

Outcomes of the DRSTP Programme in Hungary
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Hungary participated in the Pompidou Group DRSTP programme, aiming to provide assistance to Central and Eastern European Countries (CEECs) for training the professionals working in the drug demand reduction fields. Katalin Szomor, working for the Ministry of Health, was the project co-ordinator of this project.

In the first phase, four Hungarian professionals benefited from a fellowship including a course in Italy and a two-month study tour in the Netherlands, Sweden and the UK.

After this, in-country seminars were organised, dealing with community level prevention, early intervention, harm reduction, life skills development and management of drug problems in correctional institutes. A methodological training was also given by distance education. In Hungary, the DRSTP seminars were followed by 290 professionals, who evaluated them with a high score. Professional information was also distributed via a DRSTP publication.

In the second phase, the need for books was identified: there was no training material, no manual, no tradition available in our country. Only one textbook should have been set up, but the Hungarian team was more ambitious and prepared a postgraduate distance education training package covering four different areas.

The curriculum was designed with the assistance of international experts. This was a lengthy process with many discussions. Qualified consultants of the Pompidou Group contributed to the success of this process, providing advice, motivation to the book-writers and by setting up a methodology.

An important activity in this phase was the literature research. As Hungarian literature on the selected areas was missing, the Pompidou Group and other international partners provided us with appropriate literature. We also gathered useful website addresses. ELISAD members also helped us, as well as other networks. Consultants always arrived in Hungary with a big suitcase of literature. Later, these documents were sent to the National Drug Library - to make them available to the public.

For the book-writing process - essence of this work - the unified team of 20 members met frequently until the curriculum was finalised. After, four sub-teams were formed, each working on one of the four selected areas, in order to finalise the details.

Goals of the Hungarian project

The four distance education training materials prepared were:

Women and drugs

This book deals with the management of problems caused by the drug use of pregnant women and of young mothers, drugs in the work environment, the detoxification of the mother and baby, and the prevention and care of neurological and other symptoms (attention deficit disorder, hyperactivity). This training material was written explicitly for teams of medical specialists, including an obstetrician, a psychiatrist (addictions specialist), a neonatologist, a child-neurologist and a developmental psychologist.

Emergency care of drug addicts

This book deals with the emergency care of overdosed, intoxicated patients. It was written explicitly for emergency care teams.

Early diagnosis and early intervention of drug problem in the primary health care

This book was written for family doctors, pediatricians, youth and school doctors. It enables them to recognise a drug problem at an early stage, to set up the first diagnosis and to motivate the drug user to go for a special treatment. It also pays attention to prevention needs in the local community.

Management of the drug problem in prison

This book provides assistance to psychologists and educators working in prisons and physicians helping in the management of acute problems of arrested persons and prisoners.

Each book consists of two main parts: basic knowledge and special knowledge. An important aspect was to introduce up-to-date European and American experiences, based on scientific evidence.

These Hungarian distance education textbooks are innovative and fulfilling a real need as there is no relevant professional literature or textbooks available in these areas in Hungarian language. The package was designed specifically for the above-mentioned target groups within a postgraduate medical learning context. The training will take place in distance education courses, moderated by the tutors of the material.

Who contributed?

The most important contributors were the three consultants: Dr. Agneta Flinck, Swedish distance education expert, University of Lund, Dr. Gabriele Fischer, Drogenambulanz, Allgemeine Krankenhaus, Wien, Professor of Psychiatry, Universität Wien (who spent the most time with us) and Dr. Igor Koutsenok, Professor of psychiatry, Prison specialist, Deputy Director of the Addiction Training Centre, Dept. of Psychiatry, Univ. of California San Diego, USA.

The work was coordinated by the editor-in-chief, Katalin Szomor. The produced material includes the four books in hard copy, two CD-ROMs and two DVD cassettes. An electronic version of Pompidou Group publications and other international information material were scanned to the C Ds, to constitute an electronic home-library for the students. The DV D cassettes contain five educational films. Both were prepared by János Kegye, multimedia expert.

The Pompidou Group financed the costs of the international coordination, the costs related to the intern a t i o n a l consultants and the master copy of CD and video in Hungary. The Ministry of Health, Social and Family Affairs paid the book-writers and, together with the National Prison Headquarters, the printing /copying costs.

This project was characterised by a nice human environment and a wonderful collective creativeness. We hope that the outcomes of these efforts will contribute – via the training of the health care staff and of prison professionals – to the reduction of the drug demand in Hungary.