Newsletter n° 1
WHAT is SEEN PROJECT:

The social phenomena involving marginalized people undergo sudden and unexpected evolutions requiring creative and flexible skills in order to constantly develop innovative intervention modalities, but the same phenomena generally emerge in a sort of wave-like pattern so that what you meet in a country (for example in terms of drugs, drug use /patterns, migration, new poverties) will probably be exported to another country in a short time. The social outreach projects dealing with marginalized people are the first service provision capable of reading these developments and offering the opportunity for a "just in time" exchange of different expertise. This timeliness results in a significantly improved effectiveness of the activities.

Outreach and low threshod activities are a fundamental instrument for interpreting phenomena in real time, giving immediate answers and providing the institutions involved with the data and advice needed to formulate effective responses in the medium and long term. Such activities however need constant updating, training and exchanges that can only be obtained through fast, flexible and adaptable means. Only a wider, structured range of opportunities for mutual learning involving the people working in similar outreach, low threshold, harm/risk reduction services in areas with similar needs, can best respond to their needs.

The SEEN (Skills Exchange Educators Network) Project aims at providing and evaluating internship work sharing as a means of empowerment and capacity building for educators, social and health professionals and peers involved in outreach projects, who work in low-threshold centres dealing with harm and risk-reduction for drug users or supporting sex workers, migrants, youth and marginalized people.

Public and private social and health services across Europe run outreach programmes that complement traditional services. These programmes reverse the traditional relationship where it is the client that formally requests assistance, and try instead to reach the target people where they can be met.

Outreach social workers can read the phenomena and needs concerning the target users almost in real-time and can provide policy makers and the entire social services system with relevant and objective information as well as guidance about possible solutions.

The high degree of variability in the contexts involved requires versatility from outreach workers and continuous professional training that cannot be limited to traditional approaches. Experience-based learning carried out through exchanges among similar organizations proves necessary and cannot be limited to short visits, seminars, conferences or project literature (documents, manuals, final reports, articles etc.) of the most significant actors. The SEEN project therefore proposes one-
Month exchanges of outreach workers in NGOs having similar profiles and expertise in different European countries.

Main objectives:

- Empowerment and capacity building for: outreach workers (both professional and peers) directly involved and social and health workers (both professional and peers) indirectly involved and their organisations.
- Mutual learning and sharing of best practices
- Monitoring and evaluation of teaching methods and informal/experience-based training

Target group:

The target is represented by workers, educators, professionals and peers with at least three years’ experience in outreach, low -threshold, harm/risk reduction services. With their mix of expertise and growth potential, they are the dynamic element of such services and a human resource we must invest in.

Spending a month working with another team in another country will allow the participants to learn about different modalities, techniques, ways of implementing social outreach activities but also to share their own experience and provide an external competent point of view that can result very useful for the host organization.). The whole process will be shown during different training phases and through dissemination seminars involving different stakeholders (e.g social workers, public officials, social and health professionals, policy makers etc.)

The partnership:

The project involves 4 European organizations active in the field of harm reduction / outreach activities drug use in 3 EU countries.

- Associazione Gruppo Abele onlus – Lead Partner - It
- APDES (Piaget Agency for Development) – PT
- STICHTING DE REGENBOOG GROEP – Nl
- Villa Maraini Foundation - It

The partners were chosen because all of them, although with different characteristics, have for decades played a key strategic role in the field of low threshold service provision in their countries and at EU level:

- They manage low threshold harm -and -risk reduction services for drug users, sex workers, migrants, youth.
- They have been involved in several European projects and networks often as project leaders
In terms of validation, impact and dissemination of results they have an extensive, long-standing consolidated collaboration with the main NGOs, universities, research centres, and public institutions working in the same specific field, at local, national and European level. Gruppo Abele Association has been in several other partnerships with them for other European projects and networks.

GRUPPO ABELE, APDES E VILLA MARAINI in particular have a long experience in the implementation of outreach, low-threshold and harm/risk reduction services in their own areas. De REGENBOOG GROEP promoted and implemented “CORRELATION” one of the widest “Umbrella” networks in Europe under which innovative projects have been carried out over the last years. These have addressed emergencies and challenging issues concerning marginalized populations and including: new psychoactive substances, social and labour integration of immigrants and homeless people, AIDS and hepatitis, peer support, empowerment, etc.

These characteristics enable the Portuguese and Italian partners to deal with exchanges of workers in similar services and the Dutch partners appear strategic in evaluating processes, disseminating results and proposing implementation of the practice across Europe.

<iframe width="1100" height="616" src="https://www.youtube.com/embed/FLGE9KweHjs" frameborder="0" allowfullscreen></iframe>
Lead Partner: Associazione Gruppo Abele onlus:

Since 1965, its starting year, Gruppo Abele has always given voice to all disadvantaged and vulnerable people, such as drug addicted people, HIV/AIDS people, homeless, young offenders and misfits, migrants, single mothers, women victims of violence, young women victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation. Gruppo Abele is aimed at cultural and political commitment to build social justice. Gruppo Abele has always been linking welcome and culture with the idea of turning social practice into thought. For this reason it edits magazines and, books on social and education issues.

Università della Strada – the training agency - organizes training programmes for social workers and professionals. All the activities are financed by public funds (municipalities, Piemonte Region and other Regions, Ministries, National Health Service) banking and corporate foundations, NGOs and private donations. Gruppo Abele activities involve more than 130 people, employees and consultants. A great contribution is given by volunteers. Organisational structure contemplates 4 major areas, each dealing with specific issues (e.g. low threshold; victims support; drug addiction treatment programmes; training; research and documentation). It has previously carried out numerous projects with institutional entities and civil associations.

Relevant experience for this project:

Associazione Gruppo Abele is a major organization in Italy, that has worked for 50 years in the social field helping marginalized people in many different ways and has been a key reference for the empowerment of: outreach approach, low threshold services and harm/risk reduction initiatives. It has participated in a lot of different projects involving: harm reduction mobile units; drop-in centres; sex workers mobile units; outreach work targeting minor migrants, homeless people, partygoers; risk/harm reduction mobile units.

"Università della strada" (Street University), which is Gruppo Abele's training agency, has been providing training courses, seminars, technical and psychological support to social and health professionals and organizations all over Italy since 1978.

The key persons involved in the project are:

Lorenzo Camoletto has been working for Gruppo Abele as an educator and trainer since 1994. He has been involved in many outreach activities carried out by Gruppo Abele in low threshold and outreach programmes dealing with drug use, minor migrants, homeless people and sex workers. He is the project manager of the Baonps project (a project providing drug checking during nightlife events that is co-funded by the European Union). He is the coordinator of the Neutravel project, a risk/harm reduction outreach project implemented in nightlife events too. He also works at Gruppo Abele drop-in centre and acts as facilitator for the Indifference Busters Union (a harm reduction-based user union).
For the “Street University” he carries out training on: outreach work, low threshold activities, old and new drug use patterns, peer support to and empowerment of marginalized people. He has been involved in several national and international projects and networks.

Sabrina Sanfilippo has worked as an educator for Gruppo Abele since 2005. Until 2007 she worked in the girls’ sector of the “Ferrante Aporti” juvenile detection centre in Turin. Since 2007 she has worked in a street education team addressing in particular minor immigrants. She provides assistance mainly to young adolescent girls, by accompanying them to health and legal services, supporting their integration into the working world and following projects fighting early school leaving. She represents Gruppo Abele Association in the coordination of street education initiatives run by the municipality of Turin. She has cooperated in the drawing up, implementation and training of several projects.

Ezio Farinetti is a psychologist and works for Gruppo Abele’s “Università della Strada” (Street University) supervising team work (methods, clinical cases, group dynamics) in therapeutic communities, social services, low threshold services, migrant services, educational services. In cooperation with NGOs and Public Services he designs and manages specific training on social items such as: addiction, migration, cross-cultural policies, education, empowerment, self-help, penitentiary policies, prevention, social and community interventions etc. In the past he took part in several European Projects in the field of alternative measures and migration. From 1999 to 2006 he worked in mental health services.

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APDES - Agência Piaget Para o Desenvolvimento – (Piaget Agency for Development):

Agência Piaget para o Desenvolvimento (APDES) is a Portuguese non-profit organization, founded in 2004 to promote integrated development. APDES works with communities and people in vulnerable situations (unemployed people, prisoners, elderly people, foster children, drug users, sex workers, among others) aiming to improve the access to health, employment and education and enhancing social integration and cohesion. APDES also aims to strengthen active citizenship and community participation, through the enhancement of citizens’ power to exercise their rights and responsibilities. Its core principles are: Human Rights Protection, Action Research and Evaluation Methodologies, Participative and Proximity Models of Intervention; Empowerment and Citizenship; Activism and Policy Action; Transdisciplinary Approaches. Therefore, APDES profile is oriented to: (a) providing proximal intervention services to vulnerable people and communities at national and international contexts, (b) producing critical understanding and research on the health and social reality and changing and advocating for fair health and social policies.

APDES has around 50 collaborators from areas as wide as Psychology, Sociology, Social Service, Anthropology, Nursing, Chemistry, Economics and Management.

APDES develops several projects and territorial interventions and provides health and social services in various Portuguese regions and has been broadening its territorial scope of intervention, extending its action to several regions of the country, such as Barcelos, Vila Nova de Gaia, Porto, Guarda and Lisboa and Setúbal. These projects are focused on vulnerable populations like people who use drugs, sex workers, foster children, inmates, unemployed persons, the elderly, etc., and integrate action-research and evaluation methodologies for studying the target groups, their needs and policy issues associated to their social and health problems. APDES past and present history on promoting territorial interventions/projects that follow evaluation frameworks/methodologies and specific action-research projects can be highlighted with: the development of the first Portuguese action-research and experimental project on drug use peer education for the promotion of the value of peer work and its integration in national policies, co-funded by the Portuguese State - National Institute of Drugs and Drug Addiction (IDT); the evaluation of self-employment public measures to promote vulnerable people accessibility to these programs, funded by the European Social Fund; the development of an action-research project to evaluate the relationship between treatment therapists and people drug users (clients), funded by Reckitt Benckiser Pharmaceuticals; etc. APDES has been playing an important role in the national landscape by innovating in the drug intervention field and by working internationally with several partners in the development of research and intervention networks in order to improve the work done in this area and to share good practices.
Since its creation, APDES has been growing in its symbolic capital, both in national and international contexts. Its recognition by its partners, but also by official organisations as capable of original and rigorous thinking and intervention has been growing steadily. At national level, APDES is engaged on the Advocacy and Drug Policies Group of the Portuguese National Harm Reduction Network (R3); it is one of the founders of the National Sex Work Network (RTS); and it’s a member of the Portuguese Civil Society Forum on HIV. This national cooperation puts APDES in a crucial position to influence the Portuguese drug policy and intervention scenario and that’s one of the reasons why it is also profoundly engaged in international networking too, as a way of strengthening its national (and international) advocacy role. APDES is an effective member of several international networks: Correlation Network I, II and III, European Network of Harm Reduction (EuroHRN), Access to Treatment and Harm Reduction for Drug Users in Custody (Access) and InDoors – Support and Empowerment of Female Sex Workers and Trafficked Women working in Hidden Places, IDPC - International Drug Policy Consortium; European Civil Society Forum on Drugs, hosted by the European Commission - DG Justice.

APDES is a training entity accredited by DGERT – Directorate-General for the Employment and Working Relations. APDES has an extensive experience organizing training courses for vulnerable populations in specific areas: peer education, employment, self-employment, harm reduction. APDES has also promoted several courses for outreach workers in different fields: drug use, sex work, party scenes and prisons.

APDES has supported the establishment of CASO - the first association of drug users in Portugal - and provides assistance for the development of its peer support activities and political expression. Agência Piaget para o Desenvolvimento (APDES) is a Portuguese non-profit organization, founded in 2004 to promote integrated development. APDES works with communities and people in vulnerable situations (unemployed people, prisoners, elderly people, foster children, drug users, sex workers, among others) aiming to improve the access to health, employment and education and enhancing social integration and cohesion. APDES also aims to strengthen active citizenship and community participation, through the enhancement of citizens’ power to exercise their rights and responsibilities. Its core principles are: Human Rights Protection, Action Research and Evaluation Methodologies, Participative and Proximity Models of Intervention; Empowerment and Citizenship; Activism and Policy Action; Transdisciplinary Approaches. Therefore, APDES profile is oriented to: (a) providing proximal intervention services to vulnerable people and communities at national and international contexts, (b) producing critical understanding and research on the health and social reality and changing and advocating for fair health and social policies.

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APDES has supported the establishment of CASO - the first association of drug users in Portugal - and provides assistance for the development of its peer support activities and political expression. Relevant experience for this project:

Inspired by the human rights foundational ideals, APDES promotes health through harm reduction strategies and the improvement of healthy lifestyles in different social contexts, such as schools, local communities and prisons. APDES promotes seven outreach services at national level working
in different harm reduction areas: drug use, prisons, sex work, party settings, etc. APDES is a certificated training organization with a lot of experience in the harm reduction area, being the first NGO in Portugal to promote trainings in the harm reduction area.

From 2011 to September 2013 APDES coordinated the project POWfile I - European Profile of the Outreach Worker on Harm Reduction, funded by LLP Leonardo da Vinci Partnerships. The purpose of this project was to develop the Profile of the Outreach Worker on Harm Reduction (OWHR), consisting on the first step for the process of professionalization of OWHR. Major European organizations and professional networks were involved in this process. Regarding operational and financial management, APDES has extensive experience coordinating and managing projects with national and European funding. Besides the mentioned project we must also add that APDES has a wide range of international management skills acquired within the role of leading work packages in several European and international networks and in cooperation for development actions: in the projects INDOORS (as coordinator of the work package Empowerment for indoor sex workers and community capacity building, and Awareness raising about sex’s workers rights) and NEWIP (as coordinator of the Evaluation Work package); in the networks Correlation Project III - Hepatitis C (as coordinator of the Advocacy work package) and EuroHRN (as leader of the South European sub-region, where has been playing an advocacy role for the promotion of Harm Reduction in this region); in the Portuguese-Speaking African Countries projects for cooperation and development, ACP@ICT, Mozambique and Cape Verde (as responsible for the External Monitoring and Evaluation).

Aside from this, APDES, being a NGO, fulfils the much needed role for a neutral intermediate at national and international level for the establishment of bridges with Governmental Authoroties, considering that drug use and harm reduction intervention makes no sense if it’s not grounded in a steady and genuine activity of lobbying for more rational, science based and fair drug policies. Fighting against prohibitive and repressive models is an ethical obligation for those who work in this field because that’s the only way to deal with the structural factors behind drug harm.

APDES has an Outreach team that operates in different party settings throughout the country. APDES also provides a drug checking service in big festivals and every Friday at APDES main office. This service has allowed the detection of dangerous adulterantes and the development of an alert system that permits APDES not only to prevent health related crisis but also to monitor the drug market and detect new trends, which is particularly relevant in a moment when so many new substances are emerging. APDES participated in the NEWIP Project, leading the evaluation of the project, and coordinated the Project NPS - New psychoactive substances in Europe. Since 2006 APDES was an active member of Democracy, Cities and Drugs, the safer nightlife platform.

The key persons involved in the project are:
José Queiroz, Degree in Psychology (Faculty of Psychology of Porto University, Portugal); 12 years of experience in coordinating a NGO, APDES (Executive Director of APDES), and Managing national and international projects/networks; Head of the coordination commission of CLAT 5 Conference; Political and advocacy skills: coordination of the south sub-region in EUHRN and the advocacy work package of Correlation III – Hepatitis C; Portuguese National HR Network (R3) spoke person in political and parliamentary meetings; evaluation and research skills: member of the evaluation team on a cooperation for development project in Mozambique and Cape Verde (ACP@TIC), member of the research team on a study about “Life Management and Career Management” in unemployed people from the north region of Portugal; design of the evaluation methodology of an outreach HR team (GIRUGAIA).

Helena Valente is a psychologist currently doing a master degree in Law (Human Rights). Helena has been working in Party Settings as an Outreach worker in Harm reduction since 2007. Since 2012 she is responsible for all APDES projects regarding Nightlife issues. She was an active member of the DC&DII Safernightlife platform and she is the Evaluation Manager of the NEWIP and the implementation coordination of the New Psychoactive substances among problem drug users – towards effective and comprehensive health responses in Europe (JUST/2013/DPIP/AG/4774).

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Foundation The Rainbow Group (RG) is an Amsterdam-based NGO committed to people with social problems, such as homelessness, drug and alcohol abuse and psychiatric disorders. The organisation provides low-threshold health and social services, such as day centres and night shelters, psychosocial support, drug consumption rooms and needle exchange programmes. Furthermore, RG provides social support through buddy projects.

RG employs more than 150 professionals and works with 1000 volunteers. The organisation runs 9 drop-in centres, 4 drug consumption rooms, and 3 needle exchange programmes, where more than 97,000 syringes have been exchanged in 2010. RG has a low-threshold approach, hands on mentality and a lot of experiences in harm reduction and involving target groups at all stages of service delivery and decision-making.

FRG has a solid governance structure, consisting of Board of Directors, Advisory Board and Managing Director (Chief Executive). In 1996, RG received the official Dutch approval for not-for-profit organisations (CBF).

In addition to the work at the local, practical and grass-root level, RG has always been committed to international cooperation. For more than 15 years, RG has been involved in European and international organisations and projects. The aim of the international involvement is to exchange experience and knowledge, to stimulate mutual learning and understanding, to improve the accessibility and quality of services for vulnerable and marginalised people and to influence policies, targeting these particular groups.

Relevant experience for this project:

The main aim of RG is to prevent isolation and stimulate participation of marginalised groups in society.

Since 2007, RG has implemented a wide range of work and reintegration programmes. RG is the main contractor of the largest work stimulation programme in Amsterdam and coordinates the project, in which more than 100 projects are united, all available for those who live in the margins of society. RG involves its target groups in the delivery of low-threshold services in the Drop-In Centres. Every year, RG succeeds to integrate about 200 people in various work and activation programmes. Work and (re)integration is an important part of the activities of RG: it contributes to empowering the target group, to structuring their days and to enabling a better grip on their life. RG acts as mediator between the labour market and those living in the margins of society.

RG has been coordinating 'Make it Work - Meaningful work and (re)integration programmes for marginalised and vulnerable groups – INWORK', which has been funded by the Grundtvig Life Long Learning Programme. The aims of this project were to provide an overview of examples of best
practice regarding participation and integration in the labour market in Europe and to develop an online toolbox for people who work with marginalised and vulnerable groups. A final conference with more than 100 participants was organised in November 2014.

The organisation also runs an innovative programme, which provides support, day structure, work and a regulated release of alcohol. The most important element of the programme is work, individual support and the learning process in itself, which stimulates the participants to develop a new daily routine and structure, which actually leads to a decrease in perceived and actual nuisance [e.g. http://www.pstamber.com/sharing/2015/11/26/it-takes-time-money-and-beer].

The key persons involved in the project are:

Katrin Schiffer (1969) studied social work in Germany and worked in several organizations and projects targeting drug users and sex workers. She cooperated closely with national and international sex work and drug user organisations in Europe. In this framework, she implemented numerous training sessions, targeting sex workers and drug users. Since 2005, Ms Schiffer has been one of the coordinators of the European Correlation Network, with more than 100 partners from all over Europe. She is responsible for the overall management of the network, the organisation of seminars and conferences (e.g. 'Social Inclusion and Health', Sofia, 2005 and 'Out of the Margins', Ljubljana, 2011). She presented the network at many conferences and symposia and published numerous reports and articles. Katrin Schiffer is coordinator of the EACEA-funded project 'Make it Work - Meaningful work and (re)integration programmes for marginalised and vulnerable groups – INWORK'.

In 2011, Ms Schiffer graduated at the Netherlands School for Public and Occupational Health as a Master of Public Health (MPH).

Ms Schiffer has comprehensive expertise and experience in project planning (including budgeting), project implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Eberhard Schatz (1955) studied social work in Germany and worked for drug counselling services in Germany and cross-border projects between Germany and the Netherlands. From 1998 to 2004, he coordinated the European project AC Company, a network with 35 partner organisations, targeting mobile drug users in Europe. He is involved in different advisory boards on national and international level. Since 2005, Mr Schatz has been one of the coordinators of the European Correlation Network, with more than 100 partners from all over Europe. Together with Ms Schiffer, he is responsible for the overall management of the network, the organization of seminars and conferences (e.g. 'Social Inclusion and Health', Sofia, 2005 and 'Out of the Margins', Ljubljana, 2011). He presented the network at many conferences and symposia and published numerous reports and articles. Mr Schatz is coordinator of European funded project the Hepatitis-C-Initiative.

Mr Schatz has comprehensive expertise and experience in project planning (including budgeting), project implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

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Villa Maraini - FONDAZIONE VILLA MARAINI ONLUS:

Villa Maraini Foundation (VM) is one of the leading organization in Italy active in the field of substance abuse prevention and treatment. During more than 30 years of activity, VM has radically increased its activities and services, becoming a reference centre on all drug abuse related issues at international level. VM offers a wide range of services and programmes to people affected by drug and/or alcohol addiction and their families, reaching more than 3,000 people annually. These services include residential and semi-residential therapeutic communities, a clinic centre for pharmacological therapies, outreach street units, emergency unit, drop-in centre and night shelter, helpline service, a labour cooperative for job orientation, support activities in prison for drug offenders, training courses for specialists and volunteers.

The staff is composed by social workers, medical doctors, psychologists and administrators, for a total of 80 employees. Moreover, the foundation can count on the support of a great number of volunteers.

As affiliate of the Italian Red Cross, VM is member of the Red Cross Movement and since 2004, it organizes training courses on drug abuse issues for Red Cross/Red Crescent Societies from all over the world. More than 200 youth workers and volunteers have participated at these training, as well as at study visits in Italy to see in practice the work conducted every day by our staff and volunteers.

In 2012, VM has signed a tripartite Partnership on substance abuse with the Italian Red Cross and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent (IFRC), which officially recognizes VM as reference and training centre on substance abuse issues for the whole Red Cross Movement. One of the objective of this Partnership is to strengthen skills and capacity of Red Cross staff and volunteers, promoting the active involvement of youth workers and volunteers in the field of substance abuse.

**Relevant experience for this project:**

One of the main activities of Villa Maraini Foundation is outreach work among marginalized and vulnerable populations such as drug users, sex workers, migrants. Since 1992, the Foundation conducts outreach work in most disadvantaged areas of Rome with two mobile street units, with the aim to get in contact with most hard-to-reach groups and provide them with basic health and social support.
Moreover, since 1994 VM is managing low-threshold services for people with substance abuse problems, such as a drop-in centre and an emergency unit for medical interventions in case of overdoses or withdrawal symptoms.

Therefore, VM has a long-lasting experience in the field of outreach and social work among marginalized populations. Outreach work is an effective tool to offer important health services to people who have no contact with the public health system. For example, rapid testing for HIV and Hepatitis C is provided in the mobile units and the low-threshold facilities managed by VM (drop-in centre, night shelter, out-patient clinic). This allows to test people who have never been tested for these infections, detect new cases and refer people to specialized clinics for treatment and care.

The key persons involved in the project are:

Mrs. Nadia Gasbarrini works as Head of International activities and coordinator of EC funded projects. She has great experience in managing and coordinating projects in the field of capacity building, youth and health.

She has worked both with national and international organizations, managing transnational projects and networks. She has written various publications about the work with people with substance abuse problems and has participated as speaker in several international conferences and meetings.

She works as expert trainer/consultant for the Training and Research Partnership on Substance Abuse of the IFRC/Italian Red Cross/Villa Maraini Foundation.

Mr. Philippe Garcia works as Financial Manager of international programmes and EC funded projects. He has a Degree in Economics, with a Specialization in International Trade. He has a great experience in the accounting of EC grants and funds, and in the management of budgets, payrolls, expenses, and staff.

He works as expert trainer/consultant and peer educator for the Training and Research Partnership on Substance Abuse of the IFRC/Italian Red Cross/Villa Maraini Foundation.

Website: [www.villamaraini.it](http://www.villamaraini.it)

Contact: [europeanprojects@villamaraini.it](mailto:europeanprojects@villamaraini.it)
Coming soon in Newsletter n°2:

Transnational training meetings summary:

Trainees point of view and more...

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