



June 2009

Welcome to the third edition of the AIDS & Mobility (A&M) Newsletter!

In this issue we examine the role of migrant mediators in the field of substance misuse, as well as our usual round-up of HIV and migration news, a look at recent research and an interview with AIDS & Mobility project leader, Ramazan Salman.

Migrants' training on substance misuse	1
News round-up	2
Research round-up	3
Interview with Ramazan Salman	3
Contact the project	4

Migrants' training on substance misuse

The "Help with Drug Addiction" programme is one of the few projects in Germany specifically designed to help migrants to understand drug use, prevention and treatment. Ahmet Kimil, a Turkish psychologist born and educated in Germany, coordinates the programme for AIDS & Mobility partner EMZ in Hanover.

Language and cultural differences mean that not only do migrants not know that services

are available to help them, they often don't understand the treatment on offer. The EMZ programme aims to help migrants make better use of the services offered by the German health system, as well as increasing understanding of drug addiction as a health problem and its links with other issues such as HIV. The programme trains migrants who then go on to educate others in their community. Training looks at a range of substances and their differing risks and shows how addiction develops and is affected by many elements of a person's background.

Ahmet's experiences delivering the EMZ programme have shown that young migrants with drug problems often have other issues to deal with:

"In our experience problems with drugs go together with problems in life. For young people with an addiction stressful times with parents and family are a common issue. While parents may have different values – it is important that young people can develop and openly communicate their own."

Whilst friends and family can be important sources of help and support for people who have problems with drugs, professional counselling services can also be very helpful. These services are confidential and available for free.

"It is important that migrants make use of these very good services," says Ahmet. "In our training for HIV/AIDS mediators we provide information and links to specialized drug services."



The project in Hanover has trained over 200 transcultural health mediators to educate other migrants about addiction and harm reduction in a programme funded by the City of Hanover.

"A range of services are available for those with addiction issues, including hepatitis vaccination, clean needles and syringes, medication and opiate substitutes. Education in many languages opens the route for understanding even for people who do not speak German. As AIDS & Mobility rolls out, we will be reaching young people in fifteen languages and in six European countries until 2011".

News round-up

In this issue: HIV at sea and a report from the recent COST network meeting in Cyprus.

HIV, all at sea

The Global Partnership on HIV and Mobile Workers in the Maritime Sector has established its secretariat at IOM Headquarters in Geneva. The partnership brings together eight organisations including the IOM, UN, NGOs, trades unions and employers.

Although HIV has long been acknowledged as an issue globally in the trucking industry, there has never been a platform to discuss its significance to migrant workers on ships. The partnership hopes to start a pilot health promotion programme this year with Filipino seafarers.

You can read more about the partnership on the [IOM website](#).

Health, migration and HIV/AIDS

Both prevention and treatment present health care systems with major challenges when it comes to migrant populations. Some migrants come from areas of high HIV/AIDS prevalence, while others are vulnerable to infection because of the situations they may encounter.

Barriers to prevention may arise from ignorance as well as from cultural factors, social structures or religious beliefs. Barriers to treatment may result from the limited access to care faced by undocumented migrants and other marginalised groups.

The COST network (www.costhome.eu) and a&tm invited officials, researchers and project leaders from 15 European countries to meet in Nicosia (Cyprus) on May 15 and 16 2009. The 25 participants (eight of them former National Focal Points of a&tm) came together to discuss research on beliefs and behaviours affecting the vulnerability of migrant populations to HIV/AIDS, as well as the improvements needed in prevention and care provision.

Participants considered the role of social attitudes towards migrants and people with HIV/AIDS (racism, stigma, social exclusion), as well as the policy measures that are taken by health providers or governments to remedy the problems identified.

The meeting concluded that health and social care for migrants and ethnic minorities in Europe should remain the focus of regular meetings and updates not only with HIV experts, but health and migration representatives too. Migration flows and policy



changes that affect funding need to be monitored and should be reported. In addition, a need was identified to re-emphasize the need for specific and migrant-driven efforts in HIV-prevention and care.

Presentations from the workshop can be downloaded [here](#).

Research round-up

A brief overview of recently published research on issues around HIV and migration in Europe. Links to abstracts or full text are provided where possible.

Please contact us if you have research items you'd like to see included here.

The impact in the UK of the Central and Eastern European HIV epidemics

[*Epidemiology and Infection*, Published online by Cambridge University Press 19 Feb 2009](#)

This article by Delpech et al discusses the impact of European HIV epidemics in the UK, looking at different transmission routes.

Social Research among People of Sub-Saharan African Origin Living with HIV in the UK and Europe

[*AIDS & Behavior*; Volume 12, Number 2 / March, 2008](#)

This review summarises the literature on social, behavioural, and intervention research among African communities affected by HIV in the UK and other European countries in order to make recommendations for future interventions.

Ramazan Salman, A&M Project Leader

Ramazan was born in Istanbul and migrated to Hanover with his family in 1966. In 1989, having been inspired by his experiences interpreting for Turkish family members, he founded the Ethno-Medical Centre. Ramazan has over twenty years' experience working on migrant health issues and his work to promote the concept of transcultural mediator training has been widely acknowledged in Europe. In 2006, he was named Social Entrepreneur of the Year and in early 2009, Ramazan was awarded the German Cross of Honour by the German Minister for Integration. This was in recognition of his longstanding work on issues of migrant integration in Germany.

In this interview, Ramazan talks about his work leading the AIDS & Mobility collaboration and some of the main issues that the project hopes to address.

Ramazan, you have been the project leader for A&M since July 2008 – what does this mean for the network?

My own work in health and integration started with HIV/AIDS. In 1992 I started developing the transcultural mediator approach that is now a major part of A&M's work. This was a change from the national focal points structure and has enabled project partners to get more involved in direct work with migrants.



What are the most important challenges for A&M?

I am very much in favour of migrants speaking for themselves, so my personal challenge in A&M is learning more English! Migrants must take a leading role and in order to do so, we need room, time and resources. A&M faces numerous challenges beyond language barriers. After that, stigma and discrimination around HIV/AIDS are the most important issues. Migrants are being discriminated against and migrants with HIV often do not find support in their own communities.

Young migrants are the primary target group, what are the issues in this group?

When I was young, I was often torn between the more traditional thinking of my Muslim parents and the world around me. Sexual and reproductive health education is a culturally sensitive issue. Drug use and living with HIV are also far from easy to deal with within a family. We not only want to educate young people. We want to motivate our communities to overcome silence and ignorance. Young people should be able to live healthy lives and to feel at home in Europe – no matter where they come from.

What do you expect at the end of the project in 2011?

The EU will support the training of 120 transcultural mediators, who will reach out to thousands of young migrants in six countries. We will have a best practice Master Toolkit for others to use in the future. Our hope is that more organizations and countries will become involved and bring in additional expertise. For

future generations my vision is to establish a European training centre and archive where students can study and research HIV-prevention. Eventually, I hope AIDS & Mobility Europe can expand and to interact with the migrant health field beyond Europe.

If you have a project working with young migrants that you'd like to tell us about, get in touch with us at AIDS & Mobility.

Let us know about your work on HIV and migration, or any news stories or events you think our network of partners would be interested in.

You can contact us by email at:

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news@aidsmobility.org

Contact us by phone on:

00 49 511 1693184

Our website is currently being updated, but new information on the project will soon be available at www.aidsmobility.org



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