



## „Developing sustainable networks“

### Partners/stakeholders

- Size of network: 39 organizations/NGOs
- Background of the partners/stakeholders: NGOs: Counselling centres for women and girls
- Representatives of organizations: the organizations are formally represented by their boards; in practical work, the representative would mostly be a "managing director" (Geschäftsführerin), or a counsellor from the center
- Roles and positions: The 30 Centres are equal members of our Network, they form the general assembly and they elect, amongst them, at least 4 members of board, the so-called "Vereinsvorsitzende" (heads of the association)
- Heterogeneity/homogeneity: the Network is a rather homogenous one, given the criteria of its members: autonomous NGOs (non confessional non profit organizations which do not adhere to political parties or public bodies), with a focus on Women's counselling

### Cause and Purpose

- Origin and causation: The Network has been created in 1995
- Expectations: guarantee and improve quality of women's counselling; become a strong NGO that can give voice to the needs of women and will be heard in public
- Added value: Working in European projects gives more significance and widens horizon of the Centers
- Formulation of objectives, goals and aims: 1) Securing a high quality standard of counselling for Austrian and migrant women and girls 2) Introducing the perspective of women and girls into all spheres of life (gender mainstreaming) 3) Making our contribution to improve the living conditions of women and girls
- Development of a mission statement and overall concept
- Level of identification: very high to high for about 2/3 of the members; medium for nearly 173, only a few Centres are little identified. (This is not a proved statistics, but our observations, based on participation of the members to Network's activities)



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### **Characteristics of networks**

- Network model: umbrella organization
- Formal/informal: formal
- Binding character/level of obligation: membership fee, 2 general assemblies per year, participation in activities

### **Steering and Controlling**

- Type/Model of steering and controlling: board and team (every 2-3 months); general assembly (twice a year)
- Responsible steering group: regular meetings of board and team (employees)
- Motivation of steering group: improve quality of the Network, set up perspective and aims, discuss and find solutions for questions arising in the Network

**Duration and intensity: since the foundation in 1995, the Network has been working intensely**

### **Character of the Network/Relationship within the network**

- Type and structure of relationship: all members are equal, all members are counselling Centers; all of them are given the same possibility to participate in activities
- Quality of relationship between partners/stakeholders: high quality
- Participation and Empowerment: 2/3 of the members participate steadily and intensely, the rest is not so present, or not always, but they take advantage of the work; they exchange a lot of information and support each other when problems arise
- Code of conduct
- Communication/flow of information: guaranteed through the coordination unit



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## Conditions

- Internal/external

- Resources (financial, human etc.); all the Centers are autonomous, with their own budget: The Network as a coordinating unit basically lives on EU-project, except for some national funds (mostly women's ministry)

- Access to decision-making power: every representative of the Centers may apply for being a member of board. Their employees (members of the team) do not have decision-making power in cooperation with the board

**Actual output/Specific activities:** for publications see: [www.netzwerk-frauenberatung.at](http://www.netzwerk-frauenberatung.at); actually we are running an Equal project, as coordinating unit "KLARA": f. ex. free cards, cinema spots and dvd ("Women deserve to earn more")

**Positive experiences/Success factors :** We have been invited to be a NGOs representative in several commissions; we have been able to survive for more than 10 years!!, we still have a high grade of participation from our members; we have been mentioned best practice in several EU projects; we have made an important contribution in the networking between institutions and NGOs

**Negative experiences/Barriers and obstacles:** there are few resources for doing networking itself – as the umbrella organization, we have to do a lot of energy-consuming projects (a lot of administration). At the same time, for NGOs it is becoming more and more difficult to apply to European projects (since they should be international)

**Sustainability:** We have survived and developed highly for 10 years and are actually one of the big women's organizations of Austria with a lot of international contacts. Living basically on EU-projects, the new policies of not permitting national NGOs as project promoters might become a problem for our existence.



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