



Newsletter December 2021

INTRODUCTION OF OUR NEW MEMBER FROM SPAIN – Fondation Santé et Communauté

The Health and Community Foundation (FSC) (www.fsyc.org) has been working for more than 25 years in research, prevention, intervention and awareness-raising about different health and social problems that affect, especially, groups at risk or in a situation of social exclusion.



It is a non-profit entity, committed to society, controlled, endorsed and subsidized by different administrations that have trusted our services for years. Our objective has always been to improve the quality of life of people and facilitate social integration through the promotion of health and collective well-being. The FSC runs 145 centres and services of all kind, with a budget of 38,5 Mio €, 1750 professionals and around 330 volunteers.

Therapeutic Community “Riera Major”.

DRUG SERVICES

The Foundation was born in the 80s and began working in drug abuse related issues, eventually expanding its field of action to many other health and social problems. FSC addresses addiction related problems in all their complexity, thus considering psychological, biological and social aspects equally relevant. One of the Foundation’s most specialised intervention field is the interaction between disorders derived from drug use and other health and social problems through specialized centres for people with both a drug addiction and other problems, which can be related to mental health, gender violence or social exclusion.



Therapeutic Community “Can Coll”.

Currently the Health and Community Foundation has been leader in defining models of action in violence against women and drug addiction and their interactions. In the year 2000 a pioneer approach started which brought together the intervention in these two areas. These years of experience intervening with women who found themselves in both situations (gender violence and drug addiction) brought us to start a new programme in 2013 that included shelter and support for women (with or without their children) who needed treatment for their drug abuse and who had suffered gender violence at the same time, and wouldn't, until that moment, be admitted at neither any public nor private service.

FSC's intervention develops through the management of both its own centres and public ones. Its own programs and centres include outpatient services, day centres, different therapeutic communities, and reintegration homes, drug addiction intervention in the street and other programs of employment and social integration.

Currently the Health and Community Foundation has been leader in defining models of action in violence against women and drug addiction and their interactions. In the year 2000 a pioneer approach started which brought together the intervention in these two areas. These years of experience intervening with women who found themselves in both situations (gender violence and drug addiction) brought us to start a new programme in 2013 that included shelter and support for women (with or without



Espai Ariadna, integrated service for women drug users facing GBV

their children) who needed treatment for their drug abuse and who had suffered gender violence at the same time, and wouldn't, until that moment, be admitted at neither any public nor private service.

FSC's intervention develops through the management of both its own centres and public ones. Its own programs and centres include outpatient services, day centres, different therapeutic communities, and reintegration homes, drug addiction intervention in the street and other programs of employment and social integration.

Moreover, through contracts and agreements, FSC manages public programs and services in several regions, including outpatient treatment centres, prison programs and initiatives to reduce the harm associated with substance abuse, such as HIV/AIDS transmission.



If the therapeutic programs carried out by FSC have helped thousands of people through all these years, its prevention programs aimed at students, young people and families have undoubtedly benefited a much larger number of citizens, and their impact on the community awareness-raising has been widely proven.

INTERLEAVE EUROPEAN PROJECT

Health and Community Foundation is in charge of coordinating the initial research being carried out in the framework of the European INTERLEAVE project, with the aim of improving care for women who use/ used drugs and have experienced any kind of gender-based violence.

This research includes quantitative and qualitative data collection in the 6 partner countries (Austria, Croatia, Germany, Italy, Spain, Portugal) through 2 questionnaires, 15 focus groups and 120 individual interviews with women and/or professionals working with them.

For the exploitation and analysis of the data the project is supported by the University of Barcelona (Spain) and a social researcher expert in the analysis of biometric data.



Xavier FERRER PÉREZ

He holds a PhD in Psychology from the University of Barcelona and is specialist in clinical psychology, acting as Scientific and Project Promotion Director of the Health and Community Foundation since its inception. He is as well as co-founder and now Director of the Master's Degree in Drug Addiction at the University of Barcelona (since 1986). Along the years he has been charged with the design, implementation and further supervision of outpatient centres, residential centres, harm reduction and safer consumption rooms, as well as leading the starting of programmes against gender-based violence at FSC. Given his vast experience in the field of drug addiction and in the management of European and international projects throughout his professional career, he has taken on the management of the INTERLEAVE project in Spain.

Laia PLAZA HERNÁNDEZ

She holds a degree in Psychology and another one in Anthropology from the Autonomous University of Barcelona (Spain); also a Master's degree in International Cooperation (Open University of Catalonia) and a Master's degree in Gender Studies (University of Barcelona), having completed her last year at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (EHESS) in Paris (France). She has been the coordinator of international gender programmes at the Health and Community Foundation since 2012. She has also worked as a gender consultant for several international organisations in the field of gender-based violence and sexual and reproductive rights in Europe, Africa and Latin America. She also has a vast professional experience in the field of drug addiction where she worked as a psychologist during 8 years. In the framework of the INTERLEAVE project, she is coordinating the initial research, with the support of the Technical and Project Promotion Director and other colleagues from the same organisation.

FENIQS

Quality standards (QS) were a central priority in the EU Drug Strategy 2013-2020 to improve the quality of drug services and to bridge the gap between science and practice. The EU Strategy 2021-2025 puts further emphasis on QS and evidence-based interventions where the FENIQS-EU project is located.

The general objective of this project is to enhance implementation of QS in drug prevention, treatment and harm reduction throughout the EU, with more services, organizations and countries applying QS in daily practice. The project focuses on the actual application of QS in all EU countries and factors stimulating implementation. The first step in this project was the assessment of QS application throughout the EU and an inventory of implementation needs and challenges. Based on an online survey and interviews with key informants, a comprehensive country-by-country overview is in progress, which will allow us to identify 'good practice' examples of QS implementation. By identifying 'good practice' examples and successful implementation strategies, key stakeholders (e.g. policy makers, service providers and users) will have access to do's and don'ts for implementing QS in various areas of drug demand reduction.

The main output of this action will be a field-tested implementation toolkit, providing step-by-step guidance for individuals and organizations interested in implementing QS. Training sessions, webinars and a video tutorial will support the introduction of the toolkit. Country representatives and civil society organizations will be involved throughout the project to maximize stakeholders' abilities to share good practices and to implement project recommendations in daily practice and at local level.

Handle it ! In the final surge

The project Handle it! - Strategies for Addiction Treatment in New Psychoactive Substances in Europe made a significant step forward with the successful implementation of two LTTAs (learning teaching training activities) in Reichenau (Austria) and Madeira (Portugal). The two meetings were attended by 30 to 40 staff members from the partner organizations. The activity in Reichenau took place at the end of September and was dedicated to New Psychoactive Substances in Aftercare. It was organized and carried out by the Therapiesalon im Wald. Highlights included insights into outdoor and experience-oriented therapy. IREFREA organized and hosted the fourth and final LTTA on the island of Madeira at the end of October. The emphasis

was on new psychoactive substances in outpatient treatment and prevention. The Madeira Minister of Health, as well as colleagues from the local drug help center, drew attention to the urgency and topicality of our work in the project Handle it! and supported us throughout the week. Finally, a variety of tasks for the project's next steps as well as continuation in a new project could be worked out. This data will be evaluated at two transnational project meetings in early 2022. Handle it! can thus be completed with great success at the end of March 2022.



INTERLEAVE

The General Objective of the project is to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the profile and practices developed in the field of women drug users facing Gender-Based Violence. Health and Community Foundation is in charge of coordinating the initial research being carried out in the framework of the European INTERLEAVE project, with the aim of improving care for women who use/ used drugs and have experienced any kind of gender-based violence. This research includes quantitative and qualitative data collection in the 6 partner countries (Austria, Croatia, Germany, Italy, Spain, Portugal) through 2 questionnaires, 15 focus groups and 120 individual interviews with women and/or professionals working with them.

Regarding the first questionnaire, information was collected about the types and characteristics of Gender-Based Violence faced by women drug users: physical, psychological, sexual, economic, obstetric, institutional, and/or symbolic violence. The second questionnaire investigated the prevention and intervention practices to address the issue, such as prevention and advocacy campaigns, local protocols of action in coordination with the agents of the territory, specific characteristics of the shelter homes, etc.

For the exploitation and analysis of the data the project is supported by the University of Barcelona (Spain) and a social researcher expert in the analysis of biometric data. Based on the results of this analysis an intervention toolkit will be developed as a next step. Moreover there will be held a webinar in the first months of the upcoming year followed by a staff exchange and a workshop.



Strengthening social support for homeless drug users in the Islamic Republic of Iran

In the last months Working Group 1 (WG1) was established and is led by Euro-TC and WFAD. There are two objectives:

- Adapting existing quality standards as elaborated in the EU Strategy and by UNODC to the local circumstances in Iran
- Implementation of these quality standards into all actions of the project (treatment, harm, reduction, counselling, case management) to the benefit of the target group, aiming for a high retention rate of clients within the different options.

The two lead organisations Euro-TC and WFAD met seven times and started to work through researching relevant and existing standards in Europe and internationally. These were retrieved and analysed based on relevance and importance for the project. Based on which three main documents were chosen. The following European and International standards were used in the evaluation:

- The Minimum Quality standards in Drug Demand Reduction in the EU
- EU Agenda and Action plan on Drugs
- International Standards for the Treatment of Drug Use Disorders

The value of these documents is recognised by Member States and other national and international stakeholders, and have been adopted in various degrees across Europe and internationally.

Based on the analysis and compilation of the existing quality standards, recommendations will be provided. The next step in the process is to adopt the standards to the local context.

In another Working Group the process evaluation led by Fernando Mendes (Euro-TC) was carried out and will be continued. Here we have an extract from the report: "The data collected show that the Project 'Strengthening social support for homeless drug users in the Islamic Republic of Iran' reinforce the work and responses developed locally with the partners. The results of this evaluation show empowerment of professionals and recognition of the strength of teamwork for Case Management and connection in-between partners and practices. The partnerships and mutual exchange of knowledge and best practices at European level guarantee the minimum quality standards of the interventions of the Rebirth action. The high-risk target groups include homeless drug users. The primary needs of these high-risk individuals include shelter, food, relapse prevention, connection with family, counselling, vocational training and job. Due to SSSHU project there is evidence of increase of awareness and information and access to available resources and services. In a period of 8 months, 29 professional report 304 case management services (some of them may be the same case)." (From the evaluation report)

As a next step supervision of the staff involved should be provided. This action is the second pillar of the main effort of raising the retention rate of the target group in the respective programs. Due to the pandemic restrictions this part had to be postponed.

