SEEN Project Annex:
Final Evaluation Report

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1. Introduction SEEN project

SEEN is a Strategic Partnership Project within the Erasmus+ Programme – adult education. The SEEN project is an international collaboration between four European organizations in the field of harm reduction/outreach activities on drug use:

1. Associazione Gruppo Abele (Turin, Italy)
2. Apdes (Porto, Portugal)
3. Stichting De Regenboog (Amsterdam, the Netherlands).
4. Villa Maraini Foundation (Rome, Italy)

This project gives outreach workers and social workers the opportunity to experience an internship abroad with the goal to exchange knowledge.

1.1 Objectives

The main objective of this project is to empower the organizations involved as well as to offer empowerment and capacity building for:

- Outreach workers (both professional and peers) directly involved in the project’s activities
- Social and health workers (both professionals and peers) indirectly involved in the project’s activities

Furthermore the project aims to:

- Create mutual learning and sharing of best practices on outreach work
- Develop and implement teaching methods and informal/experience-based training

1.2 Expected impact

The project aims to create meaningful impact and added value for project partners, participating organizations, the final target group and additional stakeholders.

For the participants:

- Capacity building and motivation in terms of empowerment
- Implementation and consolidation of informal/relational networks among workers

For participating organizations:

- Ability to implement activities and meet common needs
- Consolidation of partnerships and informal networks
- Adoption of mutual learning informal practices as validated standard procedures.

For other relevant stakeholders:

- Consolidation of the importance of investments in training and information targeting outreach, low threshold, harm/risk reduction activities in the perception of public and private social actors
Levels of impact
Local/regional and national levels:
- Improvement in the quality of outreach, low-threshold harm/risk reduction services
- Implementation of new or enhancement of existing activities

At the European level:
- Consolidation of training and mutual learning activities

1.3 Structure and management
Gruppo Abele is the leading partner and responsible for the overall coordination and project management. De Regenboog is coordinating and responsible for the evaluation process. This evaluation focuses both on the process of the project as well as the eventual impact.

Work packages
The project consisted of different work packages as listed below.
- Project preparation
- Design internship
- Running internship
- Dissemination /teaching method
- Evaluation

The partner organizations used an activity list to determine which different activities belong in the work packages. Additionally, a schedule was set up as a detailed planning tool. This presented an overview of all the upcoming internships. Google Drive was used as a platform to save all shared documents and provide accessibility for all partner organizations.
2. Methodology

2.1 Indicators

The following indicators will be applied to assess the achievement of project objectives and results:

Quantitative indicators:
- Organisation of 4 project meetings
- Organisation of 3 skype meetings
- Organisation of one final meeting/seminar with external participants
- Implementation of 4 national training events in each country
- Implementation of 31 internships
- Publication and dissemination of a Manual

Qualitative indicators:
- Positive feedback and satisfaction of project partners about project implementation, progress and results
- Positive feedback and satisfaction of project partners about the organisation, the objectives, the content and the utility of the project meetings
- Positive feedback of the participants of the internship program

2.2 Evaluation instruments

In order to measure the indicators a set of questionnaires have been developed. All partners delivered regular input from these questionnaires. They disseminated the evaluation questionnaires to participants as well as mentors of participants during the internship.

The different instruments for measuring the impact are:

Impact on project staff:
- Evaluation questionnaires after the project meetings

Impact on participating organizations:
- Evaluation with all project organization in each country to assess the impact of the projects
- Evaluation questionnaires and reporting forms for participants of the internship program to assess the impact of the internships

Impact on the European level:
- Number of email correspondence and recipients of email correspondence.
3. Process

Gruppo Abele was responsible for the overall coordination and management of the project. The organisation coordinated the overall workflow, prepared and monitored the timelines, as well as the financial administration. They were also responsible for initiating the guidelines of the traineeships.

The partner organizations were in charge of setting up and coordinating the internships, recruitment of participants and organisation of the national preparation events. Additionally, every partner was responsible for the national dissemination (within their organisation).

3.1 Process of partner collaboration

There have been several moments where all project partners came together. From the evaluations it is possible to provide an insight of the collaboration during the project.

1st Partners meeting
This first international meeting was mostly about getting to know the different partner organizations and getting a good understanding of their profile and activities. The coordinators gained sufficient insight in for instance the expected profile of internship participants. Also the possibilities for hosting trainees, concerning the different activities were discussed.
Two people noted that good communication between the partner organizations is most important in obtaining a shared view of the goals and aims, and that a meeting like this with face-to-face contact is a crucial aspect. A point of improvement was mentioned on the topic of finance. One person would have liked to spend more time on the financial reporting.

Skype meetings
Several Skype meetings have been organized. Some comments on the first Skype meeting were given. Despite some problems due to the change of the project assistant the Skype call has been productive. The agenda includes discussing the finance. This is important for the implementation of the project, to provide a good communication and clear information about the financial aspect of the project. “Due to this we have produced specific financial guidelines and a Google drive platform.”
As an evaluation point it was mentioned that in the future it would be useful to find another communication tool instead of Skype.

Another Skype meeting has also been evaluated. During this meeting the project activities and the exact timeline of the activities were discussed.
From this evaluation it can be concluded that discussions on Skype were as successful as could reasonably be expected. This could imply that it is challenging to have a meaningful meeting through the medium of Skype.

2nd Partners meeting Amsterdam
From the replies on the evaluation questionnaires it can be stated that the 2nd international project meeting was very meaningful. The coordinators gave a high appreciation marks for content and organizational aspects. They gained a lot of knowledge during the meeting about the entire process, the different project activities
and the practical organisation of the internships. Many commented that this meeting was especially important to clarify the activities calendar. Only the topic of development of a manual could have been more focused. Overall this has been a successful meeting.

3rd Partners meeting Porto
The overall quality and appreciation of this meeting was positive. The content of the meeting and the level of participation was rated as very good and excellent. Also, all the coordinators seemed satisfied with the organisational aspects of the meeting.
The national coordinator was sufficiently able to carry out the project activities as expected. It was mentioned that there was sufficient collaboration between project partners, which made it possible to carry out all the different project activities as expected.

Conclusion
From the evaluations in can be concluded that, looking solely at the international meetings, the collaboration between the partner organizations was deemed successful. Also, the process before, during and after the internships went smooth. The coordinators mentioned they found the international partner meetings of key importance for developing good cooperation.
4. Results

This schedule provides an overview of the information used in this evaluation. From these sources results can be generated, going into the following topics:

- Impact on trainees
- Impact of internship
- Dissemination and implementation

Table 1. Overview of events and sources of information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Documents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>International meetings</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 2016</td>
<td>1st Partner meeting (kick-off) in Turin, Italy</td>
<td>Minutes, evaluation questionnaires</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2017</td>
<td>1st Skype meeting with all partners</td>
<td>Minutes, evaluation questionnaires</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2017</td>
<td>2nd Skype meeting Lorenzo and Wera</td>
<td>Minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 2017</td>
<td>2nd partner meeting in Amsterdam, The Netherlands</td>
<td>Minutes, Traineeship Guidelines, evaluation questionnaires</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2018</td>
<td>3rd partner meeting in Porto, Portugal</td>
<td>Evaluation questionnaires, project coordinators</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **National meetings**                                  |                                                                                               |
| **APDES**                                             |                                                                                               |
| May 2017 | Workshop                                                             | Presentation/ evaluation questionnaires         |
| Sept 2018 | Final meeting/seminar                                               | Evaluation questionnaires                       |

| **De Regenboog**                                      |                                                                                               |
| Information meeting                                   | Agenda                                                                                         |
| Workshop                                              | Presentation                                                                                   |

| **June 2018**                                         |                                                                                               |
| Final reflection meeting/seminar                      | Evaluation report                                                                             |

| **Gruppo Abele**                                      |                                                                                               |
| Information meeting                                   |                                                                                               |
| May 2017 | Workshop                                                             | Presentation, participant and coordinator evaluation questionnaires |

| Sept 2018 | Final workshop                                                      | Evaluation report                             |

| **Villa Maraini**                                     |                                                                                               |
| Information meeting                                   |                                                                                               |
| April 2017 | Workshop                                                             | Presentation, coordinator evaluation questionnaire |

| August 2018 | Final meeting                                                       | Mentor evaluation questionnaires Workshop report |
4.1 Impact on trainees
Partner organizations agreed on organizing multiple meetings. The purpose of the first information meeting was to inform employees about the project. The next meeting was a workshop to prepare the participants for their internship. When all the participants returned, an evaluation meeting (seminar) was organized, open for all employees of the organisation. This last meeting included sharing experiences and lessons learned. Also it was an opportune moment to think of ways to implement knowledge and skills developed by all trainees, mentors and coordinators during the project.
The information is arranged by organisation.

APDES
Information meeting
The attendees seemed positive about the information meeting. They found it meaningful. They gained sufficient knowledge about the general topics of the project, like the project objectives and the activities of hosting organizations. It provided people with enough information to make a decision on participating in this exchange project.

Workshop
Overall, people were satisfied with the information given during this workshop. From the evaluations it is clear that people learned a lot during this workshop and that all topics were explained well. People commented that they especially learned more about the objectives of the project, and about the activities of the hosting organizations. Some participants would have liked to discuss the goals and expectations more in detail. The view of the project coordinator about this workshop matches the comments of attendees. The coordinator mentioned that participants were all very enthusiastic about the project. They were so excited that they were talking about different topics at once and that made it hard to bring focus in the meeting. That is reason the coordinator mentioned that it could have been a more structured meeting.

Final meeting/seminar
A final meeting, open for all employees, was organized. During this meeting several interesting topics came across. It appeared harder than expected to learn a new way of working in such a short amount of time, because it takes quite a long time to fully understand and take in a new way of working. Also, a valuable statement was made about the collaboration between the organizations. The need for cooperation during this project between the various organizations resulted in increased understanding about each other and a stronger connection. Additionally, this project resulted in a bigger appreciation of the work within the home organisation, by comparing this with other ways of working.

There were also some points of improvement mentioned. The organisation did not always go as planned. Because of this, clear activities for the internship were not defined, neither were specific objectives formulated. This made it hard to bring focus in the learning goals and the reflection later on.

Also, it is suggested to create a way of monitoring during the internship to really be able to determine later on what could be useful as best practices for other organizations.
Gruppo Abele
Workshop
From the evaluation questionnaires it can be determined that attendees were well informed about the general topics of the project. Looking closely to the ratings however, it seems that some people already had a good idea of the project objectives. For them, this workshop did not provide a lot of additional information concerning for example expectations and preparations. After the workshop, ratings on the topic 'calendar of activities' were low.
Attendees mentioned that the most important aspect learned from the workshop was on the objectives of the project, the profile and services of external partners and the administration needed.
As a point of advice for the future, someone noted to put more attention on the outreach activities. Another person had a very practical suggestion on accommodation: to exchange houses between trainees that go abroad simultaneously in order to resolve the problem of housing.

The comments given by attendees correspond with the opinion of the project coordinator about the workshop. He stated that it had been a stimulating meeting for all participants. They got a clear overview of the project. This was even the case for people who might not be as interested in going on an exchange themselves. They got excited as well and proposed to disseminate information about the project among their networks. They liked to stay involved by welcoming participants from other organizations.

Final meeting/seminar
During the final meeting the trainees came together and shared their experiences and good practices. The seminar was open for all employees as well as all operators of the low-threshold of the city. It provided an opportunity to exchange lessons learned and share these with the rest of the organisation.
This meeting was perceived as very positive and meaningful. One of the most valuable aspects of the internships was gaining insights in services by contributing in other outreach teams.
Participants mentioned that the most important thing learned from the internship is the valuable aspect of the experience of a change in perspective, by stepping outside of your daily routine.

Villa Maraini
Workshop
The project coordinator was pleased with the outcome of the workshop. The goals of the internship were sufficiently clear in the opinion of the coordinator. Trainees got enough information to be able to confidently participate in the exchange.
One point of attention: there was a need to focus more specifically on accommodation arrangements for participants.

Final meeting
The final meeting of Villa Maraini also brought an interesting point to light. During this meeting trainees shared their experiences. All trainees found the exchange to be a positive and meaningful experience. It was valuable to see different ways of working by other organizations and also learn about the health-care system in other European countries.
Together the group thought of best practices and services possible to be replicated. Regarding recommendations for future exchange projects, it was mentioned that maybe the period of the exchange should be longer, because one month is not enough to really get involved in the work of the services.
The final meeting with all the trainees was perceived as successful. A great addition to this meeting was the presence of some trainees that were still in the Netherlands for their exchange. This meeting was open for all employees and used to evaluate and share experiences. When asked how the exchanges could be improved, opinions varied. Some employees indicated that they would have preferred to have less location-visits because it left little time to reflect on what they had seen. Others commented that it would have been boring to see only one location. Some felt the exchange could have been more effective had employees had to set specific goals before the exchange, or had a specific problem/task to tackle during their exchange, rather than being incorporated in the day-to-day activities.

4.2 Impact of internship

Preparation of internship
Before the start of the internship participants were asked to appreciate the quality of the preparation and organisational aspects by the home organisation as well as the host organisation (table 2). Out of the 31 participants, 15 filled out an evaluation questionnaire prior to the exchange. They rated the organisational aspects good to very good.

Preparation by home organisation
Zooming in on these organisational aspects it shows that participants found the information that was given about the entire process and upcoming events from fair to very good. The same goes for the amount and quality of information given regarding the activities of the internship. Some additional comments were provided on this topic. One person commented that the information was received quite late. A second person mentioned that the interaction with the project assistant did not go as well as expected.

Interestingly, the following ratings are scattered along the range, which shows a mixed appreciation of the other organisational aspects. The most extreme spread can be seen on the aspect of training and preparation; this was rated from poor up to excellent. One person mentioned not to have experienced any preparation before departure. Topics on internship goals and support given by the home organisation were rated from fair to excellent.

Preparation by host organisation
The performance of the host organisation before the exchange was rated from good to excellent. It shows that this aspect was very well appreciated. Two persons mentioned to have been given sufficient help and support by the host organisation by means of Skype meetings and by e-mail. Two persons replied the following on this question: 'Perfecto!' and 'They had patience'.

Evaluation
Ultimately, the evaluation of the process prior to the exchange was scored fair to excellent. This shows again that participants widely differed in their appreciation on this topic.
Points of improvement
A number of advices and points of improvements were mentioned. One trainee suggested that more information about the project could have been provided. Another person would have liked to receive the project guidelines at an earlier stage and have more meetings prior to exchange, for example to discuss the terminology of the hosting organisation to get familiar with that in advance. A third person asked for more flexibility towards ‘special cases’ in the future (special cases meaning participants that are volunteers instead of paid workers). In a fourth comment, someone was contemplating the possibilities of meeting with other trainees. A fifth reply concerns the lack of awareness of the organisation about the SEEN project and what this means for participating employees.

Table 2. Quality and appreciation of the organisational aspects before internship (n=15)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PLEASE RATE THE FOLLOWING</th>
<th>POOR</th>
<th>FAIR</th>
<th>GOOD</th>
<th>VERY GOOD</th>
<th>EXCELLENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organisational aspects of the internship</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information about the steps in the process and calendar of upcoming events</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The amount and quality of information regarding the activities of your traineeship</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training/preparation for the internship</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information about the goals of the internship</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support of your organisation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service of host organisation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation of the process until the exchange</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Expected contribution during and after internship
Trainees were asked to rate their expected contribution during and after their internship (table 3). These rates show that participants were very motivated to deliver results during the internship and generally expected much of their personal development. One problem concerning the preparation came forward in several forms: some people did not have a good understanding of the expectation of the home organisation as well as the hosting organisation.

Contribution to home organisation
Participants expected to contribute fairly to the development of activities of their home organisation as well as to develop the knowledge and skills of their colleagues.

Looking into the comments that were provided on this topic, it can be seen that two persons did not have a good understanding of the home organisation expectations because they were not mentioned. On the contrary, in one of these cases it is mentioned that the host organisation did discuss in detail the expectations by providing information about the work during the internship.
Table 3. Expected contribution during and after internship (n=15)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PLEASE RATE THE FOLLOWING</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expected development of your own knowledge and skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contribution of your internship to the development of activities in your organisation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contribution of your internship to the development of the knowledge and skills of your colleagues</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation for this internship</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After the internship

After the internship participants were asked to fill out an evaluation questionnaire about the quality and appreciation of the organisational aspects during the internship and about the contribution during and after the internship (table 4 and 5). From 31 trainees, 14 filled out this form.

Overall, as can be seen from the ratings, participants found the organisational aspects during the internship very good. Participants found the information and instructions by the host organisation to be sufficient. However, there are some outliers to ‘poor’. These rates come from one specific participant who, indicating from these rates, seemed to have had a less successful experience than the others. This can also be stated looking from the answers on the questionnaire. This will be analyzed later.

Most valuable aspects

Overall the participants found it most valuable to work with colleagues from another harm reduction organisation and to experience new services and methodologies. For example, for one person it was most valuable to work in a user room for a day together with experienced colleagues. For another it was working along in a project dedicated to sex workers.

One person mentioned an interesting aspect of getting a sense of confirmation about ‘your own work’ by seeing the situation from another different perspective. This gives confidence about the own working methods.

Support by host organisation

In general, people were satisfied with the support of the home organisation as well as the host organisation. Some aspects mentioned about the host organisation were the training and information meetings, the weekly feedback moments, the fact that they were always available for questions and always kind, that everything was scheduled well and that at every new place they visited there was someone to give an introduction.

There is one exception on this. One person clearly had a hard time abroad. This person did not feel welcomed at the host organisation (the coordinator was gone the first days). That was because this person experienced a language barrier, which made conversation impossible. Also, the colleagues did not provide him/her with any work. This person suggested a daily plan could have changed a lot.
Points of improvement
Some points of improvement were mentioned concerning the process during the internship. Two persons suggested meeting the coordinators would have been a good addition to the internship. Another missed a guiding figure (like a mentor) during the internship. Also, it has been mentioned that the expectations of the host organisation was sometimes unclear. Some participants expressed the wish for the exchange to last longer and to be able to get in contact with other trainees.
An interesting comment concerns the awareness of this project at the home organisation. This person experienced that people inside the home organisation were unawareness of the SEEN project and lacked empathy for the situation.

Table 4. Quality and appreciation of the organisational aspects after internship (n=14)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Please rate the following</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Very Good</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organisational aspects during the traineeship</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The amount and quality of information and instructions during the traineeship</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support of host organisation during the traineeship to reach your goals</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support of your organisation during the traineeship</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation of the process after the exchange</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5. Contribution during and after the internship (n=14)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Please rate the following</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Development of your own knowledge and skills</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contribution of your traineeship to the development of activities in your organisation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contribution of your traineeship to the development of the knowledge and skills of your colleagues</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation during the traineeship</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How likely is it for you to apply your new knowledge and skills to your organisation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Contribution to the home organisation
Looking broadly at the ratings in table 5 it can be stated that, in general, participants found the knowledge and skills gained during the internships, to create a fair contribution to the development of activities on the home organisation as well as a contribution to the development of the knowledge and skills of their colleagues. Most participants rated between a 3 and 5 on a scale from 1 till 5. The logical next question is of course how likely they find it to apply this knowledge and skills. The majority of the participants are confident that they are able to implement this knowledge within the organisation.
As a good example, one person mentioned that he/she would write a project proposal to be able to implement lessons learned in the home organisation.

Unfortunately, the table again shows outliers to the left coming from the same person as been discussed above. This indicates one negative overall internship experience. Besides this person, one other participant rated a one for the contribution of the traineeship to the development of activities in the own organisation. Looking into the comments on the questionnaire, this point is explained: This person felt like the two work areas were too different from each other to be able to bring back fitting knowledge. From the other ratings and comments in the questionnaire it seems that overall this person had a good experience: This person’s found the exchange very valuable and all personal goals have been met.

Most valuable parts
Overall, participants mentioned the following point as most valuable from the internship: meeting the local staff members and learning from their way of working and strategies. Also, they learned a lot by being directly involved in the daily routing. Next to that, participants found it valuable to be able to attend daily or weekly (training) meetings because here the local employees share their experiences. The third most valuable thing mentioned was that participants learned a lot from comparing their way of working with that of another organisation.

Points of improvement
People also had some suggestions for future internships. One person expressed the wish to focus on one field within the host organisation instead of seeing something of everything, to be able to feel more useful for the colleague’s abroad and to really contribute something. Another person suggested to the preparation could improve by making an accurate plan of activities and also to form learning goals for the trainee prior to their exchange.

Some experiences
These quotes give an idea of the experiences of the trainees.

“I observed and worked in different services and came back with a different perception of my own world; this is very important to decrease my burn out. I brought home a lot of very useful things like the easy way to approach the job, the strong peer dimension, the importance of advocacy and of an international network”

“SEEN was like diving in more than one sense: the immersion in a very different environment, out of comfort zone, continuous discoveries and the almost permanent sweat in the skin…”

“The experience in Portugal was certainly interesting and formative. It was a month full of emotions not only professional; the relationships built with other operators have certainly left a mark. If I had to collect in one word all that I have experienced, this word would be: HUMANITY”

“The day spent with the staff of GiruBarcelos, where we accompanied a person to the hospital in Braga, emotionally overwhelmed me, the gentleman in question was not very sociable but eventually we took a Pingo together at the bar and talked about gestures. Seeing him smile and smoking a cigarette, made me feel as if this was a conformation of an already strong and consolidated relationship.”
“To work with people with social problems sometimes can be hard and difficult. Sometimes this work makes me feel helpless. But behind the problems, it is always special to discover normal people like me. And to meet people is the most beautiful thing of my life.”

Internships evaluations by mentors

APDES

The mentors were in general satisfied with the organisation of the internships. Some organisational aspects were mentioned during the evaluation. For example, the communicational part prior to the internships. Before the start of the internships, the mentor was given sufficient information of the organisation on the profile and the expectation of the participants and their personal goals. The mentor suggested during these contact moments to create an exchange plan. Also, the mentors felt like they were supported and facilitated sufficiently during the traineeships by their organisation, to enable them to perform the tasks as a mentor. For example, there was always a colleague of SEEN available to answer questions. Although they were positive about the organisations support, they both mentioned not to have given a fair amount of time to be able to coach the trainees. This can be considered as a point of improvement for the future. Next to that, the evaluation process after the exchange could receive more attention in their opinion.

Concerning the content, the mentors had the impression that the internships were sufficiently educational for the trainees to bring back and implement enough knowledge and skills to their home organisation. “Participants got to see different approaches and worked with different outreach teams. Because of this, they were able to find examples of activities and intervention aspects that could be applied to their own organisation”. One mentor noticed that participants really developed knowledge and skills during the traineeships. Both mentors agreed that participants were very motivated for the internship.

Additionally, the mentors mentioned that the participants brought their own experiences to the organisation. This made this project interesting and educational for the hosting mentor and employees as well, to be able to share different approaches, methodologies and interventions together.

As a point of development it was mentioned that it would be useful to create a framework to assemble all the experiences from this project and think of ways to apply lessons learned in other organizations. Also, in the future, the mentor wishes for more face-to-face meetings to overcome cultural differences.

Villa Maraini

The mentors have filled out an evaluation about the internship period. Organisational aspects and the quality of information given to prepare to the internship were only scored fair. This also counts for the information about the goals of the traineeship and the evaluation aspects.

The mentors mentioned that the preparation with the trainee went well. They organized a Skype call with all the trainees before arrival. This was in order to get an idea of the interests of the person and plan the program of the internship accordingly. This was perceived as very useful. Before the traineeship personal goals were discussed. Also during the traineeship the mentor and the trainee agreed together on the tasks to perform during they stay.
From the comments given here can be concluded that the organisational and communicational aspects between the organizations were not always sufficient: “We received confirmation from the sending organization about a trainee’s internship in Villa Maraini just one day before the trainee’s arrival in Rome. Therefore we defined the program once he was here.”

Mentors noticed that all trainees showed great interest toward the services and were very motivated to learn about new services. The mentors felt they were able to achieve all the goals the participant set, because the program of the traineeship was discussed and agreed with the trainee upon arrival at Villa Maraini and was adapted to a person’s requests. At the end of the internship, trainees confirmed to be very satisfied. One element that contributed to the success of this traineeship was the good knowledge of the Italian language by the trainees. This made it possible to be involved in group sessions, activities with families, and discussions with clients.

4.3 Dissemination and implementation
Dissemination and implementation took place on different levels.

National level
First of all, on the national level information about the SEEN project has been spread within the organisation. Sharepoint was used as well as the organisational website, the local SEEN Facebook page, and the newsletter. Additionally, as has been mentioned before, an informational meeting was organized for persons interested in applying for an internship. During the period of the internships, the focus of dissemination was on giving employees an update on the project. After the internship, trainees shared their experiences with their organisation on different platforms mentioned above.

Implementing knowledge and skills
After the internship, trainees reported about their experience. Also, they were asked to write a story to be disseminated on the website and in the newsletter. Next to that, they were encouraged to find ways to apply and implement their new knowledge and skills into the organisation and also help develop the knowledge and skills of their direct colleagues. One example: a participant mentioned writing a project proposal to implement a program with the newly gained knowledge.

Another moment to share knowledge with the home organisation was during the national seminar, as mentioned earlier. After the traineeships, every partner organisation organized a final meeting in the form of a seminar or workshop open for other employees and volunteers. During this seminar all the trainees came together to share their experiences, evaluate and discuss ways to implement lessons learned. Attending employees could, at the same time, learn about the services provided by partner organizations.

International level
On the international level information on the SEEN project has been spread on the general website and in general recurring newsletters that were spread inside every organisation as well as disseminated among the network of every partner organisation. Most importantly, the partner organizations created a manual and guidelines on the outreach internships mutual learning methodology.
5. Conclusion

The main objective of this project was to empower the organizations involved, as well as to offer empowerment and capacity building for both outreach workers directly involved in the project and social and health workers indirectly involved in the project.

From the results of this evaluation report it is hard to make a simple statement whether or not this objective is achieved. This is first of all because the evaluation questionnaires only provide a limited and focused amount of data. Second and most importantly, this objective requires more long-term monitoring, which is not possible to obtain in the case of this short-term evaluation.

Impact was expected on different levels. From the results it is possible to say something about the immediate impact on directly involved participants and their motivation to apply new learned knowledge to the organisation and by doing that create impact in the rest of the organisation.

Looking at these results it is possible to say that this project achieved to empower the organisation by providing participants an ‘enriching experience’, so they mentioned. They developed their own knowledge and skills, and also intent to implement this knowledge into the home organisation. Overall, the participants found the most valuable aspect of the internship to be able to work with colleagues from another harm reduction organisation and to experience new services and methodologies.

This project achieved the aim to create mutual learning experiences and share best practices for outreach workers. By setting up a Manual the partner organisation managed to develop a teaching method for these sorts of learning experiences.

The need for cooperation between the various organizations resulted in increased understanding about each other’s services and activities. This resulted in a stronger connection and consolidation of partnerships. With this, another expected outcome has been achieved. Additionally, this project resulted in increased appreciation of the work within the home organisation, by comparing this to other ways of working.

It appeared that the hosting mentor and employees that worked with the trainees found that they learned a lot from them. Participants brought their own experiences to the organisation. This made it interesting and educational for the hosts as well.

5.1 Points of improvement

There were also some points of improvement. The two most important and most frequent mentioned topics were both linked to preparation. The first topic of improvement is to better define the activities to be performed by the trainee. The result of not having clear objectives came was shown in several forms: some people did not have a good understanding of the expectations of the home organisation, as well as the hosting organisation. Second point of improvement is setting specific goals for trainees. It was mentioned that the internship could have been more effective had employees had to set specific goals before the exchange.
From these results it is not possible to state something about long-term improvement in the quality of outreach, low-threshold harm/risk reduction services, or to say something about the impact for relevant stakeholders.

5.2 Limitation

It is important to take one particular limitation of this evaluation into consideration. Only 15 out of the 31 participants filled out the evaluation questionnaires. This is nearly half of the group. This means that the results concerning the impact on participants cannot be generalized for all participants involved. But, to put this statement into perspective, results show already a wide spread of opinions. This is why it is to be expected that input from more participants would not radically change the overall view.

In general it can be stated that the SEEN project had considerable impact on the outreach workers and their mentors. Also, by setting up this project with four harm-reduction organizations, it realized a development in the European network of harm-reduction. While the majority of outreach workers are very motivated after the internship to apply their new learned knowledge and skills, long-term impact could only be determined by another evaluation in a later period in time.

Hopefully, this evaluation gives the outreach organizations sufficient information to develop their activities.