



newsletter 03/2009

European dimensions within the intercultural qualification for migrant women entering the health and care sector

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This is the 3rd newsletter of the international Leonardo da Vinci Project (LLP-LDV-TOI-07-AT-0009) „**PreQual steps**“ conducted by 5 partners from 5 countries (maiz- Austria, Sophia-Czech Republic, IEPALA-Spain, DemNet-Hungary, Antigone-Greece). <http://prequalsteps.maiz.at>

Its objective is to highlight current information and results of the project's activities and to launch discussion on issues related to female migration, work and health & care within the EU from the perspective of migrant women organisations. If you don't want to receive any further newsletter please send a mail to leonardo@maiz.at

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1. PreQual – courses: New international experiences within 4 EU-countries

While throughout Europe the issue of interculturality within the fields of health and care attracts more and more attention, the European Leonardo da Vinci Project “**PreQual steps**” takes specific steps towards related challenges faced within our societies. Focusing on competences, knowledge and interest many women with migration background bring to Europe, the project supports migrant women to achieve approved and qualified labor and education, to overcome challenges and addresses political and social barriers that keep the women away from the - so called - first labor market.

In Thessaloniki, Madrid, Prague, Bicske (HU) and Linz women from all over the world recently attended - and some do still attend - courses of “PreQual”, an intercultural qualification for migrant women entering into the health and care sector. Within these PreQual courses professional support and qualification to enter the health and care sector and to improve their working situation in the respective countries is provided to women, as well as space to exchange experiences, to question precarious and stigmatized working fields and to develop strategies against racism and discrimination. Despite of differences in national health and care systems, migration histories and social developments, problems migrants have to face are quite similar throughout Europe: exclusion from the qualified labor market supported by legal barriers, stigmatization, sexism and racism. The current economic crisis in Europe does furthermore effect migrants especially.

The curricula for these courses had been developed by maiz with support of partners from 6 different EU-countries within a former Leonardo da Vinci project. Within PreQual steps the curriculum was further amended and modified according to national necessities and backgrounds by the partners, in cooperation with several experts from the fields of health, care and migration and with support of maiz.

1.1 PreQual in Thessaloniki /Greece:

The course started in October 2008 with 16 migrant women from various countries of Europe, Asia and Africa and is expected to be concluded within May 2009.

The curriculum that was introduced by maiz was developed furthermore in cooperation with the trainers (Greeks as well as migrants) and scientific experts that work on the project and with regard to the needs of the participants, as well as according to the national necessities. The course is implemented by participative methods and experiential learning and combines both theoretical educational sessions, as well as practical workshops on issues such as Medical Terminology, Care Skills, First Aid Course, Personal Orientation within the Health and Social Care Sector, Language and Communication Skills, Information and Communication Technology, Field trips to various health and care institutions, Internship and others.

Since the beginning of the course, great importance has been given to the feedback that came from the course participants and the course has been adjusted accordingly. At the moment the results are under evaluation.

1.2 PreQual in Madrid/Spain:

From October 08 until the end of March 09 the PreQual course has been realised in Madrid. Fourteen women regularly attended the course. Some of them had before taken part in the workshops that were given between January and June 08. In these previous workshops women were asked to propose topics to be included in the curriculum; at the same time they were asked to give their opinion about the curriculum that had been compiled until then. This resulted in the commonly elaboration of the curriculum, influenced by the active participation of the pupils. The

modules self-esteem and personal development partly accounted for the fact that the participants regularly attended the course with high motivation. This was stressed by both the pupils and the teachers in the evaluation meetings that were held later.

The internships in retirement homes allowed them to make contact with the reality of this professional field they had been trained for, and some of them have found a job, even though temporarily, in the residences where they had completed their internship.

The course has finished now but a group of women with common interests and worries in respect to finding employment have organized themselves to help each other in the search.

In IEPALA we have been very happy with the course: it ran very successfully, the participants showed a lot of interest and the trainers were very much satisfied with the group dynamics. So we are thinking of organizing a similar follow-up course. We are now engaged in the search for economic support. We have contacted some local authorities and some private foundations which may be interested in financing a new edition of the course, potentially beginning next September.

1.3 PreQual in Prague/Czech Republic:

Our PreQual course started on 14th March 09. Before this course started, we had organized several meetings: meetings with potentially participating migrant women and meetings with trainers. Individual interviews and consultations with all participating parties, both trainers and participants, were also an important part of our work. This enabled better understanding of the idea of the project and made the cooperation and level of involvement more effective.

After we had adapted the curriculum and made basic decision about the structure of the course - division of the modules, while respecting the original curricula, time schedule, form of internships and certification, teams of trainers started to prepare the technical basics and the training materials.

There is a specific situation in the Czech Republic law: care and health sector belongs under two different sectors, and both of them have different demands on certification. Without special certificate nobody is able to enter the health and care sector. That is also what we had to respect. In our case, women are mainly interested in the care sector.

The course started with 19 women, now there are 17 remaining, as 2 of the women have found work, which for them was necessary in times of crisis and they had to leave. After the course opening also other women showed their interest to attend the course in the future.

According to reports from participants and trainers we have confirmation of the success of the opening workshop. The aim was to create cohesion within the group, to promote safe interaction between participants and to create a space for participation, reflecting a pro-active approach during the learning blocks and to promote one's own potential and motivation for an effective participation. The women were motivated, active and responsible. We were able to establish a stable partnership and a productive dialogue within the course.

We also managed to engage teachers and trainers who are interculturally gender-sensitive, methodologically corresponding with the project idea and personally committed to the objectives of the project. The participants appraised the trainers as being friendly and understanding and the teaching as interesting and beneficial. Women attending the course assessed it as being of personal benefit, as useful spent time and a good preparation for skilled jobs. They perceived the social context of their participation in the course.

Up to this moment the course continues without problems, and we start to organize excursions and internships, which could lead to careers in the health or care sector for the participating migrant women.

1.4 PreQual in Bicske/ Hungary:

DemNet Foundation decided to organize the „PreQual“ training course for refugee women only, since after having discussed the course implementation options and resources with a wide circle of experts, the Foundation reached the conclusion that refugee women are the most marginalized and suffering from exclusion within the migrant communities. The Foundation organized the training at Bicske Reception Center for Refugees, and adjusted the curricula to the needs of refugee women, as well as adopted supportive measures to assist women in their efforts to attend the training (organizing it within the Center, arranging daycare for children, adjusting the schedule, etc.). DemNet Foundation's vision in this project is to assist refugee women with useful knowledge and provide space to develop their skills which allows them to communicate and get around in Hungarian, know where to find information in their job search and know the risks and conditions in job negotiations. With the support of this training they are able to handle their issues, concerns and relations with employers and local authorities (city council). Hopefully would be able to find jobs as assistant nurses in hospitals, elderly homes or other care institutions and/or able to participate in vocational training courses. Specific objectives:

- Provide *orientation and information* to women interested in working in the health and care sector, promote their inclusion in formal vocational training programmes;
- Assist refugee women in skills and capacity building;
- Assist refugee women's integration into the labor market;
- Empower and strengthen their capacities to fight exclusion and racism by actively building on their existing intercultural knowledge and experiences.

There are 8 participants from 6 countries from the Caucasus, Asia and the Middle East. The training is being organized between April and August 2009.

1.5 PreQual in Linz/Austria:

At the end of March the meanwhile fourth edition of the PreQual-course, implemented by the migrant self-organisation maiz, was successfully finished in Linz. Women from seven different countries attended the course from November 2008 till March 2009 that included theoretical and practical exercises on the following issues:

- Introduction to health care and social services with a special focus on social structures and categories relevant to issues of labour, care, migration, class, gender etc. in different regions of the world.
- Personal orientation for health care occupations that incorporate transcultural, political, economic and gender-related aspects.
- Improving language and communication skills and modes of study for professions in health, care and assistance.
- Information and Communication Technology
- Short-term internships, excursions and supervision

This concept of maiz is unique and builds on meanwhile wide ranged experiences and competencies that have continuously been increased since 2004. Maiz therefore is now setting

up a competence centre in Linz supporting migrant women with interest in this working field. Migrant women with interest and/or experiences in the fields of health and care are also invited to join the recently established monthly meetings at maiz to discuss related issues, exchange information, to address the challenges, clear questions and to get professional support.

5th PreQual course in Austria: The fifth edition of PreQual has already been approved. It will again be funded by the government of Upper Austria (National Sanitary Fund of Upper Austria) and start in autumn 2009.

For more information please contact the project partners: <http://prequalsteps.maiz.at>

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2. 12th of May - International Day of Nursing and Care: International Nurses Day (IND) is celebrated around the world every 12th of May. This day is celebrated “to remember all of the valuable contributions nurses make to society”. We want to take this occasion in order to address and focus on a global issue regarding migrant women’s situation:

“Paid services of migrant women are strongly influenced by the current context of the globalisation of (precarious) labour conditions and mostly a result of the manifold reorganisation of the production process in the post-fordistic society: de-industrialisation, immaterial production, feminisation of work, transnational migration and mobilisation of capital investments. Due to the plurality of precarious existences the part and number of migrant women in this sector increases rapidly. Existing employments are mainly located in the continuum “sex-aid- care work”. Precarious service sectors like the sex industry or the cleaning sector, in which migrant women are strongly represented, may therefore not be viewed isolated but have to be seen in connection with a series of other precarious fields of work in the informal sector, like for example paid housework, care for the sick and elderly, childcare, mini-jobs at the supermarket or in hotels, employment in call centres and so on. As different as these new worlds of identities of labour may be, what they all have in common is the exclusion from the system of labour legislation and therefore from the protection it provides. Precarisation is more than legal, social and financial insecurity. What is also demanded is the individual ability to become creative and to develop new forms of collectivity. The individual quality of life is increasingly dependent on the personal success on the free market.” Luzenir Caixeta: read [more](#)

maiz organized an event referring to the International Day of Nursing and Care. Beside information about the possibilities for qualification and work within this field we focused on the working conditions for migrant women within this field. A team prepared a theater based on one’s own experience, addressing “practical tasks in everyday care work with a focus on racist language and action”. As the presentation followed the concept of “forum theatre”Migrant women of the audience were invited to intervene and overtake the role according one’s own proposals or ideas of dealing with the situation. This fact led to a very exciting and extensive working session with exchange and discussion. Around this event the participating or interested women could gather information about the PreQual course and a local rescue team of Samariterbund offered the possibility to take an insight into their working activities and their ambulance vehicle.

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3. International partner meeting in Linz:

From May 17th – 19th the fifth international partner meeting of PreQual steps will be held in Linz/ Austria and hosted by the Austrian project promoter maiz. Within the meeting the partners will especially focus on the pedagogical concept of PreQual, based on the pedagogy of Paulo Freire. Maiz therefore has organised a workshop with the expert Augusto Passos.

Dr. Luiz Augusto Passos is professor and director of the board of the University of Mato Grasso (UFMT) in Brazil. He coordinates the research groups, education and social movement, Educação Popular (national education) and politics. His thematic priorities are Curriculum and Education, Education and Anthropology, educação popular after Paulo Freire, environmental education and the theology of liberation.

For more information please contact maiz. (leonardo@maiz.at)

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4. Next STEPS of PreQual

- **NOW:** National implementation of PreQual courses in Czech Republic, Spain, Greece, Hungary and self-evaluation process **Between September 2008 and July 2009**
- May 17th –19th : 5th Partner Meeting in Linz
- **Publication** of 2 final Booklets: PreQual basics and PreQual steps and presentation at the final conference in Spain/Madrid
- **Final conference in Spain**
- **End of the project. October 2009**

Fore more information see: <http://prequalsteps.maiz.at>

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6. Contact:

If you are interested in further information on the project please contact the website, the project promoter and/or the project partners:

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The Leonardo da Vinci programme

Leonardo da Vinci is the European Community's vocational training programme whose aim is to implement and support lifelong learning strategies in accordance with the national training strategies. In an effort to increase mobility, foster innovation and improve the quality of training, co-operation between the various players in vocational training are promoted within the framework of transnational projects.



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