


SPI-Forschung gGmbH



Daphne Initiative 1999

SOLITAIRE

Improvement and Co-ordination of Assistance to the
Victims of Violence and Trafficking in Women in the Area
of Prostitution



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Partner organisation
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1. Project goals

1.1. Background: the UMBRELLA Network

Non-governmental organisations worked within the framework of the European pilot programme, the UMBRELLA Network¹, primarily in the border regions between the EU countries and non-EU countries in Central and Eastern Europe with the goal of preventing sexually transmissible diseases (STDs) including HIV. The aim was to establish and develop a health service whose services could be used anonymously and free of charge, to overcome discrimination against, and stigmatisation of, specific target groups such as prostitutes and intravenous drug-users, and to create a network comprising municipal, social and health services and centres. Even though the pilot programme UMBRELLA Network was terminated at the end of the year 2000, most of the projects will continue.

The projects implemented by the UMBRELLA Network perform cross-border work in multinational teams using the method of outreach social work. Work primarily focuses on prostitution scenes, with staff speaking the languages of the majority of women found in these milieus.

The UMBRELLA Network's own research work (the UMBRELLA Network Study²) shows that a great number of the prostitutes advised and assisted by the projects are the victims of violence and trafficking in human beings. Streetworkers in six of the HIV and STD prevention projects in the border regions between Germany and the Czech Republic, and Germany and Poland, for example, interviewed approximately 500 migrant women working as prostitutes over a period of four years. The results showed that almost half of the women encountered were forced into prostitution with false promises or by physical violence, i.e. they were the victims of trafficking. Only a few of these prostitutes were prepared to report traffickers and those who had maltreated prostitutes to the police; very few women managed to get out of prostitution. The women's reluctance to do so was not

¹ See appendix for information on the UMBRELLA Network pilot programme

² See appendix for a summary.

only due to the general legal situation (in particular the laws on foreigners) and the discrimination against prostitutes, which frustrated efforts to prosecute trafficking and violence against prostitutes; and it was seldom the use of physical violence by pimps that caused the women affected to remain in situations they found humiliating and burdensome. Many women gave reasons related to their general situation: they felt that they had to repay the “debts” to the agents and others who had smuggled them across the borders; they had their families to support in their home countries; then there were the threats by pimps and traffickers that they would tell the women’s families in their home countries what they were doing. Finally, many of the women were ashamed that they had fallen for something “like this”. Once they had overcome their initial feelings of helplessness, most of them believed that they would soon be able to master their situations alone, only to find themselves becoming increasingly caught up in the nets of the prostitution scene.

Of course, the projects working within the UMBRELLA Network did and do not only offer clients support with health problems. Women who are the victims of trafficking and/or violence can either receive further assistance in a related project (Belladonna) or be transferred to a relevant project (e.g. LA STRADA) in their country of origin. Arranging this kind of care involved a great deal of time and effort in each case and was not always successful. In particular, accompanying the women through the jungle of state institutions (including the police and the public prosecutor, when women wanted to give evidence against the traffickers) requires expert knowledge, negotiating skills and a considerable amount of time.

In such cases, both the scope and the limitations of projects with goals basically related to health issues became quite apparent. On the one hand, it was relatively easy to gain quick access to prostitution scenes with an accepting approach and performing outreach social work using the languages spoken by the women. The project goal of HIV and STD prevention is easy to convey, as well as being immediately acceptable to the operators/pimps. It proved possible to establish relationships of trust with many of the women victims in the prostitution scenes. On the other hand, it was necessary to proceed

with caution in each case to preserve the high degree of acceptance shown to the project staff. An open dispute with the operators could have jeopardised acceptance within the scene, making all future work impossible. Furthermore, the female streetworkers were obviously known within the scene, which meant that they could be forced both by the women victims and the accused to testify as witnesses, since streetworkers operating in the prostitution milieu in Germany, for example, currently have no right to refuse to testify. On top of the fundamental threat posed to the work and personal safety of the streetworkers, the great lack of time also hindered the streetworkers from offering this kind of support.

Projects aiming to combat trafficking in women and to support individual victims possessed the various levels of expert knowledge required and were able to offer the women victims competent support within certain limits (often there was a shortage of funds needed to support individual cases and provide accommodation). However, these projects did not perform outreach work in the milieu and lacked knowledge, for example, about the things the women victims needed to know. The women victims who want to contact these organisations directly not only need the relevant information, they also have to overcome considerable obstacles. They must be able to call – in a foreign country, speaking a foreign language if need be – persons unknown to them. (Projects of this nature only exist in big towns.) Consequently, and despite the endeavours of UMBRELLA Network projects to intervene on their behalf, only a small group of women victims directly contacted these centres. Only the tip of the iceberg became visible.

In the experience of the UMBRELLA Network projects, the problems arising with institutions in the social and health services were of a very different nature. The women generally only went to such institutions individually. The responsibilities and spheres of competence of the institutions were not clear, and language problems rendered communication difficult in most cases. The legal situation also made it extremely difficult to offer migrants concrete assistance in many cases.

1.2 The goals of SOLITAIRE

In the light of these experiences in diverse European border regions we believe that it is absolutely necessary to offer women victims consultation and support as soon as possible. Only if the victims are able to make effective use of their rights will the political and legal prosecution of violent crimes and trafficking in human beings be successful in the long run.

A European Union Minister Conference held in 1997 noted that trafficking in women was a flagrant violation of women's rights. The Conference emphasised the need to implement measures at national, European and international levels. Thanks to the DAPHNE programme, too, many measures have been taken since then to analyse the situation of violence against, and trafficking in, women and to publicise this in information campaigns, networks, etc. Our experience suggests that too few women have been able to benefit directly from these measures so far. The proposed project is an attempt to improve the support offered to the women affected.

2. Implementation of the SOLITAIRE project

SOLITAIRE brought together four institutions, three of which pursued identical tasks:

In three EU countries (Finland, Germany and Austria) co-ordination centres were set up at NGOs that already had access to a prostitution milieu or possessed relevant competence (groups of experts, research, establishing networks) to use the methods of case management to organise and co-ordinate individual assistance for women victims and, on the other hand, to foster co-operation between the three levels (health projects, state institutions, and NGOs) to combat trafficking in women. In addition, the projects were to co-operate closely with institutions in the women's countries of origin.

Centres to co-ordinate assistance for victims of trafficking in human beings and violence against prostitutes were established at each of the following co-operation partners:

MONIKA in Finland, BELLA DONNA in Germany and LEFÖ in Austria. The tasks and goals of these co-ordinating centres were defined in advance and will be presented jointly below.

SPI Forschung gGmbH took care of implementing and co-ordinating the entire SOLITAIRE project. These tasks and goals were defined in advance and will be presented below. The work of the participant projects will be presented under P.3³.

2.1. The goals and tasks of the co-ordinating centres at MONIKA, BELLA DONNA and LEFÖ

2.1.1. The goals of SOLITAIRE in relation to individual cases (case management)

- Migrants, especially women from Central and Eastern Europe who are victims of violence and trafficking are to be contacted as soon as possible, independently of their endeavours to seek assistance. (They can be contacted through outreach social work done within the scope of STD/AIDS prevention, for example.),
- The situation is to be analysed with the women affected in order to develop assistance-plans with them, geared to their special needs,
- In agreement with the women concerned, other organisations (NGOs) are to be won over to provide support (until they return to their home countries, if desired),
- In the case of court proceedings versus violent offenders and traffickers, legal representation is to be found for the women victims (victims as witnesses),
- In well-founded individual cases, the women victims are to be offered financial support too (e.g. return journey, accommodation, etc.),
- Assistance by diverse organisations, tailored to the needs of individual cases is to be co-ordinated, evaluated on the spot and documented.

³ For a detailed description see the project reports in the appendix.

2.1.2 The goals of SOLITAIRE in relation to the entire project (co-ordination)

- Co-operation is to be initiated and fostered between projects in the health sector, projects combating trafficking, and state institutions in the health and social sectors (also across borders),
- An exchange of information and experience between all participant projects and institutions is to be organised and fostered,
- Pilot support channels for migrants affected by trafficking, especially those from Central and Eastern Europe, as well as from Latin America, are to be developed on the basis of the anonymously documented individual cases,
- The collection and administration of donations to provide individual support for women victims.

2.1. The goals and tasks of SPI Forschung gGmbH within the framework of SOLITAIRE

- Co-ordinating the overall project
- Organising advanced training (case management) and two co-ordinating meetings
- Developing a fine concept in agreement with the co-operation partners
- Developing survey instruments (e.g. case documentation)
- Evaluating the overall project (qualitative and quantitative)
- Preparing reports
- Handling the financing for the overall project

2.3 Digression: on the method of case management within the framework of social work

Case management, a relatively new approach to social work in Europe, formed an essential part of SOLITAIRE's work. As the acquisition and testing of this method played such a significant role in SOLITAIRE's field of work, it shall be briefly described here. This report will not be presenting other, more familiar methods also employed by SOLITAIRE in its work, such as outreach social work, cultural mediation and accepting counselling.

The method of case management was developed in the USA in the seventies with the particular aim of supporting persons with very difficult and complex problems. The background to this development was an increasingly complicated social welfare apparatus. As the institutions offering assistance were very specialised, care was provided, in particular, for people with very difficult and complex problems in a number of different institutions at once. This type of multiple care unsettled and overtaxed people - especially those seeking help - attending such institutions. The more problems a person (assistance-seeker) had, the less competence she was credited with having. Many assistance-seekers seemed to go under in this jungle of institutions.

It seemed urgently necessary to have experts co-ordinate and guide assistance in relation to the individual case. Furthermore, an endeavour should be made to restore the assistance-seekers' competence.

Case management thus represents a method of organising and co-ordinating assistance in particularly complicated cases and strengthening the autonomy of those affected⁴.

2.3.1. Reflections on case management methods within the framework of SOLITAIRE

The method of case management was presented at the SOLITAIRE meeting and discussed by the co-operation partners. A member of staff in the German pilot programme "Case work as a co-operation model"⁵ presented her three years of experience in working as a case manager for people with diverse social and health problems. Within the framework of the pilot programme, methods and documentation instruments were prepared and tailored to the specific needs of the people requiring care.

The speaker addressing the meeting explained that this mode of providing assistance was tailored to the client and her situation in co-operation with the client, taking into account and using resources in conjunction with experts and employing reasonable means.

⁴ See, for example, Vourlekis 1992; Wendt 1997

⁵ See FOGS 1999

Assistance was thus related to individual persons, independently of the problem and where that person lived. Case work thus refers to a relationship in which the case manager actively maintains contact with the client and visits the client with his/her consent at home, in prison or in the hospital, for example. Lobby work, i.e. actively representing the client's interests at various levels, institutional as well as political, is a part of case management and always includes the levels of reflection and the tasks by the group represented. .

The process of individually assisting clients within the scope of case management is subdivided into different phases, which shall be briefly described below.

2.3.2. The work phases in case management

-Phase 1: establishing contact

Analysing the social and health situation of the clients and arranging the type and scale of the care and support between case manager and client.

The case manager and the client reach a precise agreement on the type and scale of assistance needed. The type of relationship between the carer and the assistance-seeker is discussed and put down in writing. Following an analysis (in conjunction with the client) of the client's living conditions, the long, medium and short-term goals are set out after being mutually agreed upon by the case manager and the client. The duration of supervision is also discussed and set out. The clients thus place an order with the case manager; they are by no means given "compulsory care" against their will. The voluntary principle is extended here, too, because the client's participation is a constituent moment for the entire duration of the case management process, and not primarily tied to the actual presence, but to the level of negotiation and agreement.

- Phase 2: planning the support process

During phase 2, the goals already agreed upon for case management are implemented in specified steps. Possible forms of assistance are also planned jointly with the client. In the process, detailed agreement is reached concerning what the case manager will do alone,

what she will do with the client, and what the client will do independently without the case manager.

- Phase 3: Implementation and co-ordination

Records are kept on the course and results of the individual measures. The case manager and the client regularly submit reports to one another. Acting on behalf of the client, the case manager co-ordinates various forms of assistance and the work with diverse institutions, and submits regular reports on this too. The client remains anonymous unless she agrees to the contrary (e.g. if necessary, when applying for financial support).

- Phase 4: Evaluation

Standardised records are kept for documenting and evaluating the progress made and the measures taken. The records are discussed, agreed upon, and considered with the client. This process allows any deviations in judgement on the part of the client to be entered independently and anonymously - of course - into the records.

2.3.3. Discussing the methods within the scope of SOLITAIRE

At the first SOLITAIRE co-ordinating meeting, an exhaustive discussion took place on the suitability of this method in helping victims of trafficking and violence. It was considered a disadvantage that the speaker invited was reporting on experiences gained in a completely different field of work, i.e. work with drug-users. At first, the discussion brought out the differences between the fields of work. In particular, the legal situations of the different target groups differ considerably, fundamentally influencing the types of support available. The most pressing problems for migrants who are the victims of violence and trafficking do not concern social and health issues but are primarily related to laws on foreigners impeding, or even making impossible, their access to support measures.

On the other hand, the complexity of the problems faced by many migrants calls for a structured, co-ordinated and well-considered approach, which makes it possible and meaningful to adopt at least some aspects of case management. The tasks and approaches

agreed upon in relation to case management methods have already been presented above under section 2.1.

2.4. Survey instruments developed within the framework of SOLITAIRE

Alongside the approach already described, two survey instruments were developed, discussed and adopted for documenting the project.

2.4.1 Documentation sheet for anonymously collecting social-demographic data and information on the social situation of migrant women working as prostitutes

The documentation sheet (see appendix) is intended to show the situation of women encountered during streetwork and permit a comparison of the various project locations. The sheet is supposed to provide a kind of streetwork record; it is not a questionnaire. It provides an anonymously gathered record of the demographic data of the women encountered and, of course, data on their experience of violence and prostitution. At the first co-ordinating meeting it was agreed that each project would submit thirty sheets.

2.4.2 Progress reports on individual support measures

In order to provide comprehensible reports on long-term supervision, guidelines were issued on how to structure progress reports (see appendix). These structured records were intended to show possible modes of support and their limitations as well as offering help in developing ideal-typical support channels. It was agreed that each project would submit ten to fifteen of these reports.

3. The effects and results of the SOLITAIRE project

The progress and results of the project were documented and evaluated in various ways. The three practical projects prepared extensive reports (see appendix), which were discussed at the Second Co-ordinating Meeting in December 2000. The co-ordinator

visited the projects and discussed their methods, goals and results with them locally. The acquired data (documentation sheets and progress reports) were sent to SPI-Forschung gGmbH for evaluation. The Second Co-ordinating Meeting discussed the results, the survey and the effects of the project, and specified the structure of the final report. The final report was prepared by SPI-Forschung gGmbH and submitted to the projects for feedback.

3.1 Work done by individual projects within the framework of SOLITAIRE

3.1.1. The SOLITAIRE project within the scope of the hosting organisation, LEFÖ, in Vienna, Austria

- Overall conditions

In Austria, the broad spectrum of legislation between the “**laws on foreigners**” and the “**law on the employment of foreigners**”, which creates a vicious circle between permission to reside and permission to work, provides no scope for legalising migrants working as prostitutes. According to Article 33-2-2 of the Austrian Law on Foreigners of 1998, a woman working as a prostitute in Austria without a residence permit can be deported. Furthermore, according to article 33-2-4, the same offence is punishable by refusing a person entry into Austria for a certain period.

The **Austrian health system** does not allow access to free medical services. People not belonging to the insurance system must pay the high cost of medical services themselves. Health offices have been set up in accordance with the Law on Sexually Transmissible Diseases (STDs) and AIDS to monitor these illnesses in all of the Land capitals and district capitals in Austria. They are run by the municipalities and carry out obligatory check-ups among prostitutes.

The SOLITAIRE project under LEFÖ:

The work of the SOLITAIRE project at LEFÖ/AUSTRIA was primarily undertaken in the following areas:

- IBF project (Intervention Centre for Women Victims of Trafficking), where the victims, women who primarily come from Eastern European countries, are receive counselling and care
- Systematic supervision for women in the form of “streetwork”
- Visiting women victims who are in detention prior to deportation⁶
- Information and prevention work at the Vienna health office
- LEFÖ counselling centre, which is attended by women victims of violence and/or trafficking

SOLITAIRE within the framework of IBF

Work in the SOLITAIRE project was done in the areas of counselling, providing care and accompanying victims - mostly women from Eastern European countries - in collaboration with the IBF project.

The SOLITAIRE project works in the following areas of IBF:

- Accompanying women to private gynaecologists and to City Council Dept. 15
- Preparing an assistance plan
- Co-ordinating work with organisations in the countries of origin
- Accompanying women victims of trafficking who live in our sheltered housing projects (refuges)

The SOLITAIRE project is taking care of five cases in co-operation with the IBF.

SOLITAIRE within the framework of streetwork

The SOLITAIRE project made it possible for LEFÖ to continue its field work with foreign prostitutes in the year 2000, too.

The co-ordinating work with the SOLITAIRE project manager supported and made possible joint field work with other staff members in the following languages: Hungarian, Czech, Polish, Spanish and English. Streetwork was organised in the form of weekly visits to diverse districts with a high number of sex bars. Within the framework of streetwork, 435 counselling talks were held with 222 migrant women from 20 countries.

SOLITAIRE - visits to women in detention prior to transportation

Owing to SOLITAIRE, co-operation with the airport social service was extended and intensified in various Austrian cities. As a result, it was possible to visit women in detention awaiting deportation whenever it could be proved that they were victims of trafficking. Care could only be provided in some of the cases since it was not always possible to establish contact with relief organisations in the women's countries of origin in time - as when a decision by the police department responsible for aliens meant that a woman from Eastern Europe had to be deported at very short notice. In Vienna, women in such detention centres were visited once a week. In the year 2000, SOLITAIRE visited twenty-seven women who were in detention awaiting deportation.

SOLITAIRE at the Vienna Health Office

The Vienna health office was visited by SOLITAIRE staff every two weeks. Although women working as prostitutes are legally obliged to attend the office once a week for a medical check-up, only about 10 per cent of them do so. Working in this area was very important, since it was thus possible to inform the women of the existence of an organisation that offered help in cases of violence and abuse. Also important was the establishment of new contacts, as well as providing counselling in the area of health. Forty-three counselling sessions were carried out with twenty-seven migrants at the Vienna health office.

SOLITAIRE within the framework of counselling

The systematic establishment of contacts and a greater basis of trust in the year 2000 made it possible to take up the problems the women faced in conjunction with entering the country, accumulated debts, as well as violence by pimps, bar owners, friends, etc. It is important to point out how difficult the current legal situation makes it for women to obtain a residence permit to stay in Austria, which makes them afraid of being expelled. This critical factor prevents women involved in sex-work from taking the initiative and breaking out of this vicious circle of exploitation. They are often under pressure to pay back outstanding debts, and also have the burden of supporting their families in their countries of origin.

⁶ In Austria: "Schubhaft"

Within the scope of educational and prevention work, the SOLITAIRE staff issued an information brochure, in Spanish, on the new “Law against Violence to Women”.

Planning assistance for women victims

In each case managed by SOLITAIRE, the legal situation of the woman affected was explained and a special assistance plan prepared with her co-operation (see case studies).

Assistance plans were prepared in co-operation with:

- Women in detention awaiting deportation
- Women contacted during streetwork and with women who had contacted us by attending the counselling centre
- Women placed in emergency accommodation (IBF)

Organisations contacted

It is important to emphasise that all the above-mentioned public offices and NGOs have to be contacted regularly by SOLITAIRE staff either on the phone or in person. As this time-consuming work is done out of the public eye, we should like to point out here how much time and effort this bureaucratic work involves.

Public relations work: platform for more rights for prostitutes

In the middle of 1997, municipal officials in Vienna presented a bill for a new “law on prostitution”. With respect to check-ups on prostitutes and the penalties imposed in cases of contempt, this proposal was even more restrictive than existing legislation.

Together with some of the political parties (the Greens and the Liberal Forum) social projects, students at the *Sozialakademie*, and various other NGOs, LEFÖ launched a campaign opposing the application of the above-mentioned proposed legislation. This alliance is the first civil initiative to occupy itself with prostitution in Austria. As a result of the information campaign carried out by this alliance, directed at the general public and the municipality of Vienna, the proposed legislation was suspended.

3.1.2 The work performed by the MONIKA project within the framework of SOLITAIRE

3.1.3

The work performed by the MONIKA project within the framework of SOLITAIRE focused on the following areas:

- Gathering information about women who are victims of trafficking
- Assisting these women through case-management
- Establishing networks with health centres to support migrants
- Showing ways out of prostitution, especially offering support to migrants wanting to get out of prostitution.

MONIKA focused on performing streetwork in the languages spoken by the migrant women (generally Russian) in sex bars. Contact was also sought to women working in the streets and in other places (e.g. small hotels where prostitutes frequently spend the night). Telephone hotlines provided counselling in five languages (Finnish, Russian, Estonian, Spanish and French). Individual women were offered care in the form of case management. Interviews were conducted with the women willing to participate in the survey to evaluate the project work. All in all, some 300 migrant women were contacted in the prostitution scene. Some sixty migrants were given long-term assistance, of whom twenty-one were the victims of violence and three of trafficking.

The prostitution scene in Helsinki: impressions and general conditions

In Helsinki, most prostitutes work in bars. Street prostitution has been banned officially since 1999, but there is still district where approximately forty-five people, mostly Finns, prostitute themselves on the street. The number of bars where prostitutes work fluctuates. Bars are frequently closed by the police. Although there are never more than four to eight bars at any time, some are very big. Some 200 prostitutes, most of them migrants thus working illegally in Finland, can be encountered each day in the largest bars; between two and four women work in the smaller ones. Some of the bars offer private shows; many of the migrants work there even if they do not possess work permits. Their contracts are illegal, the conditions poor. The bar owners expect the women to offer

sexual services in the form of oral sex, “hand relief” and intercourse. Some of the private shows include sexual services in any case.

In Finland there is, as yet, no social assistance or counselling for migrants working as prostitutes. Access to health services is, however, both free and anonymous. “Seastar”, the former UMBRELLA Network project, helps women in the scene to contact these services in Helsinki.

The target group of SOLITAIRE in Finland

The group of migrants working in the prostitution scene can be divided into three groups: those with tourist visas, those with permanent residence permits, and those with long-term residence permits coupled with a work permit. The work permit does not generally apply to their working as prostitutes. Only Finnish citizens are allowed by law to work as prostitutes.

The women with **tourist visas** generally work in bars. They come from Estonia or Russia and work as prostitutes for economic reasons. As far as we know, they usually decide of their own free will to work as prostitutes.

Some of the women with a **permanent residence permit** are so-called “**Ingrians**”, an ethnic group from Russia in which one of the parents is of Finnish origin. Ingrians are allowed to emigrate to Finland. The first came about ten years ago, frequently with the intention of marrying in Finland. Although they have generally had a good education, many of them are still unemployed, hardly speak a word of Finnish and have a number of social and health problems. They are marginalised, many have divorced in the meantime and live very isolated lives. These women have often been forced into prostitution by circumstances or by specific people. Their starting age is very high, thirty on average. Of the women encountered by SOLITAIRE in Finland, migrants from this group had the greatest need for assistance.

The third target group comprises **migrants with a permanent residence permit**, who are married to Finnish men. This group also has a great need for assistance. As a rule, these women have already experienced physical, psychological or sexual violence when they contact the project. After marrying, they are, for example, socially isolated by their husbands, do not learn Finnish, and are not allowed to work. Only after they have been married for two years do the women receive a residence permit independently of their husbands. Until then, they can be put under pressure by their husbands, facing the threat of divorce and consequently deportation.

The women who are married to Finnish men frequently find themselves in debt, because their husbands force them to sign contracts that they do not understand. These women are poorly informed and often unaware, for example, that they have the right to social welfare in Finland. Although most of them are not forced into becoming prostitutes, a situation arises in which they frequently see no other alternative.

Some of the women have managed to obtain a permanent residence permit after entering into an arranged marriage. Ten such cases are known to the project. These women are more independent. They knew what awaited them from the very start. As a rule, such marriages are concluded for the purpose of prostitution from the word go. They cost the women between 4000 and 12.000 EURO, a sum that the Russians and Estonians do not usually have. In other words, these sums have to be paid back later. The organisation of such marriages is just as illegal in Finland as the marriages themselves. However, it is rare for the police to prosecute in such cases.

Establishing contact, and counselling

Contacts with the prostitutes were established in bars or on the telephone. Migrants, in particular, who are staying in the country on the basis of a tourist visa are contacted during a weekly streetwork visit, which always takes place at the same time and place. During the first three or four meetings a relationship of trust is built up, thus creating the basis for long-term counselling (case management). When doing case management MONIKA co-operates with various institutions, depending on the woman's residential

status. MONIKA itself was the only project in Finland that was able to help women possessing a tourist visa but no work permit in more than just matters of health care.

When the women had permanent residence permits, MONIKA worked with the job centre, the social welfare office, the hospitals and centres for rape victims whenever necessary and after prior consultation with the women concerned. Unfortunately, however, there is no Russian-speaking staff member at the Centre for Raped Women, making counselling very difficult and necessitating the presence of a member of staff from MONIKA. In two cases, migrant women were sent to refuges for battered wives. However, there are no Russian-speaking social workers there either, which also makes counselling difficult. All together, there are twenty-three refuges for battered wives in the whole of Finland (with its five million inhabitants). Not one of these is specialised in working with migrants.

Perspectives

The staff of MONIKA are confident that they will be able to continue their work. They are sure that the experience they have previously gathered in working with the women can be used positively in the future too. They will do all they can to safeguard the migrants' interests on municipal and national committees, and to improve the social and health care infrastructure in Finland.

3.1.2. The SOLITAIRE project within the framework of BELLADONNA in Frankfurt/Oder (Germany)

The general conditions under which the project operates

BELLADONNA is the only one of the three practically oriented projects within SOLITAIRE that is not based on a metropolis but on a small town (Frankfurt/Oder), which, together with the Polish town of Slubice, also forms a border region. The project covers the entire border area (predominantly rural) between the German Land of Brandenburg and Poland. Unlike the other two projects, BELLADONNA operates on a cross-border basis, i.e. where necessary, it makes use of the health and social services in Germany and Poland. These services have tended to be rudimentary due to their location

in a rural area and are hardly sufficient to cope with the problems arising in conjunction with immigration.

In Germany, it is illegal for migrants without resident permits (laws on foreigners) to work as prostitutes. Police intervention almost always results in their being expelled at short notice. In Poland, Prostitution has not been regulated by laws up to the present so that migrants with valid tourist visas cannot be expelled for working as prostitutes. The difference in the law between Germany and Poland in this respect has meant that prostitutes in the border region between these two countries primarily work on the Polish side, although the greater part of their clients by far are German men.

During the past few years, the scenes have become increasingly well established. Ever more brothels are opening up and street prostitution is declining accordingly. On both the German and the Polish side, there have been endeavours since the mid-nineteen-nineties to provide health as well as social counselling and care for the approximately 23,000 prostitutes working in the region. Providing care continues to be a long and arduous task due to the legal restrictions and powerful prejudices against prostitution on the whole.

SOLITAIRE within the framework of BELLADONNA's work

For the BELLADONNA project (a former UMBRELLA Network project), SOLITAIRE offered a possibility to continue and concretise the work it was already doing. Since 1977, BELLADONNA has been combining outreach social work in the prostitution milieu, including the goal of STD and HIV prevention, with supporting the victims of violence and trafficking in human beings. A refuge and a counselling centre have been established for this target group. The case-management approach made it easier for staff to document and systematise their work. BELLADONNA is in contact with approximately 1,000 prostitutes in the region (mostly migrants) and was able to offer advice and support, in the medium and long term and within the scope of SOLITAIRE, to approximately thirty migrants who had been the victims of violence and traffickers.

Networking and organising the work with the target group

The project works with the Federal German Border Police and various police authorities and public prosecutors. Streetwork, which had previously been geared to doing AIDS prevention, was restructured within the framework of SOLITAIRE. Measures related to violence and trafficking in women were integrated accordingly. During the first six months, very few attended the counselling centre and the refuge. However, after the project succeeded in organising a woman's flight, the situation changed overnight. Since August/September demand has grown considerably and there are plans to restructure the counselling centre. As a result, the network addresses have been updated and a new address distribution system created.

The BELLADONNA staff were trained by a woman lawyer to help them cope better with the complicated legal situation and to advise the women in this area.

Working hours

A part-time position (four hours per day) was inadequate to deal with the complex work carried out under the SOLITAIRE project. Additional streetworkers were allocated for counselling. The time required per woman can be broken down as follows:

2 x 1-2 hrs. per week:	visiting doctor
10 hrs. per week:	accompanying women to court hearing
8 hrs. per week	negotiating with the embassy
1-2 hrs.:	social welfare office
1-2 hrs.:	negotiating with other offices
2-3 hrs.:	accompanying women in their free time
6 hrs.:	women, handed over by the CID (often unpunctual)
2 hrs.:	language course

Other tasks included being on call day and night and the related continuous organisation. If proceedings start against a trafficker, a full-time position is necessary to accompany the witness. Optimally, the project needs 2.5 staff members speaking various languages.

Preparing a new leaflet, in three languages, for the target group⁷

There is considerable fluctuation in the prostitution scene. Many of the migrants come to the region without really knowing where they are. Furthermore, they seldom speak the language of the country they are staying in. Having such poor local knowledge of the region, they are unable to find and visit certain institutions and counselling centres.

Using funds from SOLITAIRE; a leaflet was prepared in three languages for the target group. A map of the border region showing the locations of a number of projects (excluding BELLADONNA and ABENDROT on the German side; TADA, the Polish project; and NADEA, the Polish NGO in Slovice) was printed on the reverse side of the leaflet. Moreover, it contained a number of additional addresses and telephone numbers of establishments and centres for the women to contact. The leaflet was produced with the co-operation of staff from these projects and distributed by them.

Public relations work: conference and board of experts

In September 2000, a conference of experts was held in Poland to consolidate the border-crossing network supporting the work of BELLADONNA (the German project) and TADA (the Polish pilot project) in the area of border-crossing prostitution. The conference, the first in Poland to have the word “Prostitution” in its title, was a great success. It was attended by many representatives of various institutions and projects who had been invited to come. The conference fulfilled also its additional goal of creating a greater sensibility for this issue among the public in Brandenburg.

The co-operation on the board of experts of the Land of Brandenburg on the issue of trafficking in human beings since March 2000 was also important in terms of public relations and political influence⁸. The work of the board of experts is presently concerned with concluding a co-operation agreement between the Ministry of Justice and the special counselling centres on the modalities of accompanying the victims of violence and trafficking who are staying in refuges. This was the very first time that the Ministry of

⁷ See the leaflet in the appendix

⁸ Co-initiated by SPI-Forschung gGmbH

Justice and the representative agent for foreigners of the Land of Brandenburg sat at the same table. A similar model already exists in Hamburg; it is being striven for in other German Länder, too. The work in the board of experts made it easier to establish contacts and to respond more quickly.

Perspectives

- During the coming year, the project will move into better rooms. The refuge and the counselling centre will then be located in the same building.
- In the coming year, language courses, leisure activities and computer courses are to be secured with additional means from the job centre (job-creation schemes) to relieve the burden on the staff who are providing counselling and care.
- The project will elaborate a training programme for staff at women's refuges which are prepared to accept migrants who are victims of violence and trafficking. The focus will be on accompanying victims serving as witnesses.

On the whole, the prime value of SOLITAIRE is seen in the great advantage it presented for self-reflection, as well as for optimising and restructuring the concept accordingly. BELLADONNA will continue its work.

3.1.3. SOLITAIRE within the framework of SPI-Forschung gGmbH

• Co-ordinating the overall project

SPI-Forschung gGmbH took over the co-ordination of the overall project after consultation with the other co-operation partners. As direct verbal communication between the staff of MONIKA, LEFÖ and BELLADONNA was not possible, the exchange of information in other ways was extremely important. This exchange took place via MAILS, via reports prepared by the co-ordinator on the basis of visits to the project locations and at the co-ordinating meetings in February and December.

- **Organising advanced training (case management) and two co-ordinating meetings**

Both co-ordinating meetings were organised by SPI-Forschung gGmbH and took place in Berlin in February and December 2000. The programme for advanced training in the methods of case management was prepared and subsequently carried out at the co-ordinating meeting. It was done in a way that allowed sufficient time and space to discuss its implementation in projects.

- **The development of a fine concept in agreement with the co-operation partners**

At the first co-ordinating meeting, the fine concept presented by the co-ordinator was discussed, amended and adopted. In subsequent communication, especially during the visits to project locations, the concept was assessed and changed where necessary.

- **The development of survey instruments**

In addition to this, the co-ordinator developed two survey instruments, which were also designed to document the adopted approach. The documentation sheet served to record streetwork contacts; the guide was designed to provide a structured record of long-term support measures (case studies). Both instruments are contained in the appendix. The survey instruments were also discussed, amended and adopted at the first co-ordinating meeting. Responsibility for evaluating the data lay with the co-ordinator. This evaluation formed part of the report.

- **The evaluation of the overall project (quantitative and qualitative)**

The overall project was evaluated at a number of levels. The projects were evaluated by the co-ordinator within the scope of visits. The evaluation drew on structured team discussions and participatory observation made during streetwork. Projects were visited in March and June (LEFÖ and BELLADONNA). For health reasons, the planned visit to Finland (MONIKA) in October had to be cancelled. The data obtained using the survey instruments likewise flowed into the evaluation.

The co-ordinator also established an “Advisory committee to combat trafficking in human beings” in the German Land of Brandenburg (BELLADONNA), which is currently working on a contract to improve co-operation between NGOs and the police.

- **Report**

The present report was prepared by the co-ordinator and includes both the insights gained from the evaluation and the report of the practical projects.

- **The financial handling of the overall project**

Proof of the employment of funds in the practical projects formed the basis of the overall proof of the employment of the funds.

3.2. Results of the SOLITAIRE study

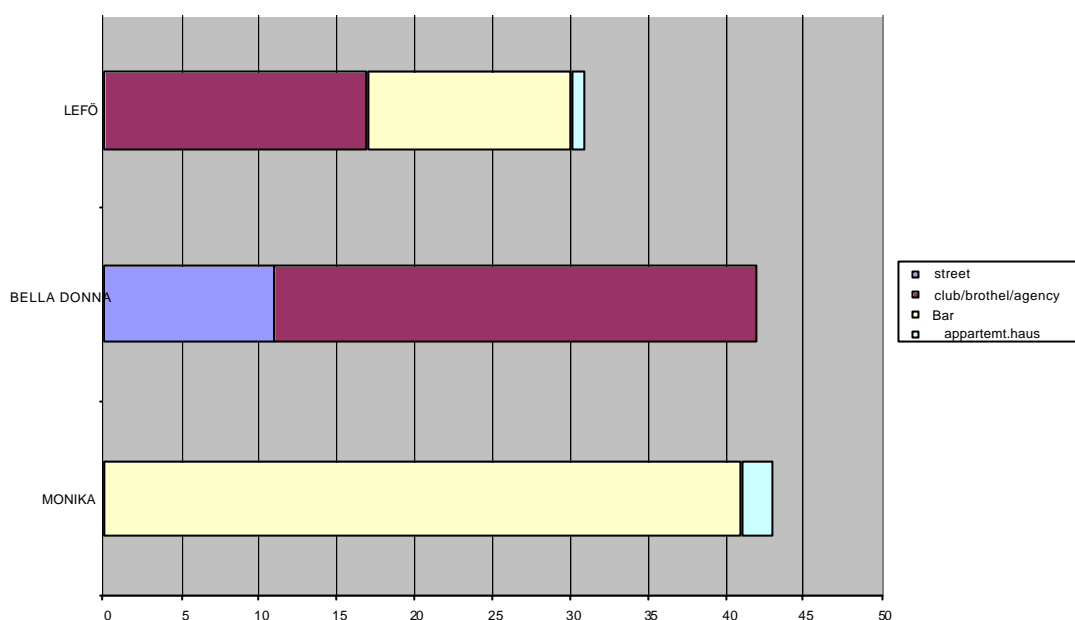
A documentation sheet was developed and adopted⁹ to analyse the social and health situation of the prostitutes encountered in the course of streetwork. The evaluation of the documentation sheet will be presented below. From the three projects, a total of 122 cases were recorded in the documentation sheets. Forty-seven sheets were submitted by MONIKA, Finland, forty-four by BELLADONNA, Germany, and thirty-one by LEFÖ, Austria. These data obviously neither reflect all of the prostitutes contacted by the three projects during streetwork, nor can they be seen as representative for prostitutes in the various scenes, since we do not have exhaustive knowledge of the scenes. However, the data make it possible to describe the situation of migrant prostitutes in considerable detail and to compare contacts with the scene in the three locations. A comparative presentation of some of the results follows.

3.2.1. Scenes of prostitution in the three project regions

Prostitution takes place at a variety of places ranging from brothels and similar establishments such as “clubs” and “agencies”, in which the services of prostitutes are both offered and practised, to bars in which the women only solicit clients whilst the actual sexual services are performed in rented rooms nearby, to apartments advertised in newspapers, and to street prostitution, where the women solicit clients and generally have sex with them in the clients’ cars.

⁹ See Section 2.4.1 and the appendix

Diagram 1: The scenes of prostitution visited by the practical projects



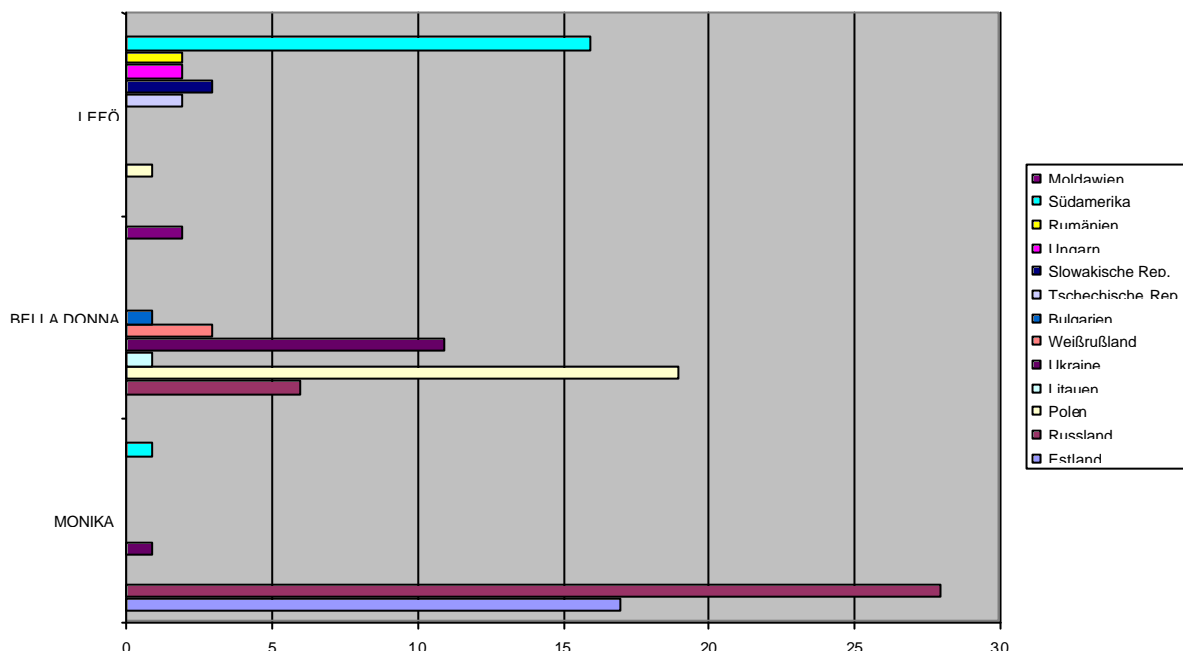
The three practical projects endeavoured to visit all the locations in their region where prostitutes worked in order to contact the broadest possible range of women. Owing to the differences in scenes (here we are comparing a region based on small towns and border-crossing with the metropolises of Vienna and Helsinki), the places the practical projects visited were distributed very differently. Whilst LEFÖ in Vienna contacted most of the prostitutes in bars and clubs, BELLADONNA encountered most of the prostitutes in clubs and in the street. MONIKA contacted most of the prostitutes in bars.

3.2.2. The nationality of the prostitutes encountered

Almost all of the women encountered and surveyed were migrants in the countries where they were working as prostitutes. On the whole, the practical projects surveyed women from eleven countries. The streetworkers often came from the prostitutes' countries of origin and spoke their respective languages; where this was not the case, other women were called in to translate and interpret. Thus, almost all of the women encountered in

Helsinki were interviewed in Russian; in Vienna Spanish, German, Czech and Hungarian were spoken; and in Frankfurt/Oder communication took place in Polish and Russian.

Diagram 2: The nationality of the prostitutes encountered



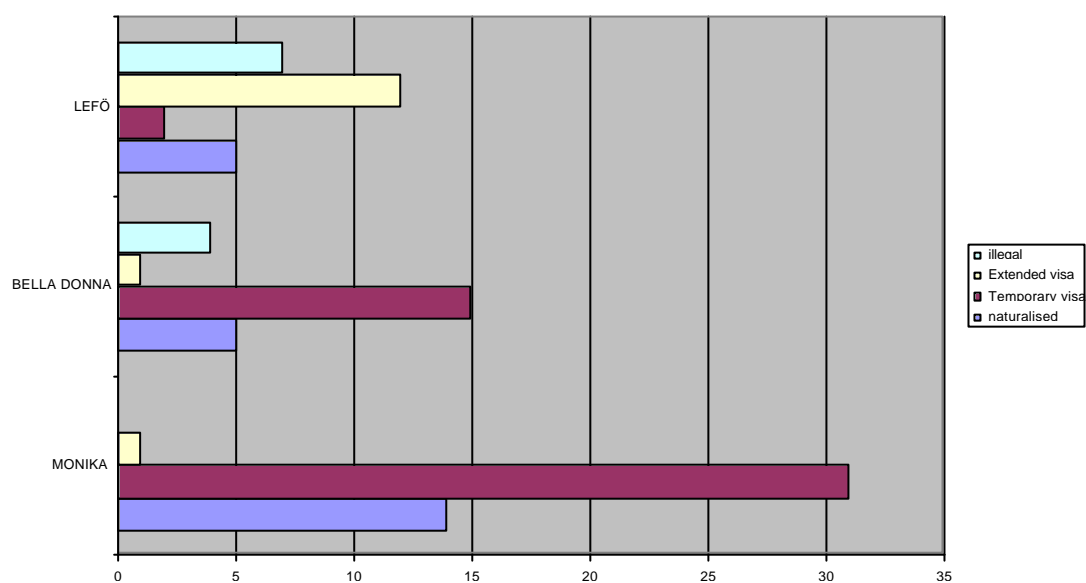
In Vienna, most of the women surveyed and cared for came from Central and South America, because the LEFÖ project was developed from an initiative founded by Latin American migrants in Austria. Some of the staff and the women cared for still come from these part of the world. The projects in the two other locations mainly dealt with women from Central and Eastern European countries. In all projects women migrants were working who came from the predominant countries of origin of the sex workers..

3.2.3. The residential status of the prostitutes encountered

The **residential status** of the women surveyed is very interesting in this context. In all three countries, the residential status largely determined whether the women were entitled to assistance and support. Their availability is limited for women staying in a country

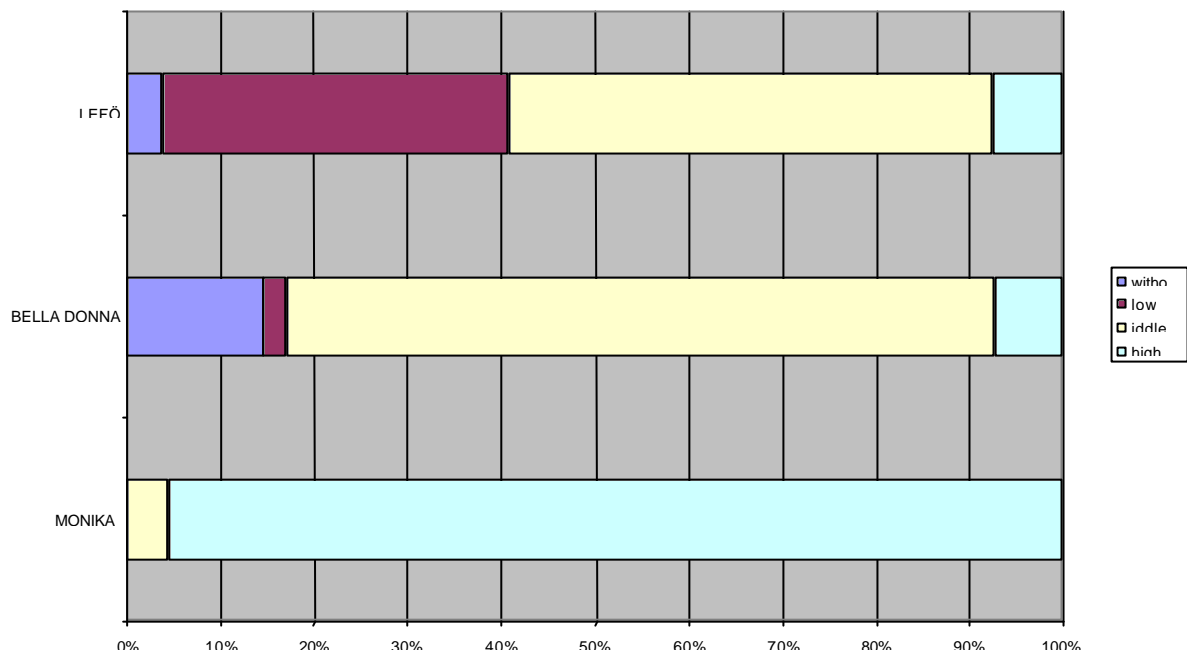
illegally. But even women staying in a country on the basis of a temporary visa, cannot obtain any assistance apart from free and anonymous tests for HIV and STDs. Almost **50 per cent (fifty-nine) of the women surveyed were staying in the country illegally**, or only had a temporary residence permit. Hence they were among the women for whom it was most difficult to obtain help.

Diagram 3: The residential status of the prostitutes surveyed



3.2.4. The school education of the prostitutes encountered

The following diagram also clearly reveals the differences in the three project regions: the school education of the women encountered differs considerably depending on the country of origin and the women's age. The women from Central and South America encountered in Vienna had generally had a poor to average school education. Those working in Frankfurt/Oder were generally younger and came from Poland and the Ukraine; they also had had a poor to average school education. In Helsinki, the project primarily encountered women from Russia, who were somewhat older and had had a better school education.

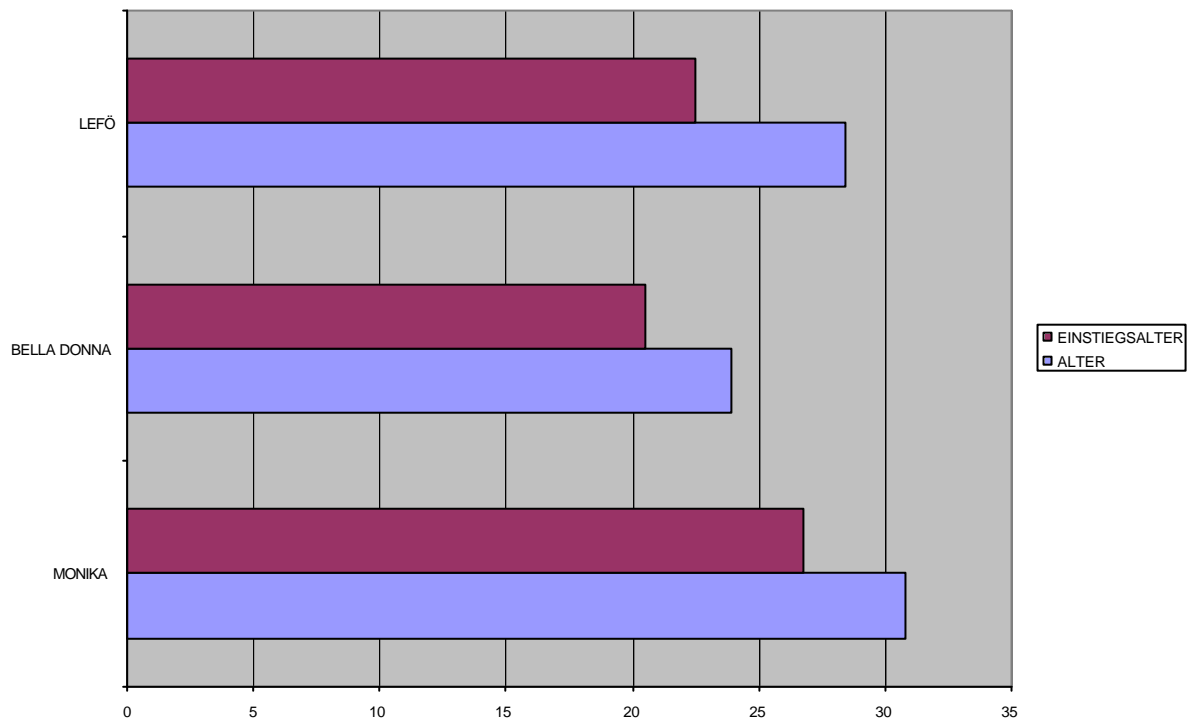
Diagram 4: The school education of the women surveyed

As the vocational education of the women surveyed presented a very similar picture, we shall not go into it in detail here. The educational background of the women surveyed is interesting for a number of reasons. Firstly, the level of education tells us something about conditions in their countries of origin. Poorly educated South American women come to Europe to improve their economic situation. The economic situation in Russia is still so desperate that even highly educated women go abroad to support their families through prostitution. Young women from Russia, the Ukraine and other Central and Eastern European countries who were primarily encountered in Frankfurt/Oder had had a poor to average school education. Women with an average to higher school education are more easily reached and informed via the printed media than are women with a poor school education, for whom special media must be developed.

3.2.5 The age of the prostitutes encountered, and the age at which the women started working as prostitutes

As already suggested above, the age of the women surveyed differed in each of the three regions. Whilst the average age of the women in Vienna and Helsinki tended to be around thirty, the women in Frankfurt/Oder were in their early to mid-twenties. The women in Frankfurt/Oder had also started working as prostitutes at an earlier age than their counterparts in the two metropolises.

Diagram 5: Average current age (Alter) and age at which the women started working (Einstiegsalter) as prostitutes



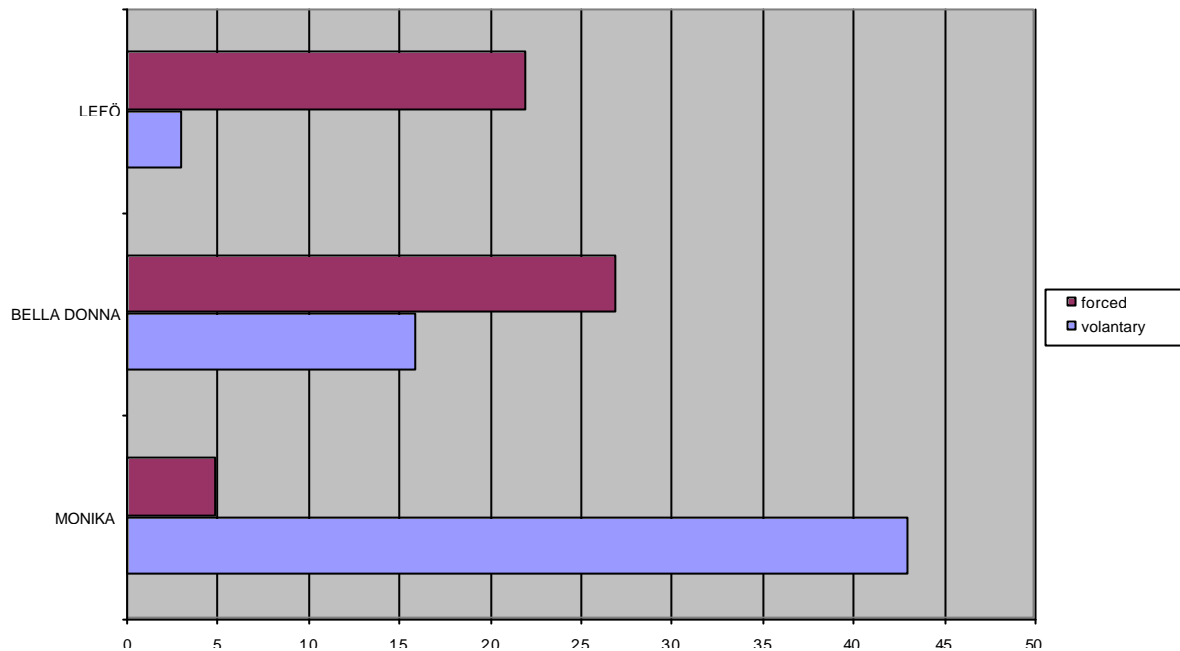
The explanation for this divergent demographic data is partly to be found in the scenes themselves: in Frankfurt/Oder, mobility is higher than in the other two metropolises. It also suggests different ways of gaining access to the women and a difference there social situation.

In Finland, for example, most of the women surveyed stated that they were divorced (twenty-six). According to the MONIKA staff the divorces of these migrants - usually from Finnish men - were the reason for their becoming prostitutes, because many of them were penniless and were determined to remain in Finland. However, they still did not have a right - independent of their husbands – to reside in Finland.

Almost **half of the women had children**, most of whom (thirty-seven) were living with relatives in the women's countries of origin. When these women first started working, or established contact, with the prostitution scene, they frequently did so with the intention of supporting their children and other members of their family.

3.2.6. Entering prostitution – the result of coercion or a voluntary decision?

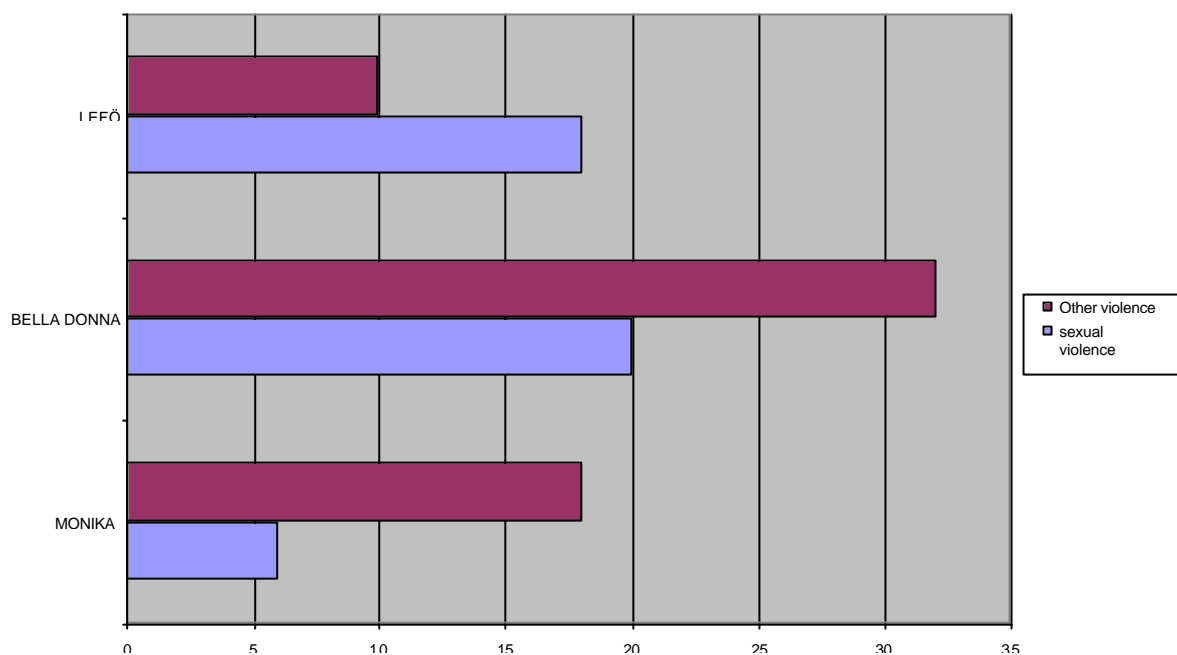
Approximately **half of the women (fifty-eight) stated that they had “not voluntarily” started working as prostitutes**. Most of these women (nineteen), however, said that they had been forced into prostitution by “relatives” and “friends”. Twelve stated that they had been forced into prostitution through the use of violence; fourteen had been recruited or coerced into prostitution by pimps.

Diagram 6: Entering prostitution

Conspicuous here is the large share of women in Helsinki who stated that they had voluntarily chosen to work as prostitutes. This stands in marked contrast to reports from the other two regions. This information could be misleading due to the way the survey was conducted. In Helsinki, migrants were surveyed directly with the documentation sheet. However, the sheet had not been conceived as a face-to-face questionnaire and did not therefore include the option: “No comment”. Hence the women had no choice but to give the harmless “positive” answer if they did not want to disclose further information about themselves. As the survey results did not reach us until the autumn, and we were only able to discuss them at the co-ordinating meeting shortly before the project terminated, we were no longer able to correct this fundamental error in the survey. We suspect that the approach adopted in Helsinki produced a number of false results. One can therefore conclude that the number of women victims of trafficking and violence is probably far higher than the figure stated here.

3.2.7. The experience of violence in the sphere of prostitution

Diagram 7: The experience of violence in the sphere of prostitution



Two-thirds of the migrant women contacted reported experiencing physical violence whilst working as prostitutes. One third also stated that they had been the victims of sexual violence. It is noteworthy that more experiences of violence were reported in the German/Polish border region than in the two metropolises. This is certainly related to the prostitution scenes contacted. We only contacted prostitutes working in the street (which our experience shows to be the most dangerous place for prostitutes) in Frankfurt/Oder. To summarise, we discovered that a greater part of the migrant women working as prostitutes in the regions of Germany/Poland, Finland and Austria, where our projects operated, were victims of trafficking and violence. Our comparison of the three project locations revealed that the younger the migrants are, the more mobile the scenes, and the more victims of trafficking and violence we encountered in these scenes. The results also clearly demonstrate that not all migrant women prostitutes are victims of trafficking or

violence. Outreach social work, which the women accept as individuals, is urgently necessary to build up trust and offer them help on an individual basis. Experience also shows, however, that it is by no means only the individual situation of the migrants that is to blame for their difficult circumstances. Laws on residence and other legal provisions are largely responsible for creating situations in which women migrants are open to blackmail and exploitation with virtually no recourse to assistance from social agencies.

3.3. Progress reports from individual support measures

To allow us to consider and document long-term support processes (going beyond the social situation) a classified record of progress reports was discussed and adopted as a second survey instrument.¹⁰ The results are briefly discussed below.

A total of thirty-three progress reports were prepared by the projects. On the basis of the existing material, a joint evaluation as originally planned is only possible for certain areas. The differences in the documented support measures were too great: BELLADONNA primarily documented acute support measures (seven), LEFÖ reported on a mixture of acute cases and long-term support measures (eight) and MONIKA primarily documented long-term counselling and support measures for women residing in Finland. It must be pointed out here that it was obviously not possible to document all of the monitored cases. The work done by the projects, including the target groups reached, is presented under P-3.1 brief reports and in greater detail in the Appendix (project reports).

3.3.1. Contact with the victims of violence and trafficking

The legal conditions and the way in which contact is first established determines the subsequent support measures, especially for migrants who are staying in the above-mentioned countries on short-stay visas or without any legal right of residence. **In all three (four including Poland) participant countries, the police attached considerably more importance to ensuring the observance and implementation of laws relating to residence than to prosecuting trafficking and violence.** And although it proved possible, in Austria, to extend contacts to women in detention prior to their deportation, it

¹⁰ See Section 2.4.2 and the appendix

was generally only possible to talk with them briefly before they were deported as stipulated. In Finland, nobody has ever tried to work with so-called “illegal” migrants before. The tighter laws on prostitution allow for women to be deported at short notice. In Germany, it has at least been possible in a few cases to accommodate and take care of women victims of trafficking in a BELLADONNA refuge on the basis of “toleration” until legal proceedings were instituted. In Germany too, however, most of the migrants were deported as quickly as possible.

3.3.2. Analysis and estimation of the situation of migrants affected

The different focal points in the case documents also have an affect on the analysis of the situation. BELLADONNA dealt with acutely endangered cases which – in some cases – necessitated dramatic support operations at short notice. LEFÖ reports on frequently frustrated endeavours to organise and provide individual assistance despite the repressive laws on foreigners in Austria, and thus to make at least the return of the women to their home countries bearable for them. The actual conduct of the police does not suggest that the state is interested in prosecuting trafficking and violence. In Finland, migrants can only be supported by the MONIKA project in the long term if they are legally residing there. For this reason, apart from providing assistance, the main focus there is on violence within the family and social questions.

3.3.2. Agreements with clients: agreeing on goals and planning assistance

The agreements reached with clients basically involve short- and medium-term goals for managing acute crisis situations. The new feature here is that even in such situations, the goals are agreed upon and assistance plans prepared in co-operation with the clients.

3.3.3. Contacts between clients and other establishments

So far, contacts between clients and other establishments have only ever been regulated on an individual basis. Owing to the laws on residence and the absence of social schemes, it has in the past been difficult and very time-consuming to arrange such contacts in every single case. All of the participant countries are still a long way from working in a

regulating network that provides individual assistance in specific cases. Continued intensive endeavours are necessary at an institutional and social level.

3.3.4. Documentation of the course of the support measures

The near impossibility of referring cases to other instances means that almost all of the work to provide assisting measures rests with the case manager. The absence of a network makes each case into an individual case, and each individual case extremely time-consuming. On behalf of the two other projects, BELLADONNA has listed the tasks, and their scope, deemed necessary on the basis of previous experience to provide the women with adequate assistance. The result is deeply distressing: in order to provide adequate care for women who are victims of trafficking, are prepared to testify, and are compelled to live in emergency accommodation, one full-time staff member is needed. This full-time staff member would then be able to provide social support, accompaniment and counselling for three cases only. Although BELLADONNA has a refuge with six places, there is only one part-time staff member available to work there. In other words, at least one full-time plus one part-time position are still needed to provide good counselling and support. The other projects are in a similar situation. They can only provide and perform a fraction of the necessary counselling and assistance. Much of the work must be done in an honorary capacity. Apart from the general legal situation, this frustrating lack of counselling and support facilities clearly shows why many of the women victims prefer not to testify against their persecutors in court.

3.4 Evaluation of the results

To summarise: most of the victims of trafficking and violence assisted within the framework of SOLITAIRE were sent back to their home countries without anyone having testified as witnesses on their behalf, and without their having been at all recognised as victims of trafficking and violence in the area of prostitution. At best, the projects were able to provide care to alleviate the social consequences for the victims. So far, however, support has involved constant improvisation. An “ideal” support channel, as originally envisaged, has not yet been created.

The case documentation clearly shows that neither suitable facilities and resources nor an adequate infrastructure exists in any of the participant regions to combat trafficking in human beings or violence in prostitution. All participant projects are working to improve conditions. Co-ordinating groups and groups of experts exist on a political level in all participant countries and are working on improving assistance for the victims of trafficking and violence. However, there can be no fundamental improvement unless individual assistance for victims is seriously considered. Work is being done in this area in all regions. The most important demands involve:

- Counselling, care and accompaniment through specialised counselling centres for all potential victims of trafficking in women
- Agreements between the police, countries and specialised counselling centres to regulate assistance; recognition of the expert status of the women specialists at the counselling centres
- Giving migrants who might be victims of trafficking or violence permission to reside in the country for at least four weeks under the care of the specialised counselling centres
- Giving the persecution of offences such as trafficking in human beings, and violence against migrants priority over persecuting the violation of laws on the right of residence
- Special regulations (e.g. residence and work permits) as well as offering protection to testifying victims in court cases against traffickers, pimps and perpetrators of violence against women
- Access to social and health services regardless of the residential status of persons seeking assistance
- No general victimisation of prostitutes

4. The SOLITAIRE project: conclusions and perspectives (abridged version)

4.1. The goals of the SOLITAIRE project

Within the framework of the European pilot programme, the UMBRELLA Network, NGOs are working above all in the border regions between the EU countries and the non-

EU countries of Central and Eastern Europe with the goal of preventing sexually transmissible diseases (STDs) and HIV. Our own research shows that a greater part of the prostitutes counselled and cared for in the projects were victims of violence and trafficking. Only a few of these prostitutes were willing to testify against their traffickers and those who had abused them; only a few managed to cease working as prostitutes, despite the support they received.

Given these experiences in various border regions of Europe, we considered it absolutely necessary to offer the women affected proper counselling and support as soon as possible. Only if the victims can effectively take advantage of their rights, will the political and legal prosecution of traffickers and violent offences be successful in the long term. The project presented here was an attempt to improve the support offered directly to the women victims.

4.2. Implementation of the SOLITAIRE project

SOLITAIRE linked four institutions, three of which had identical tasks. In three EU countries (Finland, Germany and Austria) co-ordinating centres were established at NGOs that already had access to the prostitution milieu or the necessary competence (groups of experts, research, establishing networks) to use the methods of case management to organise and co-ordinate individual assistance for women victims and, on the other hand, to foster co-operation between the three levels (health projects, state institutions, and NGOs) to combat trafficking in women. In addition, the projects were to co-operate closely with institutions in the women's countries of origin.

Centres to co-ordinate assistance for the victims of trafficking and violence in prostitution was established at each of the following co-operation partners: MONIKA in Finland, BELLA DONNA in Germany, and LEFÖ in Austria. The tasks and goals of the co-ordination centres were defined in advance. SPI-Forschung gGmbH took care of implementing and co-ordinating the entire SOLITAIRE project. Alongside the approach already described, two survey instruments were developed, discussed and adopted for documenting the project. Together with the project evaluation and the project reports, these surveys constitute the basis of this report.

4.2.1. The SOLITAIRE project within the framework of the LEFÖ hosting organisation in Vienna, Austria

In Austria, the broad spectrum of legislation between the ‘**laws on foreigners**’ to ‘**law on the employment of foreigners**’, which creates a vicious circle between permission to reside and permission to work, provides no scope for legalising migrants working as prostitutes.

The **Austrian health system** does not allow access to free medical services. People not belonging to the insurance system must pay the high cost of medical services themselves. The work of the SOLITAIRE project at LEFÖ/AUSTRIA was primarily undertaken in the areas of counselling, care and accompanying affected women, who primarily originated from the countries of Eastern Europe. All in all, LEFÖ contacted 281 migrants working as prostitutes. Within the framework of streetwork 435 counselling talks were held with 222 migrants from 20 countries. Owing to SOLITAIRE, co-operation with the airport social service was extended and intensified in various Austrian cities. As a result, it was possible to visit twenty-seven women in detention awaiting deportation. At the Vienna health office, forty-three counselling sessions were held with twenty-seven migrants. Within the scope of educational and prevention work, the SOLITAIRE staff have issued an information brochure, in Spanish, on the new “Law against Violence to Women”. Furthermore, LEFÖ fought for the rights of migrants in national and international committees.

4.2.2. The work of the MONIKA project within the framework of SOLITAIRE

In Helsinki, most prostitutes work in bars. Street prostitution has been banned officially since 1999, but there is still a district in which approximately forty-five people, mostly Finns, prostitute themselves on the street. In Finland there is, as yet, no social assistance or counselling for migrants working as prostitutes. Access to health services is, however, both free and anonymous. “Seastar”, the former UMBRELLA Network project, helps women in the scene contact these services in Helsinki.

MONIKA focused on performing streetwork in the languages spoken by the migrant women (generally Russian) in sex bars. Telephone hotlines provided counselling in five languages (Finnish, Russian, Estonian, Spanish and French). All in all, about 300 migrant women were contacted in the prostitution scene. Some sixty migrant women were given long-term assistance, of whom twenty-one were the victims of violence and three of trafficking. When the women had permanent resident permits, MONIKA worked with the job centre, the social welfare office, the hospitals and centres for rape victims whenever necessary and after prior consultation with the women concerned. The staff of MONIKA are confident that they will be able to continue their work.

4.2.3. The SOLITAIRE project within the scope of BELLADONNA in Frankfurt/Oder (Germany)

BELLADONNA is the only one of the three practically oriented projects within SOLITAIRE that is not based on a metropolis but on a small town (Frankfurt/Oder), which, together with the Polish town of Slubice, also forms a border region. The project covers the entire border area (predominantly rural) between the German Land of Brandenburg and Poland. In contrast to the other two projects, BELLADONNA operates on a cross-border basis, i.e. where necessary, it takes advantage of the health and social services in Germany and Poland. These services have tended to be rudimentary due to their location in a rural area and are hardly sufficient to cope with the problems arising in conjunction with immigration. During the past few years, the scenes have become increasingly well established. On both the German and the Polish side, there have been endeavours since the mid-nineteen-nineties to provide health as well as social counselling and care for the approximately 23,000 prostitutes working in the region. Providing care continues to be a long and arduous task due to the legal restrictions and powerful prejudices against prostitution on the whole.

Since 1977, BELLADONNA has been combining outreach social work in the prostitution milieu including the goal of STD and HIV prevention with supporting the victims of violence and trafficking in human beings. A refuge and a counselling centre have been established for this target group. BELLADONNA is in contact with approximately 1,000

prostitutes in the region (mostly migrants) and was able to offer advice and support, in the medium and long term and within the scope of SOLITAIRE, to approximately thirty migrants who had been the victims of violence and traffickers.

4.2.4. SOLITAIRE within the framework of SPI-Forschung gGmbH

Following consultation with the other co-operation partners, SPI-Forschung gGmbH took over the co-ordination of the overall project, organised advanced training and co-ordinating meetings, evaluated the projects locally and prepared this report. In addition to this, the co-ordinator developed two survey instruments, and assumed responsibility for their evaluation, which forms part of this report. The co-ordinator also established an “Advisory committee to combat trafficking in human beings” in the German Land of Brandenburg (BELLADONNA), which is currently working on a contract to improve co-operation between NGOs and the police.

4.3. The results of the SOLITAIRE study

A documentation sheet was developed and adopted to analyse the social and health situation of the prostitutes encountered in the course of streetwork. The evaluation of the documentation sheet will be presented below.

Owing to the differences in scenes (here we are comparing a region based on small towns and border-crossing with the metropolises of Vienna and Helsinki), **the scenes of prostitution**, which the practical projects visited, were distributed very differently. Whilst LEFÖ in Vienna contacted most of the prostitutes in bars and clubs, BELLADONNA encountered most of the prostitutes in clubs and in the street. MONIKA contacted most of the prostitutes in bars.

Almost all of the women encountered and surveyed were **migrants** in the countries where they were working as prostitutes. On the whole, the practical projects surveyed women from eleven countries. The streetworkers often came from the prostitutes' countries of origin and spoke their respective languages; where this was not the case, other women were called in to translate and interpret. Thus, almost all of the women encountered in Helsinki were interviewed in Russian; in Vienna Spanish, German, Czech and Hungarian were spoken; and in Frankfurt/Oder communication took place in Polish and Russian.

In **Vienna**, most of the women surveyed and cared for came from **Central and South America**, because the LEFÖ project was developed from an initiative founded by Latin American immigrants in Austria. Some of the staff and the women cared for still come from these part of the world. The projects in the two other locations mainly dealt with women from **Central and Eastern European** countries.

The **residential status** of the women surveyed is very interesting in this context. In all three countries, the residential status largely determined whether the women were entitled to assistance and support. Their availability is limited for women staying in a country illegally. But even women staying in a country on the basis of a temporary visa, cannot obtain any assistance apart from free and anonymous tests for HIV and STDs. Almost **50 per cent (fifty-nine) of the women surveyed were staying in the country illegally**, or only had a temporary residence permit. Hence they were among the women for whom it was most difficult to obtain help.

Almost **half of the women had children**, most of whom (thirty-seven) were living with relatives in the women's countries of origin. When these women first started working, or established contact, with the prostitution scene, they frequently did so with the intention of supporting their children and other members of their family.

Approximately **half of the women (fifty-eight) stated that they had "not voluntarily" started working as prostitutes**. Most of these women (nineteen), however, said that they had been forced into prostitution by "relatives" and "friends". Twelve stated that they had been forced into prostitution through the use of violence; fourteen had been recruited or coerced into prostitution by pimps.

4.4. Results of the record of progress

To allow us to consider and document long-term support processes (going beyond the social situation) a classified record of progress reports was discussed and adopted as a second survey instrument.

A total of thirty-three progress reports were prepared by the projects. On the basis of the existing material, a joint evaluation as originally planned is only possible for certain areas. The differences in the documented support measures were too great.

The legal conditions and the way in which contact is first established determines the subsequent support measures, especially for migrants who are staying in the above-mentioned countries on short-stay visas or without any legal right of residence. **In all three (four including Poland) participant countries, the police attached considerably more importance to ensuring the observance and implementation of laws relating to residence than to prosecuting trafficking and violence**. The actual conduct of the police does not suggest that the state is interested in prosecuting trafficking and violence. In Finland, immigrants can only be supported by the MONIKA project in the long term if they are legally residing there. For this reason, apart from providing assistance, the main focus there is on violence within the family and social questions.

So far, contacts between clients and other establishments have only ever been regulated on an individual basis. Owing to the laws on residence and the absence of social schemes, it has in the past been difficult and very time-consuming to arrange such contacts in every single case. **All of the participant countries are still a long way from working in a**

regulating network that provides individual assistance in specific cases. Continued intensive endeavours are necessary at an institutional and social level. The absence of a network makes each case into an individual case. The near impossibility of referring cases to other instances means that almost all of the work to provide assisting measures rests with the case manager. This means that each individual case is extremely time-consuming. Apart from the general legal situation, this frustrating lack of counselling and support facilities clearly shows why many of the women victims prefer not to testify against their persecutors in court.

4.5. Conclusions

To summarise: most of the victims of trafficking and violence assisted within the framework of SOLITAIRE were sent back to their home countries without anyone having testified as witnesses on their behalf, and without their having been at all recognised as victims of trafficking and violence in the area of prostitution. At best, the projects were able to provide care to alleviate the social consequences for the victims. So far, however, support has involved constant improvisation. An “ideal” support channel, as originally envisaged, has not yet been created. This would require a second project phase¹¹.

The experience clearly shows that neither suitable facilities and resources nor an adequate infrastructure exists in any of the participant regions to combat trafficking in human beings or violence in prostitution. All regions are working to these improve conditions. The most important demands concern:

- Counselling, care and accompaniment through specialised counselling centres for all possible victims of trafficking in women
- Agreements between the police, countries and specialised counselling centres to regulate assistance; recognition of the expert status of the women specialists at the counselling centres
- Giving migrants who are the victims of trafficking or violence permission to reside for at least four weeks under the care of the specialised counselling centres

- Giving the persecution of offences such as trafficking in human beings and violence against migrants priority over persecuting the violation of laws on the right of residence
- Special regulations (e.g. residence and work permits) as well as offering protection to testifying victims in court cases against traffickers, pimps and perpetrators of violence against women
- Access to social and health services regardless of the residential status of persons seeking assistance
- No general victimisation of prostitutes

¹¹ Unfortunately, our application for extension was rejected.