barriers confronting black and Asian women. This problem has been identified as urgent because of the racism of the agencies dealing with violence against women, and the sexism of Asian communities. These communities often choose to ignore this problem because it challenges traditional roles, and because they believe that airing such problems communicates a negative image to mainstream society.

## Control and restrictions on young girls:

These controls and restrictions cover, in particular, arranged and/or forced marriages and accessing further education. In recent years, SBS has noted that conservative forces in the Asian communities are using “bounty hunters” to track down young women and girls who leave home, using a network of taxi drivers and shop keepers.

## Actions Undertaken

**Domestic Violence:** The first campaign was for an Asian woman who hanged herself after suffering years of violence. SBS demonstrated outside her husband’s house to raise visibility and protest against domestic violence; this particular method was taken from the Indian women’s movement who picketed the houses of the victims of dowry violence. Like Indian Feminists, SBS felt that it was vital to subvert Asian notions of honour, shame and name problems by making visible who is the perpetrator and who is the victim.

Since this first campaign, SBS was “catapulted to national fame” for its campaign to release an Asian woman, Kiranjit Ahluwalia, who was given a life sentence for the murder of her violent husband. As a result of its campaign, she was released, and her sentence reduced to manslaughter.

SBS campaign was fought based on two factors: giving evidence on the cultural context of the experience of Asian women and domestic violence and challenging the legal (male) interpretation of “provocation”, by providing evidence on the different reactions of women to men to years of abuse and violence. SBS campaign also hinged on mobilising a broad spectrum of support from diverse groups such as, the Asian community, the Women’s Institute and Justice for Women.

Currently, SBS is campaigning for the release of Zora Shah, who is serving a life sentence for the murder of a man who sexually and economically exploited her over a period of 12 years.

## Campaign on Immigration and Asylum Policy:

The One-Year Rule is a 12-month probationary period for both men and women who have entered the UK as spouses. The main problem for women who experience domestic violence is that this rule leaves them economically dependent on men as they have no access to welfare benefits, and makes them vulnerable to deportation. The SBS has lobbied against this rule and has made proposals on how this law could be reformed. The government has stated that it intends to introduce reforms to the One-Year Rule.

SBS has also worked on the integration of gender issues into asylum legislation to draw attention to domestic violence and to issues of gender related persecution against dependent women asylum-seekers.



**Women Against Fundamentalism (WAF):**

SBS is a member of WAF, which was created in response to the rise of fundamentalism in all religions because such movements impact negatively on women's everyday lives since they usually advocate the control of women. SBS was heavily criticised (including by the anti-racist Left) for "fuelling anti-Islamic" sentiments, but argued that fundamentalism was a "dangerous development for all communities" and that they were fighting for secularism.

**Other activities:** SBS undertakes a formidable range of activities, which includes: educational work in schools, training of magistrates, support for anti-racist organisations, etc.

**Resources**

SBS has a total income of £156,347 per year. Some of the sources of this income include: the London Borough of Ealing; the Churches Commission for Racial Justice; Womankind Worldwide; Women Living Under Muslim Laws. SBS also receives donations and a small income from the sale of publications.

Since the very beginning, SBS has relied heavily on both unpaid work and volunteers to carry out its activities.

**Impact**

SBS was awarded the Martin Ennals Civil Liberties Award in 1992 for its "outstanding contribution towards the furtherance of civil liberties and human rights in the United Kingdom".

SBS is one of the few black women's organisations in the UK which has been able to sustain a community-based activism for over two decades. At the heart of its work has been the empowerment of the most vulnerable groups of women in the black communities. This focus, together with a commitment to raise issues in the political arena, has been the key to its success.

The activities of SBS have undoubtedly made an impact on the perception of violence against black women, both in the communities concerned and within mainstream society. Its activities have also helped to empower women; more women are now confident about coming for help and asserting their rights. One client stated that "the only reason my husband does not hit me is because you exist".

SBS success has increased its visibility and its caseload. More and more women come for help, either independently or as referrals from social services agencies.

An internal evaluation has been carried out with the management committee and workers over the last two years. This was initiated because people felt the need to evaluate their work, to set new objectives for the organisation, and to conduct a wider analysis of their weaknesses and strengths.

SBS, as with many grassroots organisations of long-standing, needs to attract younger women, because it relies on individuals to carry the movement forward. However, younger women do not want to be activists because campaigning requires energy and is too time-consuming.

Hannana Siddiqui said: "There has been an influx of younger women, but they are very career-minded". A lot more women, both black and white, have achieved career successes, but are not translating their individual struggle into politics (women still have the double burden of jobs and childcare responsibilities). Furthermore, black women tend to go into politics to fight racism, not as feminists.

Clearly, to work in SBS is not a job; emergencies have to be dealt with at all hours. Women with young children can do part-time work (there is sometimes a crèche for workers and clients) and are given tasks that do not impinge upon their childcare commitments.

**Comments**

As for future obstacles to its work, resources remain a priority. However, the lack of support, both moral and practical, from some sections of the anti-racist movement, many white feminist organisations and the Socialist-Left movement, also represents an obstacle. SBS feels that support is only flowing one way and that it is not receiving support back from groups. This is why it has kept the focus on black women, but now this needs to be mainstreamed into the work of other groups.

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# South Glamorgan Women's Workshop Ltd.

## Summary

*The South Glamorgan Women's Workshop (SGWW) was established as a women-only collective in 1983 to provide training for socially and economically disadvantaged women, in areas of employment where they are under-represented.*

*Its aim is to empower women to become economically independent. The training gives priority to black and minority ethnic women who are recruited from all over Cardiff.*

## Innovative Elements

- providing good quality, free, on-site childcare for course participants and staff
- providing free training in new information technologies to women by women
- enforcing anti-racist policies with a code of conduct
- working with refugee women
- promoting self-confidence
- making visible migrant women among trainees and staff
- promoting a multi-racial working environment

## Background

The SGWW is located in the Butetown area of Cardiff, the population of which is largely black and/or from minority ethnic groups (there are also a number of recent refugees). SGWW aims to reflect the diversity of its surroundings, both in the composition of its staff and of its trainees. A Voluntary Management Committee of seven, of which three are of black and minority ethnic origin, supervises the overall running of the workshop.

The SGWW was established to fill a gap in the market for women-friendly training. The original founding members were all working mothers, who recognised that access to good quality, affordable childcare was the key to accessing education, training, the labour market and financial independence. The EEC Office in Wales, at the time, was promoting the European Social Fund (ESF), and the SGWW realised the potential which this money had for developing training courses.

The SGWW is a women-only building, and is thus, a "safe" environment for women from minority ethnic groups, refugee women or women who are victims of domestic violence. Some Muslim women would not attend courses if this were a mixed centre.

The SGWW has a room for prayer and meditation, which is available to all staff and trainees. Such provisions make women feel respected and also help to raise awareness among staff and trainees about the needs of different women.

## Barriers Identified

**Under-representation of women in the new information technologies:** Women lack the skills to compete for jobs in this sector. Moreover, any training in this area needs to be women-friendly since women learn differently from men.

### **Black (African-Caribbean) women:**

Although the African-Caribbean population makes up nearly 35% of the minority ethnic group in the area, black women are under-represented in the workshop. Black women figure predominantly among the unemployed, and nearly 60% of them are single parents and/or on benefits.

Black women are also increasingly vulnerable to poverty, as the availability of low-skilled work has dropped in the area due to changes in employment available (now more service-based) and to the decline of the local area as a port.

### **Lack of recognition of skills and qualifications:**

One ex-trainee, now working as a trainer, was a teacher in her country of origin, but was not able to find equivalent work in the UK because her qualifications are not recognised here.

## Actions Undertaken

The SGWW offers free training, free, full-time, on-site childcare facilities, travel expenses, plus support and counselling.

The training courses are aimed at all women in the Cardiff area, but priority is given to black, minority ethnic women and refugees. Information about the courses is available in 9 languages, including English, Hindi, Gujarati and Persian. Where necessary, trainers are happy to visit families to explain their work.

### **Childcare services:**

Free childcare is available for all trainees and staff, and accessible to trainees for up to one year after completion of a course. The crèche offers a vegetarian-only menu, with food from different communities on offer.

### **Training courses:**

The training courses cater for women at different levels and with different needs. Their aim is also to give women access to higher level jobs, especially in the new technology sector. The following courses are offered by the workshop:

- technical training in computing
- computer networking

- personal and career development (New Starter Course which lasts 12 weeks and targets: black and minority ethnic women; women with mental health problems; refugee women; women who have suffered domestic violence).

The workshop carries out prior screening and preparatory work to ensure that placements with companies are able to cater for the different cultural needs of black and minority ethnic women.

There is a computer training room, which is available to all women, by appointment, to explore the Internet.

**Integration of anti-racist policies and equal opportunities:** All trainees have to undergo an induction course on equal opportunities, and anti-racism is formally integrated into the courses. For staff members and trainees, there is a code of conduct and a disciplinary procedure for any acts of bullying or racism.

**Confidence-building and personal development skills:** These constitute essential components of the courses offered. The workshop believes that an increase in confidence leads to an increase in choices and makes women more aware of their rights within society.

**Language course:** This course is crucial because it empowers women to cope with everyday life, especially given the fact that a lack of command of English is often associated with stupidity.

The SGWW works closely with the UK Women's Training Network and in the past, was a member of the IRIS training network co-ordinated by the Centre for Research on European Women (CREW). Currently, it is working in partnership with the Belarussian Women's Organisation Social Initiative to assist in a training project for unemployed women.

## Resources

The SGWW is funded by the European Social Fund, with matching funds provided by the South Glamorgan County Council. Delays in payment were the main problems cited in accessing ESF money. It also receives money from the National Lottery Charities Board.

Its total budget amounts to £344,834: the amount of unpaid and voluntary work carried out is incalculable, but it is estimated that for every hour paid, most staff work two hours unpaid.

## Impact

Over the past 14 years, the SGWW has received many awards in recognition of its excellent work on training. Within some minority ethnic communities, the SGWW has established a solid reputation through the word-of-mouth recommendations of its ex-trainees, one of whom said: "I feel I was recognised", "I go as I am", and "I dress as I am". But its success is also based on its results: out of a total of 120 women who completed their training in 1997, 60 were of black, minority ethnic origin or refugees. Of these 60 women, 14 found jobs, and 31 have gone on to further training.

Previously, the workshop was a predominantly indigenous organisation. The SGWW has remedied this situation, increasing the visibility of black and minority ethnic women by promoting them as trainers and by giving priority to them in the recruitment of trainees.

On the situation of black women, the SGWW needs to develop an active strategy, in consultation with black women, as to how they can be recruited as trainees.

## Comments

The work of the SGWW provides us with an outstanding example of innovation and empowerment. Its success can be directly attributed to the personal commitment of the collective to combat racism and sexism. Moreover, it has been able to sustain its activities for over 15 years, without compromising its principles or standards.

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# Babaylan

## – Philippine

### Women's

### Network

### in Europe

#### Summary

*Babaylan was created to empower and to make visible Filipina women living in Europe. Its aim is to facilitate the exchange of information on the situation of women in different countries; to carry out campaigns to raise awareness; to share resources and expertise, and to provide empowerment training. Making links with organisations in the Philippines is also an integral part of its work.*

*Cultural activities are an inseparable part of Babaylan's political activities; its conferences are interspersed with songs, relaxation exercises, and the sharing of food. The use of role-plays and the sharing of experiences through personal testimonies are equally important; poignant stories recount the, sometimes harrowing, experiences of women in mixed marriages and their experiences as undocumented and domestic workers.*

#### Innovative Elements

- making links between different Filipina communities in Europe
- making visible the particular nature of the discrimination faced by Filipina women
- combating violence against Filipina women in trafficking, as au pairs, domestic workers, "entertainers", and in mixed marriages
- providing empowerment training for Filipina women
- highlighting the valuable socio-economic contribution of Filipinas in a multicultural European society

#### Background

Babaylan (which means priestesses) was established in 1992 at a conference held in Barcelona called "Empowering Filipinas in Europe". The origin of Babaylan is closely linked to the Commission for Filipino Migrant Workers (CFMW), a service organisation and a lobbying group based in Amsterdam, which initiated this first meeting. The establishment of Babaylan was of great significance for Filipinas and as one conference participant stated: "The steps to women's empowerment have been taken, possibilities of networking have been forged, the opportunity to tell our stories has begun..." (extract from the report on the Second Conference of Philippine Women in Europe, 1994, page 1).

The Filipino community is unique among migrant groups in Europe, since it is largely made up of women. It is estimated that there are around half a million Filipinos living in the European Union, 80% of whom are women. Filipinas tend to migrate alone, often to work as domestics in order to support their families back home. Currently, research is being carried out in the Philippines to calculate the contribution to the Philippine economy made by women and men working abroad.

The Filipinos are represented in all countries of the European Union, but the largest concentration of Filipinos is found in Greece, Italy and Spain (due to the colonisation of the Philippines by the Spanish). Since the Philippines is a predominantly Catholic country, Filipinas in Europe have often sought and received support from the Catholic Church in the fight for their rights (see 24-UK).

#### Barriers Identified

**Economic poverty:** Women and men have been migrating to Europe to work since the 1960s. Their main motivation has always been to alleviate the poverty of their children and families. This can mean separation from loved ones for many years and women's organisations in the Philippines are currently documenting the long-term impact which this separation has on children and families.

**Entrenched stereotyping:** The discrimination and exploitation suffered by Filipina women all over the world is partly based on entrenched stereotyping. Filipina women are seen as sexually exotic, malleable, passive and domesticated. This type of stereotyping has made them particularly vulnerable to exploitation in trafficking, and much sought-after as "mail order-brides". In fact, agencies which "arrange" marriages between indigenous men and Filipinas use these "qualities" to "sell" women. Indigenous men are attracted to the stereotype of Filipina women, believing that they will be less "troublesome" and more accommodating than indigenous women.

**Violence:** Babaylan has documented the many different types of violence to which Filipina women have been subjected in Europe. These include: domestic violence in mixed marriages, violence against trafficked women, au pairs, and domestic workers.

**Domestic work:** Filipina women are much sought-after as domestic workers. Here again, the demand is based on the image others have of them as hard-working, docile, good with children, and uncomplaining women who can be easily controlled.

**Lack of recognition of qualifications:** Filipinas who migrate are usually well-qualified professionals, but are not able to get work equivalent to their qualifications because these are not recognised in Europe. Hence, many of them remain in low-skilled, low-paid work, with very few being promoted into senior positions.

## Actions Undertaken

**Biannual conferences:** Babaylan meets every two years in different European countries. In general each conference examines a theme which is of direct importance to Filipina women. For example: violence, the situation of domestic workers, au pairs, etc.

**Empowerment training:** Babaylan places great importance on the need to empower individual women to combat the racism and sexism that they face on a daily basis. Training is given on assertiveness and confidence building; this includes issues such as feminism, gender sensitivity, types of oppression, patriarchy, and racism. As resources are limited, women benefiting from such training are expected to go back to the Member States and train women at the national level and in this way, Babaylan can also keep in contact with women at the grassroots level.

**Campaigns:** In 1994, Babaylan carried out a campaign on violence against women to make visible the particular types of violence that Filipina women face in Europe and beyond. Its campaign emphasised both physical and emotional violence inflicted upon women. Babaylan organised activities in different countries to raise awareness: for example, in the Netherlands, the national organisation Diwa made a theatre presentation to make visible the different forms of violence behind the "seemingly" contented lives of Filipinas. In Germany, the Philippine Women's Forum carried out the campaign together with other groups of migrant women.

Babaylan stated that the campaign did make an impact in the different countries; raising awareness in European society but also among Filipina women themselves, on the different forms of violence.

Babaylan plans to launch a new campaign on poverty and violence for the year 2000, with funding from UNIFEM. Babaylan also participates in conferences and events at the international level, for example, the United Nation's Fourth World Conference on Women held in 1995 in Beijing, China.

## Resources

Babaylan has a negligible income from membership fees and has no resources for the operation of the network. In general, the hosting organisation for each conference is responsible for raising money to meet costs. Up to now, the Babaylan has been successful in securing funding and sponsorship from the national and the European level (for example, the Green Party in Germany, Mama Cash in the Netherlands, and Catholic organisations). Babaylan has also secured funding for training from European Commission programmes.

There is also an incalculable amount of unpaid work done by members in all the European countries.

## Impact

Babaylan is one of only three transnational networks for migrant women in Europe. So far, despite the lack of secure resources, it has sustained a presence at the European level. Babaylan has made visible issues affecting Filipinas in Europe, and is a source of strength and empowerment to women.

The strength of the network lies in the fact that it combines political activity with empowerment training to equip women with skills to combat the effects of everyday and institutional racism and sexism.

## Comments

The Filipino community is well organised in Europe; part of the reason for this is the fact that many of those who migrated came from well-educated, professional backgrounds. Babaylan has built on this and has succeeded in creating the most solid transnational network among any single community of migrant women in Europe. Its success is also linked to its unique ability to maximise its resources and to combine its cultural heritage with its political activities.

The vibrancy and dynamism of this Network is a source of inspiration for all migrant women in Europe; it was also the source of inspiration for this project.

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# Black Women in Europe Network

## Summary

*The Black Women in Europe Network (BWEN) is a coalition of independent organisations which aims to represent black and migrant women living in Europe. Although its focus is on Europe, its "dreams are international".*

*BWEN's objective is to make black and migrant women more visible in society, with a view to reducing individual and political isolation. One of its priorities is to establish links with organisations in the countries of origin of black and migrant women, to work on issues of common concern.*

## Innovative Elements

- encouraging networking of black and migrant women's organisations across Europe
- making links with women in the countries of origin of black and migrant people
- having a presence at the European level

## Background

BWEN was established as a network at a conference held in London in 1993. This conference was the follow-up to a meeting organised by the Green Party in the European Parliament in 1991 on migrant women in the European Union, initiated by the former French-Algerian MEP Gilda Tzasdait. At this meeting, the participants felt that it was imperative to keep the momentum by setting up a permanent structure to increase solidarity and networking among migrant women.

BWEN does not limit its activities to the European Union, but aims to network with relevant women's organisations around the world. Currently, BWEN has representatives from the following countries: Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the UK.

The groups represented by BWEN include women from African-Caribbean countries, Turkish and Filipina women. However, BWEN also tries to network with a broad range of organisations on issues of common concern. For example, on the issue of domestic workers, it has established links with Kalayaan, based in the UK, which is both a lobbying and support group for the rights of migrant women domestic workers.

Through its national members, BWEN tries to reach out to grassroots women not represented in its network, so that it can take account of their needs as well.

BWEN has a "roving" secretariat, which is based in different countries depending on resources available to member organisations.

## Barriers Identified

**Resources:** The difficulty in identifying sources of funding for its activities is a fundamental barrier for the BWEN as transnational activity is costly and the contribution of unpaid work is dependent on the commitment of individuals and organisations.

**Difficulty of organising across cultural communities:** Currently, women of African-Caribbean origin dominate the membership of BWEN. It is attempting to address this problem, but has encountered difficulties due to a lack of resources.

## Actions undertaken

**General Assembly:** This is organised every two years in different Member States, at which elections are held for members of the board and the executive, and work priorities are set. BWEN tries to meet annually, but this depends on the finances available.

These meetings are important events at which black and migrant women exchange information about conditions in the Member States through the presentation of the country reports. This exchange of information shows that women across Europe face the same problems: lack of political and civil rights; racist and sexist violence; trafficking; negative images of black and migrant people in the media; exploitation in the informal economy or in low-paid, low-skilled work; lack of rights for asylum-seeking and refugee women.

Its future priorities for action include the following:

- Economic empowerment of women
- Making visible violence against women in war
- Promotion of women into decision-making positions
- Highlighting the role of women in development
- Portrayal of women in the media
- Design of housing and its impact on women
- Making visible the impact of fundamentalism on women

## Resources

The activities of BWEN are funded by member organisations that either make a financial contribution or donate administrative services; all costs are kept to a bare minimum.

BWEN relies on small grants to fund items such as publications. For example, it received a grant from the UK Equal Opportunities Commission to publish its report on the UN Women's Conference in Beijing. For its general assemblies, it tries to find sponsors to meet some of the costs.

It is clear that BWEN could not function without the unpaid work of all its members, who often meet their own expenses and use their free time to attend meetings and carry out administrative work.

## Impact

One of the main problems encountered by BWEN is the lack of financial resources: this causes BWEN particular difficulties as regards its transnational networking aim. It is not able to provide interpreters and translate documents to facilitate communication between its members and even at the General Assembly, they are not always able to work in English and French.

Resources also impact on its visibility and participation in European, governmental and non-governmental structures.

In spite of these financial limitations, BWEN tries to network with a broad group of women in an attempt to make global links. BWEN considers such links important, not only in terms of collaborating on different issues, but also because these links increase the possibility of demonstrating "solidarity through action".

## Comments

As a transnational network, BWEN has the potential to make a significant contribution to the development and visibility of race and gender politics. However, the future of BWEN will depend on two issues: firstly, it needs to secure core funding in order to set up a functioning secretariat and thus, lift the burden of unpaid work from its members; secondly, it needs to get younger women involved to replenish the network. BWEN said that it was not easy to get younger women involved in its activities, mainly because they are not prepared to be in "fringe" organisations and are not attracted to spending their free time doing unpaid work.

BWEN remains committed to networking at the European level and has plans to participate in the newly-established European Anti-Racist Network because it believes that such organisations need to "reach the roots" in the Member States in order to reflect the realities of everyday racism.

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# The Migrants' Forum's Support Group for Migrant Women

## Summary

*Since the Migrants' Forum was created in 1992 in Brussels, continuous efforts have been made to create a structure within it to empower migrant women to give expression to their particular needs.*

*Eventually, these efforts were successful and an internal Support Group for Migrant Women was established in 1996.*

## Innovative Elements

- combating sexism within an organisation representing migrants
- making visible the social and economic contribution of migrant women
- promoting equal rights and opportunities between women and men
- promoting networking between women to share and to learn from each others experiences
- promoting positive images of migrant women in the media
- lobbying to influence policies concerning migrant women

## Background

In the early days, when the Migrants' Forum was established, it was heavily male-dominated: there were no women in the Executive Committee and only a few women were on the board. The constitution of the Forum have no specific clause about the representation of women in decision-making structures or the integration of gender issues into its work programme and activities.

A Women's Committee was set up in 1992. In 1993, women in the Migrants' Forum started to organise themselves to make visible their contribution to the fight against racism in the European Union.

One of their first activities was to organise a conference in Athens on "Migrant Women in Action" in 1994. This conference marked the conclusion of three working groups set up by the Forum on: women and the media; the impact of employment legislation on women and the dignity of young girls. However, whilst preparing for the Athens conference, it became clear that there were issues of independence and the visibility of the Women's Committee that needed to be addressed by the Forum.

The visibility of women in the Migrants' Forum was radically increased in the 1996 internal elections. Now there are six women out of a total of 32 members on the board and the executive has four women out of a total of seven.

With the establishment of the Support Group for Women, the Migrants' Forum has made clear its intention to redress the previous invisibility of women in its structures. The Support Group has its own statutes and has the right to a representative on the board of the Forum. Finances have been made available to develop activities and a part-time member of staff is responsible for co-ordination.

## Barriers Identified

**Addressing sexism:** Suzanne Monkasa, the General Secretary, believes that the invisibility of gender issues in the past was linked to the question of women having the determination to fight for their rightful place. This problem stemmed from the diversity among women, which meant that there were different priorities, different levels of political awareness and different ways of working. Some women were used to organising around community-based, cultural groups and they tended to take a more conciliatory position whereas, women who were political activists, were in favour of a more radical approach.

However, migrant women do share common experiences; for example, many women are becoming breadwinners, even if they are doing so by carrying out low-status jobs such as cleaning. Some migrant men find this humiliating because the rules are changing and they are no longer able to assert their rights as the head of the household.

**Violence:** Discrimination against migrant women in state legislation impacts on migrant women the most because it denies them basic human rights. For example, in Belgium, female migrant foreign students have no legal rights to work or to access welfare benefits because their legal identity is derived from men. In a situation of domestic violence, women are rendered more vulnerable by state legislation.

## Actions undertaken

**Migrant Women and the Media:** The Support Group organised a conference in 1997 during the European Year Against Racism, to examine and to make recommendations on the treatment of migrant women by the media. It focused on the lack of migrant women in media structures and the negative portrayal of women in reporting, particularly in relation to violence.

**Migrant Women and the Economy:** This project was launched recently and will gather information on the contribution of migrant women to the economies of selected Member States and highlight issues of economic independence. Five Member States are taking part in the project and a team of women, including grass roots representatives and academics, will carry out the research. Funds for this project have been secured from DG V of the European Commission.



## Resources

Resources for activities come from grant funding of the Migrants' Forum from the European Commission, which includes the employment of a part-time worker to deal with women's issues. Extra funding for projects is made available from the Forum's own resources.

## Impact

The main impact of the women's activities so far, has been on an internal level, raising issues of sexism and women's needs within the Forum itself. Mainstreaming of gender issues into the work of the Forum is still not automatic, but there are some issues in which the gender dimension is now fully integrated, for example, on employment and legal status.

Now that women have gained more visibility, Suzanne Monkasa has stated that they must guard their place. Future success will depend on the type of women who get involved and their willingness to work on common projects by overcoming interpersonal difficulties. She also emphasised the fact that being able to negotiate is a political skill that migrant women need to learn, so that they know when to concede and when to hold out.

The Support Group for Women is still not very visible outside of the Forum and the General Secretary agreed that this is an issue that should be tackled through concrete projects.

Suzanne Monkasa believes that the challenge now for women in the Migrants' Forum is to identify allies for the long term (especially among politicians), because they will not make any gains by working alone. In this respect, she stated that the Migrants' Forum appreciated very much the increase in collaboration and contact with the European Women's Lobby.

## Comments

The evolution of the Women's Support Group provides a good example of the problems that migrant women may face in mixed, male-dominated organisations. Some women remain committed to fighting racism in a mixed environment, despite their intense frustration at the obstacles that they have had to face. Ultimately, they feel that more can be achieved politically in such organisations than within groups dominated by indigenous women and men.

The continued visibility of the Support Group for Women is a political priority, given that currently, it is the only structure at the European level that is in a position to raise race and gender issues.

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# Recommendations of the Project

## **Recalling**

- the European Convention for the Protection of Human rights and Fundamental Freedoms, 1950
- the United Nations International Convention on the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination, 1965
- the resolution adopted by the Social Affairs Council and the Education Council on combating racism in work and in educational systems, 1995
- the resolution adopted by the European Parliament on racism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism to safeguard equal treatment opportunities, irrespective of age, race, sex, disability or beliefs, 1995
- the joint declaration by employers and trade unions adopted at the Social Dialogue Summit on the prevention of racial discrimination and xenophobia and the promotion of equal treatment at the workplace, 1995
- the Platform for Action and the Beijing Declaration as agreed at the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, China, September 1995
- the Amsterdam Treaty and Article 13 on Non-discrimination to combat "discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation", 1997

The European Women's Lobby proposes that the institutions of the European Union and the Member States, within the context of a commitment to combating racism and sexism:

## **On Social Exclusion**

- ensure that the polices and service delivery of public services reflect the needs of a multicultural society
- provide adequate funding for resource centres which provide legal advice and information to black, ethnic minority and migrant groups
- provide language courses for black, ethnic minority and migrant groups, especially for new migrants, refugees and women
- ensure that black, ethnic minority and migrant women have access to information, in their own languages, on the health services available, particularly for pregnant women, mothers and older women
- fund preventative measures in the countries of origin of trafficked women such as training courses, business creation and information campaigns to prevent further victims

## **On Legal Status**

- grant independent legal status to black, ethnic minority and migrant women in the European Union, especially to women who are victims of domestic violence
- adopt legislation to give migrant women domestic workers their individual legal status
- ensure that asylum legislation addresses the specific experiences of women which make them vulnerable to persecution, violence and oppression
- recognise the economic contribution made by undocumented workers living in the Member States and grant a general amnesty and legal status to such workers who have lived for five years or more in the European Union

## **On Violence**

- promote the exchange of information and good practice among agencies dealing with violence against black, ethnic minority and migrant women
- provide training for the police and other public authorities on violence and black, ethnic minority and migrant women
- adopt and enforce legislation to prevent the trafficking in women, and provide resources for groups who rehabilitate such women
- adopt and enforce legislation to eradicate female genital mutilation, and provide resources for grassroots organisations to undertake preventative work in the communities concerned

## **On Access to the Labour Market**

### ***I) Education***

- encourage schools to work with black, ethnic minority and migrant communities to look at ways of improving the performance of children, especially girls
- provide anti-racist and anti-sexist training for individuals in the education system
- provide information for black, ethnic minority and migrant parents on the functioning and the requirements of the education system
- encourage research on the impact of racist and sexist stereotyping on the performance and career choices of black, ethnic minority and migrant girls and young women

### ***II) Training***

- facilitate access for refugee women to education and training courses
- prioritise black, ethnic minority and migrant women in the development and implementation of policies and programmes on training
- encourage training agencies to provide pre-training courses for black, ethnic minority and migrant women to build up self-confidence
- make available training in the new information technologies sector for black ethnic minority and migrant women
- make available and disseminate information on national and European funding sources for training courses for black, ethnic minority and migrant women

### ***iii) Access to employment***

- introduce measures to regulate atypical work and the informal economy to ensure the full social protection of black, ethnic minority and migrant women
- implement and enforce legislation to regulate the working conditions (working hours, minimum pay, holidays and social security) of live-in migrant women domestic workers and au pairs
- promote the recognition of skills and qualifications of black, ethnic minority and migrant women derived from countries outside of the European Union
- make available good quality, affordable childcare services for black, ethnic minority and migrant women

**On Visibility**

- mainstream the concerns of black, ethnic minority and migrant women into policies and programmes
- encourage a breakdown of statistics to include black, ethnic minority and migrant women as a separate category, especially in figures on racist and sexist violence against women, social exclusion and employment and training
- promote the visibility of black, ethnic minority and migrant groups in the public services at all levels
- implement positive action measures to promote black, ethnic minority and migrant women into decision-making positions in all areas of society
- give financial support to black, ethnic minority and migrant women's groups organising at the national and European levels

**On the Role of Non-governmental organisations**

- engage in dialogue with non-governmental organisations to draw on their expertise in combating racism and sexism
- provide adequate funding to develop programmes to fight racism and sexism
- carry out consultation with non-governmental organisations on the drafting and implementation of legislation to combat racism and sexism.



# Guide to good practice on race and gender issues – A checklist

## **Policy-makers and institutions**

- Consult with organisations working on race and gender issues to define priorities and to find out what work has already been carried out
- Undertake anti-racist and anti-sexist training
- Define mechanisms for the mainstreaming of race and gender issues into policy-making and programmes
- Involve black, ethnic minority and migrant women in the evaluation of policies and programmes implemented to improve their living and working conditions
- Promote and use examples of good practice on strategies empowering black, ethnic minority and migrant women
- Promote the visibility of black, ethnic minority and migrant women by promoting them into decision-making positions

## **Funding bodies**

- Provide user-friendly advice and information on national and European level funding
- Find ways to simplify procedures to encourage and to facilitate applications from grass roots organisations
- Set different criteria for funding applications from black, ethnic minority and migrant women's organisations. For example, if co-funding is required, this could be reduced for certain groups, and take into consideration the contribution of unpaid and voluntary work
- Consult with black, ethnic minority and migrant groups to find out the main obstacles in accessing funding
- Promote the continuity of work on race and gender issues by developing multi-annual funding programmes

## **Mixed organisations (black, ethnic minority and migrant and indigenous women) working on race and gender issues**

- Implement an anti-racist policy which should include a code of conduct for workers and clients. Such policies should be drawn up in consultation with black, ethnic minority and migrant workers
- Increase the visibility of black, ethnic minority and migrant women working in the organisation, by promoting suitably qualified women into decision-making positions
- Organise ongoing racism-awareness training for workers
- Draw up mechanisms to mainstream race and gender issues into the policies, programmes and practices of the organisation
- Consult with and involve black, ethnic minority and migrant women in the drafting, implementation and evaluation of policies and programmes
- Develop mechanisms for the evaluation of your work and/or service delivery by black, ethnic minority and migrant women clients
- If you have only one black, ethnic minority or migrant woman worker in your organisation, develop ways to decrease isolation by allowing time for her to meet other women for mutual support and empowerment

### **Mixed anti-racist organisations (black, ethnic minority and migrant and indigenous women and men)**

- Set up a special section in the organisation to raise, and give visibility to, race and gender issues
- Devote resources and give support to the development of work on race and gender issues
- Promote suitably qualified black, ethnic minority and migrant women into decision-making structures within the organisation
- Draw up mechanisms to mainstream race and gender issues into policies and programmes
- Organise anti-sexist training for men within the organisation

### **Black, ethnic minority and migrant women's organisations**

- Provide empowerment training for women and/or clients.  
If you are a European or a national network, you could maximise your resources by organising training with a multiplier effect
- Carry out regular personal development evaluations, including training, for workers in the organisation
- Provide support for women with childcare responsibilities in the organisation (flexibility in working time, provision of childcare facilities, parental leave provisions)
- Address issues of “diversity” between different groups of black, ethnic minority and migrant women in the organisation in order to make the best use of different experiences and knowledge and also in order to deal with any obstacles to collaboration
- If you organise around a specific black, ethnic minority or migrant group, promote networking and collaboration with other groups of black, ethnic minority or migrant women.



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# Acknowledgements

**The European Women's Lobby (EWL) thanks the following people for their contribution to this project:**

***Organisations in the Member States***

For their participation in this project

***Project consultant***

Catherine Hoskyns, who made a significant contribution to the development and implementation of the project

***Project leader***

Barbara Helfferich, General Secretary of the EWL, for overall management of the project

***Member State researchers***

Anita Berger (Germany), Nacera Boulehouat (France and Belgium), Noelia Igareda (Spain), and Jyostna Patel (Belgium, the Netherlands and the UK) Families and friends who hosted our researchers in the Member States

***L'Oiseau Migrateur asbl***

For its indispensable collaboration with the EWL on this project

***Members of the internal working group of the EWL***

Bernice Dubois, Hazel Holmlund, Ann Mannen, and Nikki Roubani

***Member of the expert working group on race and gender***

Hellen Felter, vice-president of the EWL, Pinar Hüküm, member of the board of the Migrant's Forum, Ann Mannen, member of the EWL General Assembly, Nouria Ouali, researcher on migrant women and employment at the Free University of Brussels (French speaking), Elsa Ramos, International Confederation of Free Trade Unions

***Editor of the report***

Alison Roy

***French translation***

Martine Wauters, proof reading in French, Denise Fuchs, Bernice Dubois and Colette de Troy

***Cover illustration – design and production of report***

Calico Museum of Textiles, Gujarat, India – Gauthier Burny, TexTure s.a.

***The staff of the EWL***

Malin Bjork, Cécile Greboval, Marie-Anne Leunis, Claire Roumet

***The student of the EWL***

Gaëlle Le Boulter, Shaela Cruz, Alexandra Deneke, Helena Gäfvert, Isabel Kleinschnittger and Renate Lange

Giampiero Alhadef, SOLIDAR – Chantal Beyst – European Leader Observatory – Nadine Lefebvre – Jan Niessen, Migration Policy Group – Nimita Patel – Emily Riley, Levi Strauss & Co. Europe – Jane Tate, European Home-working Group – Jean-Pierre Verduyck – M<sup>me</sup> Wellinghoff, DG V, European Commission.



# Questionnaire on Overcoming Discrimination

## Selected strategies empowering black, ethnic minority and migrant women

### **Please note the following information before completing this questionnaire**

- The information that you provide will be treated in confidence.
- For some questions there are notes attached to guide you.
- Fill in this questionnaire using a typewriter, word processor or write in block letters.
- Return the completed questionnaire to the European Women's Lobby by **15 April 1998**.

### **1. Information about the Organisation**

**1a)** Name of organisation (including abbreviation)

**1b)** Contact Person (and title)

**1c)** Address

Tel, fax and e-mail

**1d)** What are the main aims of your organisation?

### **2. Innovative Strategy**

**2a)** Describe the innovative strategy carried out by your organisation :  
(See the notes attached for guidance)

**2b)** Which of the following themes relates to your innovative strategy?  
(you may select more than one theme)

- racism, xenophobia (institutional and/or everyday) and sexism
- violence
- legal status
- access to employment and training
- access to education
- representation in decision-making positions
- access to social services (welfare, health, etc.)
- level of participation in organisations
- representation in the arts and culture
- implications of religious faith and practices
- encouraging solidarity, visibility and networking
- sexuality
- conflict resolution

**2a)** For the purposes of this project the term "innovative strategy" is broadly defined as having some or all of the following characteristics :

- showing originality/creativity in confronting barriers to integration
- efficient in terms of reaching the objectives set
- making good use of the resources available.

**2d)** This section should give concise information on the social, cultural, economic and political context in which the strategy has been carried out, for example, information on the size of the black, ethnic minority and migrant population, whether the community is long established or more recent, relevant legislation and any incidents which may have given impetus to the action.

**2h)** The innovative strategy should be either ongoing or implemented in the last five years.

**2c)** If your innovative strategy does not fit into any of these themes, how would you categorise your action?

**2d)** The background - give relevant information about the context in which this innovative strategy was carried out (see the notes attached for guidance)

**2e1)** What was the objective of the innovative strategy?  
If relevant, indicate long and short term objectives

**2e2)** Who was the object of your innovative strategy?  
(the general public, institutions, non-governmental organisations, etc.)

**2f)** How was the strategy developed?

**2g)** How did you put the strategy into action?

**2h)** The time period in which the innovative strategy was implemented (see the notes attached for guidance)

**2i)** Resources used for the development and implementation of the strategy  
2i1) Total budget (indicate source)

2i2) Estimate of unpaid work done by paid workers  
(if you had to put a financial value to this unpaid work, indicate how much you would allocate per hour)

**2i3)** Contribution of volunteers in number of hours

**2j)** Were any partnerships/alliances made for the development and implementation of this strategy, if yes, please indicate

**2k)** Are there any clear results/consequences of the innovative strategy? If not, how would you describe the value of your strategy (see the notes attached for guidance)

**2k1)** Was there an evaluation of the strategy carried out, either internal or external, if so, give details

**3. If your strategy is selected, please indicate if you would be willing for it to be included in a guide to good model practice and if someone in the organisation would be willing to make time available for a fuller interview?**

**3a)** Do you have any remarks/observations about this project:

If possible, enclose some information in the form of leaflets, publications, etc. about your organisation when returning this questionnaire.

We would like to enter information about your organisation into a database, which will be available to participants in this project, members of the European Women's Lobby, the European institutions and non-governmental organisations, please indicate if you are willing to be included

- yes
- no

If possible, please copy and distribute this questionnaire.

Thank you for filling in this questionnaire.

Organisations which send back a completed questionnaire will receive a copy of the guide to good practice.

**2k)** *In this section, try to detail the effect of the strategy in terms of whether:*

- *the objectives/target of the innovative strategy were met*
- *the strategy succeeded in raising awareness on racism, xenophobia and sexism*
- *some empowerment of black, ethnic minority and migrant women took place*
- *solidarity, networking opportunities and visibility were increased.*

**NB** empowerment has been broadly defined as significantly increasing the following: networking; awareness raising; confidence building; assertiveness; participation, either within organisations or in the wider society.

The "Overcoming Discrimination" project has been carried out by the European Women's Lobby with financial support from DG V of the European Commission and Levi Strauss and Co. Europe.

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