EVI

EVI NETWORK

**EMPOWERMENT
THROUGH
VOCATIONAL
INTEGRATION**

GUIDELINES FOR NETWORK BUILDING

FOR SUCCESSFUL JOB INTEGRATION OF VICTIMS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN PROSTITUTION

**Funded by
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IMPRINT

Notes: The terms "women" and "clients" refer to all those who define themselves as women. This of course also applies to trans, inter or non-binary people.

Special thanks go to all those who have contributed to this guide in various ways.

"ALONE WE CAN ACHIEVE SO LITTLE, TOGETHER WE CAN ACHIEVE SO MUCH."

HELEN KELLER

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ABBREVIATIONS AND TERMINOLOGY

ABBREVIATIONS

EVI stands for *"Empowerment of Victims of Gender-based Violence through Vocational Integration"*.

TERMINOLOGY

TARGET GROUP (OF THE EVI PROJECT): Women working in prostitution who are affected by gender-based violence (clients).

NETWORK INITIATOR (local EVI network initiator): Representative of a social institution working with people involved in prostitution, and victims of violence.

CORPORATE PARTNERS: Companies and employers who are, or want to become, partners of an EVI network.

SUPPORTING PARTNERS: public or civil society partners of the EVI network (e.g. non-profit organisations, public authorities, etc.)

EMPOWERMENT refers to an approach in social work that starts with the strengths and competencies of the people concerned to cope with life. This approach is especially useful in life situations that are characterised by personal and social weaknesses. The aim is to encourage people to discover their own strengths and to use their existing resources to solve problems. Empowerment aims not to fixate on a person's deficits, problems and inadequacies, but to consistently orientate towards a person's strengths. The perspective is directed towards strengthening the individual, strengthening social networks and groups, and political lobbying in local and regional politics, in the interests of people on the fringes of society. Beyond the individual level, empowerment in social work also aims at professional action that focuses on people in groups, builds networks for those affected and supports political forms of asserting interests. Methodologically, empowerment means the active promotion of solidarity-based forms of self-help and self-organisation, with the aim of self-determination, social justice and democratic participation (Stangl, 2022).

BEST PRACTICE: "Best Practice" refers to a proven approach, practice or method for carrying out a recurring activity in the best possible way. This is a kind of pattern that is used to achieve a defined result. In the truest sense of the term (translated), a best practice refers to an "excellent practice".

LESSONS LEARNED: "Lessons Learned" are the written recording and systematic collection, evaluation and consolidation of experiences, developments, tips, mistakes and risks from projects. Observing them can prove useful for future projects.

STEERING GROUP: A steering group controls and organises a project or network and often acts as a decision-making body.

INTRODUCTION

THE EVI PROJECT: WHAT IS IT ABOUT?

The EVI project was launched to give women affected by violence and who work in prostitution a realistic chance of work integration outside of prostitution.

Many of these women have a migrant background. However, integration programmes designed to support migrant women often do not address the specific needs of victims of gender-based violence in exiting prostitution.

Other programmes created to support victims of gender-based violence primarily operate within the social welfare system, and provide access based on official employment and a registered address. In many cases, women who experience violence in prostitution and want to leave fall through the support networks that currently exist.

There are several well-developed tools that support social institutions to assist victims of sexual exploitation to integrate into the labour market (COMPASS manual[1], TOLERANT guide[2]). These guides mostly focus on supporting trafficked persons in the form of careers advice or job application training. However, successful integration into the primary labour market is often only possible if the social institutions are supported by appropriate partners from the start. As good as the support of those affected may be, this is not sufficient on its own and is no substitute for competent and trained corporate partners who open the doors for those affected so that they can enter the primary labour market.

GOALS

GENERAL OBJECTIVES OF EVI

This is exactly where EVI comes in:

The aim is to enable women who are, or have been, affected by violence in the context of prostitution to successfully integrate into the labour market through a broad network of business and support partners who, together with you as a social institution (and network initiator), stand by the sides of those affected.

When public sector and civil society partners pool their existing resources, the needs of the target group can be better met. To achieve this goal, local networks with partners from the business sector as well as from public and private social institutions are established to close crucial gaps in provision for the target group, and thus provide them with needs-oriented support. The aim is to enable women who have left prostitution to become as independent as possible in the labour market. This is why companies and employers are key partners in these networks, because only they can provide women with low-threshold access to the labour market.

In addition to raising victims' awareness of gender equality and their rights as victims of gender-based violence through practical psychosocial support and exit assistance, the project's

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[1] https://gipst.eu/Kompass-Handbuch.pdf

[2] https://www.tolerantproject.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/tolerant-guide-DE.pdf

interventions aim to reduce intolerant and violent behaviour, and reduce or ideally prevent victim blaming, especially in the context of the labour market.

OBJECTIVES OF THIS GUIDE

This guide is intended to provide guidance on setting up and implementing a network, to enable people to start their own local network.

As the organisational and support landscape can be very different in each city, and even more so in each country, it is important that the network initiator is aware of the different roles of network members in the local context.

As part of our overall EVI project, an EVI network was set up as a pilot project at each of three locations, Vienna, Nuremberg and Karlsruhe. The principles of these EVI networks in Austria and Germany should also be transferable to other countries, although some aspects of the project have to be adapted individually on a country-specific basis.

The creation of local duplicate structures (through superfluous, new EVI networks) should be **counteracted**. For this reason, a thorough analysis of the relevant stakeholders is of great importance. The network initiator ensures that the network fits into the **existing system** and thus, systemic hurdles faced by the target group can be better overcome.

The guide serves as a tool that can and should be adapted to your circumstances and local specifics. Different points may vary depending on the needs, context and differences in your target group. Certain hurdles may arise and different support systems may exist depending on the location. Therefore, it is particularly important to be flexible in responding to local circumstances.

The following content provides a practical overview and covers basic topics, such as your tasks as a network initiator, the selection of partners, and best practices. Not every topic will be relevant for everyone.

WHO IS THIS GUIDE AIMED AT?

This guide was developed for representatives of counselling centres for women in prostitution, and is intended to support network initiators in setting up comparable local networks in their own region, so that barriers to leaving prostitution for women who have experienced violence can be lowered across the board.

In order to achieve promising work integration with the target group, the counselling centres that want to act as network initiators should ideally have the following prerequisites:

Outreach work: Regular outreach work provides access to street prostitutes, brothels and other relevant locations. This makes it possible to publicise the counselling services and at the same time provides the opportunity to establish and maintain contact with clients who are already known.

Points of contact/counselling: Furthermore, a contact point, e.g. in the form of an open contact café or a meeting café, offers a further opportunity to build relationships and make support, health care and psychosocial counselling easily accessible. This can be a first place of safety.

Social counselling: In addition, social counselling should be offered as an optional or subsequent option for longer processes and support. This includes, for example, applying for health

insurance, benefits from the job centre, providing housing, psychosocial counselling, as well as support and accompaniment at official appointments. Especially when clients express a desire to change jobs or leave the labour market, the individual development steps to prepare for further professional development/reorientation can be planned and implemented together with the target group (see EVI Job Guide).

Practical experience: Network initiators should already have experience in practical work with clients, in order to be able to speak to the relevant members of the support system about the specific needs of the target group and their living environment. Cooperation and contact with the members of the local network are essential for successful and promising integration, as this is the only way to lower (systemic) hurdles.

In summary, your services should be able to cover the need for support with financial, legal, health and psychosocial issues.

THE TARGET GROUP OF THE EVI PROJECT

The target group consists of women who work in prostitution and who want to leave the profession or reorientate themselves professionally. The backgrounds, motivations and working conditions of the clients that the social workers encounter are very different. This is why clients come to the counselling centres with a wide variety of concerns and conditions. It is not uncommon for their work situations to be chosen involuntarily, or affected by violence or the threat of violence, so that both victims of human trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation and victims of gender-specific violence in the context of commercial sex are supported by means of exit assistance and integration into the labour market.

In our experience, most women in prostitution in German-speaking countries come from Eastern Europe (in particular Romania, Hungary and Bulgaria), Africa (particularly Nigeria), China and Latin America. This means that they are not only confronted with cultural differences and differing values, but also have to learn the language and become familiar with the local help system and the laws.

In addition, working in prostitution often entails a life in the milieu that follows its own rhythm, rules and laws, and may seem like a parallel world to outsiders. Many women are not officially registered and thus are neither insured or covered in the event of illness. Together, this creates an overwhelming difference between the target group and the society of the country, on the fringes of which they have been working and living for years.

When working with the clients, a whole range of different starting points, individual prerequisites and limitations (such as the level of education at school) become apparent. Especially in the case of victims of sexual exploitation and gender-based violence, health-related and, in particular, psychological consequences are a major issue that require attention and sensitive handling with regard to professional reorientation.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE NETWORK

The following chapter offers two theoretical foundations, namely those of *governance* and *network development*, both of which are considered necessary for the formation of a successful network. In the first part which deals with local governance, the existing structures and concepts already in place which can serve as a background for the network are briefly defined. In the second part, the theoretical framework of network development is used to present best practice approaches for the development of a network.
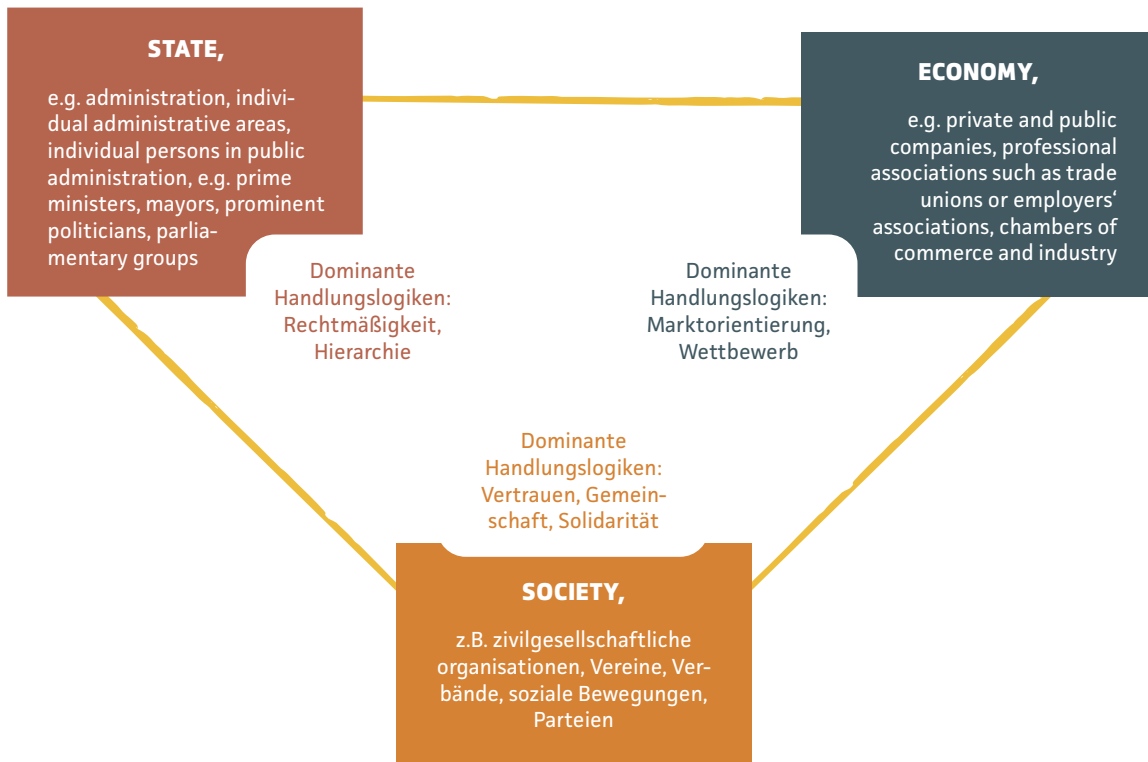
THEORETICAL BASIS: GOVERNANCE

Although the term "governance" has a long etymological history, it has taken on a special significance in social science over the last fifty years, describing a shift in the way governments deal with public and social issues. The story of this change is part of a longer history of the retreat of liberal nation states, in which the financial and technical capacity of local governments to solve increasingly costly and internationally relevant problems has been critically questioned. The result of such questioning at the political level has led to a widening of the circle of participants in the process of addressing certain social problems. This process has led to the concept of governance. In simple terms, **governance refers to the mechanisms used to coordinate the actions of a diverse group of participants (both state and private) to address a social problem, while maintaining the independence of the participants.**

Theoretically, concepts of coordination between a diverse group of independent participants first require the precise identification of these different participants and their distinction from each other. The first and most commonly mentioned distinction is that between public and private institutions. In German-speaking countries, public or state institutions have the highest authority to solve a social problem. This is partly due to the longstanding hierarchical structures of the state, which are often seen as effective in keeping egocentricity in check, while at the same time these bureaucratic structures are democratically and legally accountable through social policy and judicial control. In many cases of governance around a social issue, the state plays a leading role in giving direction and political legitimacy to all coordinated efforts.

The diversity of participants within the private sphere is represented by the two main categories of economy (or market) and society (sometimes referred to as community). As the chart below shows, each group has a preferred logic that distinguishes itself from the others, but also demonstrates the valuable contribution each sphere can make to collective action. In the sphere of economy, we are not surprised to learn that the "bottom line" of its logic is cost and profit, which has historically placed this sphere in an ambivalent position on various social issues. At the same time, the raw, market-democratic logic within the economy favours participation, results and innovation over hierarchy and structure. The driving ideas of the market are indeed valuable elements for governance. Moreover, the sphere of the market has recently gained a sense of social responsibility. Collaboration with other participants in the form of socially responsible business networks and social business initiatives are just a few examples of its growing role in governance.

The other sphere, that of society or community, is the second major sphere within the private sector. This sphere includes a wide range of different groups, from official charities to local grassroots initiatives, alongside political activists and interest groups. Many social scientists have portrayed the role of this sphere as essential to the governance process, as its logic of action tends to be both collaborative and outcome-oriented. Often, however, the openness to governance and the pace of cooperation between these three spheres are determined by the interests of the state. As with almost all socio-political concepts, much of what is observed here has its highest relevance in the arena of a local (municipal) landscape.

STATE,

e.g. administration, individual administrative areas, individual persons in public administration, e.g. prime ministers, mayors, prominent politicians, parliamentary groups

ECONOMY,

e.g. private and public companies, professional associations such as trade unions or employers' associations, chambers of commerce and industry

Dominante Handlungslogiken: Rechtmäßigkeit, Hierarchie

Dominante Handlungslogiken: Marktorientierung, Wettbewerb

Dominante Handlungslogiken: Vertrauen, Gemeinschaft, Solidarität

SOCIETY,

z.B. zivilgesellschaftliche organisationen, Vereine, Verbände, soziale Bewegungen, Parteien

(Möltgen-Sicking/Winter, 2019: Illustration 2)

LOCAL GOVERNANCE

Local governance starts with the premise that the increasingly global and complex world we live in has given more importance to the role of the local community in guiding and shaping policy solutions (keyword: globalisation). In this sense, the local community (city, region) is the most important place for governance. The three areas of governance in the chart above remain relevant for local governance, even though governance at the local level often starts with cooperation between the municipality or specialised authorities and the non-governmental organisations (NGOs), especially in relation to social issues.

The following three elements are the most common forms of local governance:

· Through participation in policy-making. This often happens through the involvement of civil society in local socio-political processes (i.e. through politically functioning committees, advisory boards or participation in other working groups).

· Through the collaborative provision of services, which is usually achieved through the budget for the private provision of services by members of civil society.

- By allowing self-organised urban development arrangements (Urban Regime Theory). As an example: a defined place for the self-organisation of a green space.

The first two elements are particularly relevant to the issue of gender-based violence in prostitution and the problem of prostitution in general. It can be assumed that most municipalities already have some form of local governance to address the problems in prostitution, where the administrative and professional authorities have at least created opportunities for civil society input (professional working groups, etc.).

EXAMPLE: KARLSRUHE

The example of Karlsruhe (Germany) will now be used to strengthen the understanding of local governance in relation to the issue of prostitution.

In response to growing public interest in regulating street prostitution in the city, due to a number of citizen complaints and media reports, the city organised several joint discussions with citizens and civil society organisations in 2014 and 2015. This resulted in the introduction of some new restrictions on street prostitution and the city started to financially support a counselling centre. The city thus responded to public interest by immediately involving civil society in joint discussions and eventually in the provision of services.

At the beginning of 2018, based on the mandate given to the municipal authorities by the Prostitution Protection Act of 2017, a specialised working group was formed by the authorities responsible for the implementation of the law. This group included the representatives from the Public Order Office, the Public Health Office, the Criminal Investigation Department, the Equal Opportunities Office, as well as employees of two civil society organisations that run counselling centres for people in prostitution in Karlsruhe. The expert working group continues to meet every two to three months and discusses all relevant topics of cooperation in the field of prostitution.

This example shows how the federal and state laws have set guidelines for the implementation of prostitution policy, but the implementation of the laws has been shaped by the working relationships between civil society and the specialised authorities.

The increasing socio-political awareness of the issue of prostitution in Karlsruhe, due to the influence of local activists and the growing political dissatisfaction with the exit options for women from prostitution, led to a resolution of the municipal council in 2019, which emphasised the need for the city to support counselling centres for women to exit prostitution. The city council's response to the resolution was to place the issue of adequate support for women in prostitution under the responsibility of the Equality Office. In addition, the municipal council of the city of Karlsruhe commissioned the Equality Office to prepare an action plan for the implementation of the Istanbul Convention[3], which would address various aspects of gender-based violence and domestic abuse. The Equality Office took a strong government-oriented approach and started its analysis with extensive meetings with civil society organisations related to the relevant target group. Due to the aforementioned socio-political awareness, the city administration prioritised the issue of prostitution and human trafficking in its agenda. This led to the Equality Office making considerable efforts to obtain information from counselling centres specialising in the issue of prostitution. Subsequently, a needs assessment was presented to the city council with recommendations for action, including further financial support for the services offered by civil society organisations.

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[3] The Council of Europe's Istanbul Convention of 2011 is an international agreement to combat gender-based violence against women and girls. It defines violence against women and girls as a violation of human rights and a sign of gender inequality. The Convention has been in force in Germany since 2018. See: https://rm.coe.int/168008482e

The role of the Equality Office is mainly to create political legitimacy and to guide the governance process on this issue with the aim of pooling existing resources. This aspect also includes the second example of governance in Karlsruhe: the formation of a unique action group during the COVID-19 crisis. When restrictions on prostitution began to take effect during the pandemic, there was a drastic increase in the number of people seeking help at the two counselling centres operating in Karlsruhe. There was a need for emergency accommodation as well as unbureaucratic procedures for applying for financial support from the Job Centre. The counselling centres asked the Equal Opportunities Officer and the Integration Officer for support in forming a special working group to deal with the particular challenges of women leaving prostitution during the COVID-19 crisis. This working group, then called the ‚WG Exit‘, played an important role in building better relationships between civil society and the authorities able to support women exiting prostitution. In this case, it was civil society's appeal to city officials that led to the formation of an effective working group.

The above examples show what governance can look like at the local level. Regardless of where the socio-political initiative started, the city of Karlsruhe showed a strong interest in working hand-in-hand with the private sector to find solutions. Despite the individual circumstances of the Karlsruhe example, it can be assumed that similar impulses towards governance exist everywhere in Europe. In particular, it can be assumed that there is already a high level of civil society and governmental interest in addressing the issue of prostitution, even if only on the basis of the minimum requirements of the Prostitution Protection Act.

It is recommended that the development of the EVI network be seen as an offer by civil society organisations to add to the already existing structure of governance in the local context. Elements of the economic sphere can be added to the interests of the state and civil society already engaged in this field. In this way, the EVI network adds important value to governance while supporting and building on the structures already in place.

STRUCTURE AND ROLES OF AN EVI NETWORK

WHAT CONSTITUTES A NETWORK IN GENERAL?

A network is an alliance or association of independent participants who come together at a particular time to achieve one or more common goals or to solve problems. The network forms the structures needed to achieve the common goals and assembles appropriate participants with the resources that are necessary for success. Once the purpose of a network is fulfilled, it becomes obsolete and is thus a temporary endeavour (Büttner & Voigt, 2015).

WHAT MAKES AN EVI NETWORK?

DThe EVI network is a social network that was originally launched in three European cities as a model project. The purpose is to pool local resources to enable women affected by violence in the context of prostitution to have a higher chance of success in professional integration. The development of the network (with partners from public and civil society organisations, as well as companies) to support those affected is based on the *stakeholder method* for social engagement. This method is useful for pooling already existing resources for a specific target group that falls through the existing system. It is expected that by applying this method, best practices for building networks for the target group will be developed that can be applied in all EU Member States.

The EVI project aims to encourage participants to build their own sustainable networks of businesses and public partners within their sphere of influence, that focus on the professional integration of trafficked persons leaving the prostitution milieu.

The project will have a long-term positive impact on the target group, who will benefit from work preparation and integration. It is expected that trafficked persons will be trained and equipped to navigate the labour market and better protect themselves from violence and exploitation. In addition, trafficked persons will know their rights as women and as workers to counter future threats of sexual harassment and violence, and they will be prepared to make decisions from a position of confidence.

THE NETWORK INITIATOR

The initiator of an EVI network can be any counselling centre or social institution that supports and accompanies women working in prostitution and aims to support clients in their professional integration outside the prostitution milieu.

As the initiator, the counselling centre or social institution starts building the local network and from then on serves as a link to ensure a low threshold for entry into new employment for those affected. The network initiator is thus the interface between the target group and the subsequently acquired network partners who provide the resources, both to support the target group in entering the formal labour market and to remove barriers for the target group.

It is important that potential network initiators inform themselves sufficiently about the existing networks in their sphere of influence at the beginning (e.g. through a stakeholder analysis, see p.17 "Stakeholder analysis") in order to avoid duplicate structures. However, any social institution can establish an EVI network with so-called "free partners" for its own purposes at any time without this being a major intervention in the existing system

STRUCTURE OF AN EVI NETWORK

We consider it extremely important that counselling centres and social institutions are well integrated into the local support system in order to adequately meet the needs of the target group. However, due to fixed local conditions, it can be difficult or very time-consuming in certain regions for individual social institutions and counselling centres to establish a steering group that aims to remove systemic barriers for the target group. This can be due to various reasons, such as unwillingness of decision-makers or cumbersome bureaucratic procedures. It is therefore extremely helpful to have the possibility to get started quickly and unbureaucratically. This is made possible by establishing a free EVI network.

The EVI network can be set up as follows:

FREE EVI NETWORK: Here, the network initiator acquires partners from the business and public sectors to overcome the individual hurdles for the target group. They communicate directly with the individual partners without them having to be networked with each other. They accompany the clients, receiving support from the network partners to lower the individual clients' hurdles that hinder their professional integration. For this, the network initiator does not necessarily have to be integrated into the local support system.

The independent partners provide support with little effort to lower individual exit barriers/ work integration hurdles.

The free partners can be companies that agree to offer those affected a training place, or educational institutions that can help place those affected in language courses. Various such

partners can thus join the network as cooperation partners with little effort. They do not need to have any contact with each other, but only communicate with the initiator of the network.

Depending on the expertise of the cooperation partner, different hurdles can be tackled to support those affected. This happens on a case-by-case basis and looks different depending on the client and partner. It is the initiator's task to ensure sufficient communication and to support both parties (client and partner) in the process of work integration.

In the case that an EVI network can only acquire free partners, the network initiator takes over all **organisational network tasks (network management)** alone.

Example of a free network partner: During outreach work, the network initiator met a woman who wants to leave prostitution because she has experienced violence there. During the counselling interview it becomes clear that she has severe physical complaints and therefore cannot take up a full-time job yet. She does not have health insurance and therefore cannot take advantage of any medical treatment that would be necessary to improve her physical condition. The network initiator is now contacting various companies. These have been recruited in advance for the local EVI network and have already been trained and informed about their role. A company is found that is willing to give the client a chance, despite her physical complaints, and offer her a temporary part-time job. Through the employment, the client gets the opportunity to be enrolled in the statutory health insurance scheme and can finally get the medical help she needs. During the recovery process, which lasts several months, the network initiator supports the client and the company in the process of work integration. After the client has fully recovered, she is given the opportunity to move up to a full-time position or to look for another job. The free EVI network partner helped overcome the hurdle of the client's lack of health insurance and enabled her to take a decisive step towards professional integration by offering her part-time employment.

PERMANENT EVI NETWORK: Here, the network initiator looks for partners who want to become an elementary part of the network and work together with him/her at the local level to break down systemic barriers to the work integration of those concerned. This can be, for example, an authority for jobseekers (e.g. the Job Centre in Germany or the AMS in Austria), which, together with the network initiator, creates further offers for training or work integration assistance for those affected.

Once different partners have been recruited, the network initiator sets up a local steering group that acts together and overcomes not only individual but also systemic barriers. The various organisational network tasks can be delegated to permanent network partners (more on these tasks in the practical part). Clear communication on the part of the network initiator is important here: they should carefully communicate the respective role assignment so that each network member is aware of their own role.

Example of a permanent EVI network: The network initiator starts a steering group in the region, to which different authorities and organisations (e.g. Equal Opportunities Office, Health Office, Public Order Office, Job Centre, Migration Support Services, etc.) are invited. This working group now takes over the local control of lowering systemic barriers that hinder those affected from integrating into the labour market. The working group meets every four months.

MIXED STRUCTURE: Ideally, the network initiator combines both network structures and gathers both free partners to lower individual labour integration barriers and permanent partners to lower systemic barriers (e.g. in the form of a round table or steering group).

Mixed structure of an EVI network		
Permanent partners	**Participants**	**Tasks**
High commitment	Network initiator Steering committee (made up of local partners with higher commitment)	Organisational network tasks / management Lowering systemic barriers to the work integration of people with disabilities
Free partners	**Participants**	**Tasks**
Low commitment	Network initiator Partners from the economy Partners of other support organisations	Lowering individual barriers to the work integration of people with disabilities

SUCCESS FACTORS

Common goals and visions: It is extremely important to develop a common mission statement when setting up a local steering group. However, the mission statement and goals must also be well communicated in the free network so that a network identity is created.

Good communication: Communication must be regular, comprehensive and direct. In particular, the benefits of the network for the individual network partners should always be clearly communicated and understood in order to ensure the commitment of the partners in the long term.

Clear distribution of roles and tasks: In order to be able to act effectively as a network, there must be a clear distribution of roles and tasks, which includes a clear agreement on the structure, control and management of the network. This also includes the clarification of expectations and open questions.

Willingness to innovate: The willingness and ability to change perspectives are important. There must be no clinging to old methods and procedures, but rather an innovative approach, with which one engages with new things and includes different approaches, developments and ideas.

Mutual trust between partners: Successful cooperation between network partners requires a certain level of trust, which must be fostered at all costs. This can be done by always focusing on the common goal and the resulting benefit to each network partner, promoting clear communication and transparency, and experiencing and celebrating successes together. This is mostly dependent on the ability of the individual participants to cooperate.

Evaluation: The network must measure and evaluate its own processes and successes in order to be able to develop adequately.

Tip: For further literature on theoretical foundations for successful networking, we recommend:

https://www.stiftung-toleranz.de/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Flick-Stiftung-Netzwerke-end.pdf

PRACTICAL/STRATEGIC IMPLEMENTATION OF NETWORK BUILDING

Depending on the structure of the network, the network initiator has different tasks which he/she either takes on alone (if the network consists only of free partners) or which he/she accomplishes together with his permanent partners.

The following **organisational tasks** are necessary for the successful establishment of an EVI network, and can be divided into three phases:

√ Initiation phase

√ Stabilisation phase

√ Steady state phase

INITIATION PHASE: FINDING SUITABLE PARTICIPANTS

It starts with the initiation phase.

Determine the goals of the network: Before a network can be launched it needs a clear definition of goals, because well-formulated goals are crucial for success. In the case of the EVI network, these are already predefined (see 1.2 Objectives) and do not need to be worked out together with the partners. Nevertheless, it is important that the potential partners of the network are well informed about the objectives and are convinced of them. Only if each network partner can identify with the goals will everyone work together to achieve them.

Determine EVI network variant and if there will be a steering group: At the beginning of the initiation phase it has to be determined how the local EVI network will be set up. In the previous section it was explained that EVI networks can include free or permanent partners. In a constant EVI network, the network initiator can act alone or recruit partners for a steering group to take over the organisational tasks of network management together with him/her. In this case, the core partners for this steering group should be identified promptly in order to quickly involve them in the development and definition of the mission statement and values. In the case of the free network, the network initiator alone takes over the tasks of organisational network management.

Selection of network partners: Suitable participants must be found who can be considered as network partners. These should complement each other well in terms of resources and competencies. The resources and competencies that are needed depends on the hurdles that are to be lowered. For example, employers are needed as network partners for the hurdle of finding a job, and housing associations are relevant network partners for the search for housing.

| Task	To be carried out in the free EVI network	To be carried out in the permanent EVI network (optional)
Initiation phase		
Selection of network partners	Identify relevant stakeholders through the stakeholder analysis in order to find suitable participants who complement each other in their resources and competencies, and can thus support individual persons concerned in their work integration.	The core partners for the steering group are identified. For the network to work, partners must be found who can contribute with their skills, resources and relationships, to the achievement of the network goals. The better the fit of the partners, the more productive, and consequently attractive, the network becomes.

STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

A suitable tool for selecting network partners is the stakeholder analysis. This is an inventory of the local support system of the target group with the aim of finding suitable participants for the network (Büttner & Voigt, 2015). The development of a stakeholder analysis is an important and very relevant measure. The result of the analysis can, among other things, give a good insight into how useful a steering group would be.

The first step, **stakeholder identification**, is to record all stakeholders in a list. It is helpful to answer the following questions (Quilling et al., 2013):

· Which social space are we talking about?

· Who are direct and indirect stakeholders?

· Who plays what role in this social space?

· Are there several participants who perform the same or similar tasks?

· Who is indispensable as a relevant participant and why?

It is important to establish whether similar networks or structures already exist, to avoid duplicate structures being set up. If necessary, synergies can be created here. In this case, however, the network initiator can still set up its own free EVI network to better support the target group.

To illustrate and analyse the importance of the potentially relevant stakeholders and their role within the network, the assessment and prioritisation of the stakeholders can be carried out using a **stakeholder matrix:**
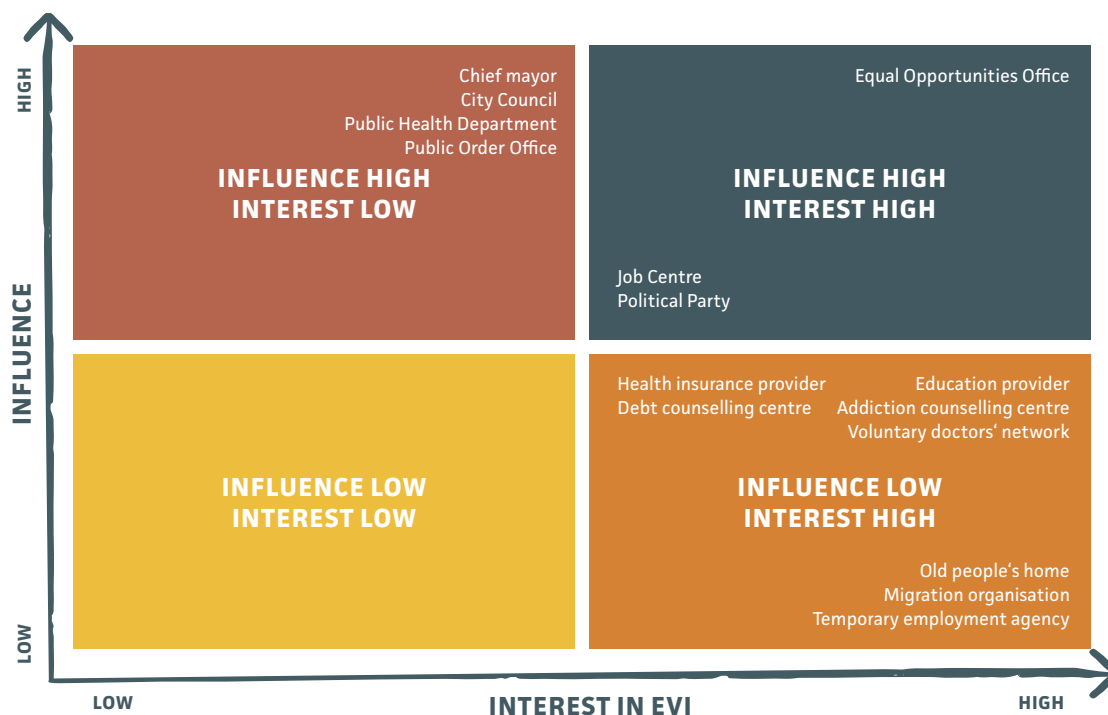
Depending on the positioning within the matrix, different strategies of action arise in dealing with the participants:

The core of the network is formed by stakeholders with *high influence and high interest* in the upper right corner of the matrix. They should be prioritised and actively involved.

In contrast, stakeholders with *little influence and equally little interest* are in the lower left corner of the matrix. These stakeholders generally receive little information about the project, but should be kept in mind as their role may change in the future.

In the upper left corner are stakeholders with *high influence but low interest* in the planned network. You should inform them sufficiently and try to understand their needs and expectations in order to satisfy them. If this is not the case, they could be a potential threat to the project.

Lastly, in the lower right corner there are stakeholders *with little influence but high interest*. These can be seen as ‚supporters‘ of the project and can be helpful in achieving the objectives. Therefore, it is important to inform them regularly about the progress of the project.

Interpreting the matrix helps to identify the most important stakeholders and to ensure that their needs and expectations are met. At the same time, it is important to note that a stakeholder analysis is only a snapshot and changes to the current situation may occur over time.

More information on stakeholder analysis can be found in the guidelines of the *F.C. Flick Foundation:* "Theoretical Foundations for Successful Networking"[4] and of the *Paritätischer Gesamtverband:* "Strategic Planning of Successful Networking"[5].

[4] https://www.stiftung-toleranz.de/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Flick-Stiftung-Netzwerke-end.pdf

[5] https://www.der-paritaetische.de/fileadmin/user_upload/Publikationen/doc/A4_MSO-netzwerkarbeit_web.pdf

MARKET SOUNDING: DETERMINING SUITABLE EMPLOYERS

Before selecting potential participants, it is important to consider which jobs are suitable for the individual local target group. The aim should be to provide a wide range of different jobs to choose from, in order to give clients maximum self-determination.

Since members of the target group of the network can be very different, it is important to be able to respond to this appropriately. Many of the women involved in prostitution who want to leave have no school-leaving qualifications, or are even illiterate. Some have little resilience due to trauma and experiences of violence. For this reason, job opportunities in the low-wage sector are primarily sought for them. However, the diversity of the target group should not be disregarded, as there are also many women with school, vocational or university degrees. Therefore, there should be a number of employer cooperations that offer, for example, apprenticeships in different fields as well as jobs for skilled workers. An apprenticeship offers great opportunities; especially for female clients who previously had little access to education.

There are also different types of low-paid jobs. For example, there are manufacturing jobs that take place on an assembly line and are placed through a temp agency, or those that take place in a workshop with other workers at a big table and can involve part-time/full-time work in a small company. Both jobs involve assembling or putting things together, but the working conditions are much more pleasant in one than the other. There will be some women who are satisfied with assembly line jobs, so these are very important - especially at the beginning of the exit process. However, the goal of the EVI network is to find a suitable job offer for each client.

In addition, care should be taken to ensure that jobs with different employment contract type (e.g. full-time, part-time, temporary) are available.

The questions that the network initiator must ask him/herself here are:

- What jobs do we need in this local network to meet the different needs of the clients?
- What kind of workplaces do we need in this local network to meet the different needs of the clients?
- What employers are there who could offer this type of job?
- How important is social responsibility? What activities already exist in this area?

SELECTION OF PARTNERS

WHO CAN BECOME PART OF THE NETWORK?

The larger the network, the greater the room for manoeuvre and the resources available, but the greater the associated responsibility for the network initiator also. Therefore only really relevant or promising partners should be acquired, and clear priorities should be set in advance as to who should be included in the network and who should not. A helpful tool for analysing the importance of the individual participants is the stakeholder matrix (see p.17).

Stakeholders who have a strong influence on the target group and at the same time a strong interest in the objectives of the network should be given the highest priority and are best suited for a potential steering group. The network should generally have a balance between business partners and support partners. However, companies and employers are an essential part of an EVI network and should by no means be neglected as key partners.

The selection should be guided by the determined needs and hurdles of the target group to ensure that the network can adequately address these needs.

HOW DO THE NETWORK PARTNERS BENEFIT FROM THE EVI NETWORK?

In order to motivate the network partners to work together towards the goals of the network, it is important that they also benefit through participation. This must be communicated well, especially when contact is made, and can already be used to narrow down the partners. A participant who sees no benefit for themselves in the network should not be prioritised by the network initiator. When selecting corporate partners, attention can also be paid to which companies will benefit from the cooperation. For many employers, cooperation with the EVI network can bring advantages. For example, they are not only supported in the search for new employees, but also receive help from the network initiator and the other support partners in the work integration of the new employee. Especially in the low-wage sector, this is an extremely attractive offer for many employers, but it should not be underestimated in other areas either.

Many of the support partners may independently pursue similar goals to those of the EVI network, and can therefore be easily convinced. Nevertheless, it is important to consider the benefits of participating in the network for each potential partner individually, to include these in the selection process and to communicate them clearly when contacting them.

IMPORTANT: CARE IN THE CHOICE OF NETWORK PARTNERS

As the target group of the project is highly vulnerable, it is essential to choose the network partners carefully. The focus is on the clients and not on the network partners. Thus, if participants want to be involved in the network purely out of selfish interest, their partnership should be excluded. This could be, for example, employers who are not willing to provide the necessary discretion or care for their employees.

The goal is not to move women from one predicament to the next. Rather, partners should show commitment. It is better to have a smaller selection of reliable partners than a large pool of partners with changing interest.

Examples of important partners: job centres, health authorities, training providers, employers.

ACQUIRING PARTNERS

Task	To be carried out in the free EVI network	To be carried out in the permanent EVI network
Initiation phase		
Acquisition of network partners	Depending on demand, partners can be prioritised for whose resources there is already an acute need. This helps to gain experience quickly and to bind the first partners to the EVI network.	At the time of the initiation phase, core partners should already have been recruited for a steering group in order to involve them in the design of the network at an early stage. A joint kick-off event is also useful here.

Extensive preparatory work is needed to attract stakeholders to the network. The stakeholder analysis helps to get a good overview of all relevant participants and to set priorities. It is important to always focus on the needs of the target group. **Only participants who can really make a difference for the target group should be considered as partners**

For the permanent network, potential partners can be invited to a kick-off event in order to convince them of the network's goals. This allows all participants to start on common ground, which promotes network identity.

In the case of the free network, a kick-off event is only useful to a limited extent. Most partners have to be contacted and acquired individually. It is important that the network initiator is sufficiently prepared for each contact meeting. The benefits of the network must be made clear so that each participant can see their own gain.

ESTABLISHING CONTACT

It makes sense to acquire suitable multipliers for the network at the beginning through the stakeholder analysis. Multipliers are people who already have many contacts. With these and other contacts of your own, you can make an ideal start. Partners who have already been acquired for the network can also become multipliers by passing on their own contacts.

Now that contact has been made, interest in the network's vision must be developed. This is always based on reciprocity. The best form of networking is face-to-face meetings. The goals of the network have a social benefit – the difference the network makes to women affected by violence can be an important key to attracting partners. This is best communicated in person. The meeting should be reciprocal, with an interest being shown in the potential partner.

As soon as the potential partner shows interest in the project, an appointment should be made to discuss participation in the network in more detail. Potential corporate partners should have all their questions answered in such a meeting so that they as a company can make an informed decision.

Tip: Many companies have diversity and sustainability officers who are excellent contacts for the network.

PROCEDURE FOR CONTACTING EMPLOYERS

Many readers will already have had their own experiences of building contacts and organising network meetings. This section is intended to provide a framework and some inspiration. It shows an exemplary approach that can be adopted, but this is not compulsory.

First and foremost, the network initiator should make the corporate partners aware of their key role. Corporate partners, as potential future employers, make the biggest difference to the women in the network. This should be clearly communicated to convince them of their own importance and motivate them to become part of the EVI network.

Subsequently, three steps can be taken:

1. Introduction of the living environment of the clients

In order to ensure sustainable cooperation, it is important for corporate partners to understand the clients' living environment. For this reason, it makes sense to address the different needs in detail during the conversation.

It must be made clear that each client has unique circumstances and needs. It is important to point out that tailor-made training for the employer can take place before the client starts work.

Tip: An elaborated **guideline for sensitisation and training of employers** can be found in the appendix

2. Survey of the working environment provided by the employers

Subsequently, the working environment of the company must be discussed. This shows the corporate partner that no "dumping" will take place, but that it is in the spirit of the EVI network to find suitable female clients for the jobs of the respective corporate partners. Many employers want to do something good, and by participating in the EVI network they have the opportunity to actively implement their social responsibility.

Many companies have a fast-paced workday and are looking for resilient employees who can cope well with this. This will not be the case for every client. Therefore, it is important to clearly communicate what employers expect from their employees and what the prerequisites or minimum requirements (language skills, time commitment, stress load, previous experience) of a job are.

3. Find an interface - clarify expectations

Now that the employers have become acquainted with the living environment of the clients, and the network initiator understands the working environment of the employer, interfaces can be found.

An interview is particularly useful to collect existing questions and potential hurdles and problems that need to be addressed together (in preparation or during the work). Not only do the clients have needs, but also the company partners. The best approach is not to ignore any of the needs, but to find common solutions.

What can the employers cope with, and what not? What exactly does the company need to implement its task in the project? How can other network partners and, in particular, the network initiator support it? How informed is the company partner? What mandate does he/she give with regard to training?

Often the work integration of the target group fails because of wrong or unfulfilled expectations. For this reason, it is imperative to clarify expectations and open questions or topics. Small adjustments, such as joint employee interviews at the beginning, can help to give employers the necessary security to get involved with the EVI network.

A key to the success of cooperation is an intensive exchange about the respective goals and expectations, as well as a tailored coordination of both parties. Corporate partners should, for example, have the opportunity to express themselves in detail about the desired intensity of the support.

Tip: An **interview guide** can be found in the appendix..

AWARENESS RAISING AND TRAINING OF EMPLOYERS AS NEEDED

Depending on the employer's needs, shorter briefings or more detailed training on specific topics can be useful and offered.

Dialogue on topics such as trauma-informed care or discretion in the workplace can sensitise company partners to be able to react appropriately to the needs of the clients. In this way, employers should be given sufficient security and clarity to be able to act confidently in acute situations.

Extensive training for employers is not a must. However, at the very least, the need for a trauma-informed and trauma-sensitive approach to clients should be clearly communicated in order to improve work integration.

Before employers begin training a client, they should be able to answer the following questions, among others:

What special challenges can arise for employees with trauma sequelae or with past experience of violence? How can employers or supervisors react in acute cases? Which reactions should be avoided, and which are helpful and supportive? How can supervisors and team members support those affected?

It is important that clients are also prepared for possible challenges in the workplace.

To support the entire process of work integration, the network initiator is always at the side of both the client and the employer.

Work integration is thus a joint learning process, to the success of which all those involved can actively contribute.

Tip: Material for awareness raising and training of employers can be found in the EVI document **"Guidance for counselling centres on awareness-raising and training of employers"**.

NETWORK PARTNER AGREEMENT

Finally, it should be discussed whether an agreement with the network partners is necessary. This is not mandatory for corporate partners as they should never be obliged to accept clients. However, this may be useful for support partners and other partners in the steering group, in order to clearly coordinate roles and tasks.

STRUCTURE OF THE NETWORK MANAGEMENT

Task	To be carried out in the free EVI network	To be carried out in the permanent EVI network (optional)
Initiation phase		
Structure of the network Management	Network initiator takes over management.	Network initiator and steering group take over management. Relationship work and coordination necessary.

The leadership and structure of the network must be established and the individual steps to achieve the goals must be coordinated. The management ensures the smooth running and promotes continuity. It also ensures compliance with minimum standards and the quality of the processes, as well as compliance with the obligations of the cooperation partners.

In this step it has to be clarified whether the network initiator takes on the tasks of management alone or whether the tasks can be delegated to partners in the steering group. In the latter case, it is important that they are included in fundamental considerations such as the design of the mission statement and the network culture (see next section "Excursus: Development of a mission statement").

The tasks can be divided into four functional areas (Büttner & Voigt, 2015):

The **selection** includes the selection of suitable participants as network partners, the elaboration of the network's goals and benefits, and the development of implementation strategies.

Designation includes the distribution of roles and tasks in the network.

Regulation includes the coordination of individual measures and the design of rules for cooperation.

The **evaluation** includes the assessment of the network's previous measures in order to adapt and improve them if necessary.

EXCURSUS: DEVELOPMENT OF A MISSION STATEMENT

For a network to have the best possible impact, it needs its own mission statement and values. These need to be defined or created together. Within the EVI network, there are already clearly formulated goals (see 1.2 Goals) that should be adopted. However, it is important that each autonomous local network adapts these individually to its own circumstances and needs, and develops its mission statement accordingly. If a network is planned that only acquires free partners, they do not need to be involved in the development of the mission statement. However, if permanent partners are involved, it is important that they are included

Example mission statement

Vision:

- Maximum possible independence in the labour market of women leaving prostitution.

Mission:

- Mobilising companies with the aim to offer realistic career prospects to people who want to leave prostitution.
- Lowering the systemic barriers to the labour integration of people with disabilities.

EXCURSUS: SETTING UP A STEERING GROUP

If the local network is to establish a steering group in addition to networking with independent partners, a concept for the work of the network must be drawn up. This should include the following points:

√ Type of communication

√ Number of meetings

√ Mode of operation

√ Type of decision-making

√ Documentation

√ Rules and liabilities

√ Dealing with conflicts

Tip: It can be useful to involve the city's gender equality office or women's representative early on in the planning of a steering group, as most authorities will have to respond to a request from you. Getting them on board for a possible steering group can be extremely important.

ROUND TABLE

One of the ways to organise a steering group is in the form of a round table. A round table enables an equal and democratic working and discussion process. Strong and weak organisations are on an equal footing and carry shared responsibility (Ewen, n.d.). The aim of a round table in the EVI network would be to find solutions and new forms of cooperation to reduce or eliminate systemic barriers to the work integration of the target group.

ALLOCATION OF TASKS

Task	To be carried out in the free EVI network	To be carried out in the permanent EVI network
Initiation phase		
Distribute tasks	Here, the network should clearly define and distribute the tasks and responsibilities of all partners. This will be very simple in the free network. The independent partners are given individual, clearly defined tasks and only take action when their cooperation is specifically required in individual cases. Only when partners are involved in the form of a steering group does this need to be more clearly defined and elaborated.	The tasks and responsbilities are discussed and defined here together with the steering group. The tasks here also include measures to lower systemic barriers for the target group.

The tasks are defined in the management and then distributed to the partners. In the free network, the tasks of the partners are derived from the reason for their participation. By identifying the hurdles of the target group, the network initiator has also recruited the appropriate partners to remove or lower these hurdles. The task of the free partner was therefore already discussed during the acquisition and is thus clearly defined. The partner goes into action as soon as a client needs support in the partner's area.

In the permanent network, the tasks are less clearly defined and therefore need to be developed and agreed together with the steering group.

MATCHING AND SUPPORT

One of the most important tasks as a network initiator, apart from supporting the clients, is matching and supporting the company partners.

As soon as one or more suitable employers from the EVI network's pool of company partners have been found for a client, the matching process begins. Here the client is brought together with company partners. It is particularly important that not only the client, but also the

company partners are adequately supported in this process.

Corporate partners must be enabled to make a good decision about employing a client, through transparent support. This requires clear communication about the individual hurdles of each client. Only if the client to be placed can also fulfil the requirements of the job can the match be considered suitable. For this reason, special attention must be paid to the expectations and requirements of the company partner in the matching process. This requires one thing above all: regular and clear communication.

In the subsequent work integration process of the client, the following points should be carried out for cooperation:

· Support in the first few months through joint staff meetings, contributing to both staff and employee development

· Setting common goals (employees and company partners)

· If necessary, coaching in the workplace

· Supporting the corporate partner in case of difficulties/de-escalation

· Support of the corporate partner by other support partners (coordination by network initiator required)

· Agreement on how the social workers should support the group

· Motivation and recognition of progress in the integration and development process in the workplace

In addition, ensure that the corporate partner has received sufficient training prior to successful matching.

Keeping up: If the work integration does not work out, the continuous cultivation of relationships, especially in difficult situations, has a significant added value for the corporate partner. With the committed support of the network initiator, an unpleasant experience can become an opportunity for better cooperation. This can lead to successful cooperation, even if there were difficulties at the beginning.

STABILISATION AND STEADY STATE PHASE

Task	To be carried out in the free EVI network	To be carried out in the permanent EVI network (optional)
Stabilisation phase		
Implementation of network meetings	These are only relevant to the free partners, to a limited extent	Can take the form of a round table
Establishment of communication systems	Minor, but clear and transparent communication required	Frequent communication to enable easy participation of stakeholders in a steering group, possibly including a regular round table.

Steady state phase	
Network maintenance	Maintain and, if necessary, deepen the relationships between the individual partners to ensure the highest possible commitment to the network.
Carry out evaluations	The assessment of network activities in order to be able to adapt measures
Acquiring new partners	Regularly acquire new partners so that the network can function in the long term

CLOSING WORDS

These guidelines serve as an aid to give women working in prostitution who are affected by violence a realistic chance of work integration outside of prostitution. Of course, the steps contained can be flexibly adapted to individual needs.

The EVI project partners wish all prospective network initiators every success in setting up their own EVI network.

Website: https://evi-europe.eu/

APPENDIX - INTERVIEW GUIDE

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR A MEETING WITH POTENTIAL BUSINESS PARTNERS:

1. Welcome and introduction (5-10 minutes)

- Greet the business representative and briefly introduce yourself and your organisation.

- Give a short introduction to the EVI network and explain that you are looking for cooperation partners who want to support women in prostitution to integrate into the labour market.

2. Introduction to the living environment of the clients (approx. 10-15 minutes)

- Good cooperation requires that employers understand the living environment of their clients. It is therefore advisable to discuss the different needs in detail.

- Mention the different hurdles women face and how you can help lower these hurdles through the EVI network.

3. Explain the added value for the corporate partner (approx. 5 minutes)

- Explain the potential added value for the business partner that would result from successful cooperation. You will refer potential workers and support the process of work integration of the clients.

4. Establish the working environment of the company partner (approx. 10-15 minutes)

- Ask about the company's requirements so that you can place the right clients. This is the only way to ensure a successful integration.

- The requirements mentioned above must be recorded precisely so that they can be later taken into account during the matching process.

- Also ask for a short description of the company so that you can pass this information on to the clients.

5. Clarify expectations and find interfaces (approx. 15-20 minutes)

- Now the needs and expectations of both sides should take compared.

- Clarify what the company specifically needs to implement its task in the EVI network and how other network partners and the network initiator can provide support.

- Then explore your counterpart's level of information and clarify what expectations he/she has with regard to training.

- In order to protect the women's privacy and give them a new start, it is important to ask for discretion. It would be helpful if information about their past is only shared with explicit consent, and if as few people as possible knew about it.

- Ask for consent to be informed regularly about current job opportunities.

6. Conclusion and next steps (approx. 5 minutes)

- Thank the business representative for the time and opportunity to present your project and the EVI network.

- Ask whether there is interest in cooperation and what the next steps are to make this collaboration a success.

7. Duration of the appointment and required documents

- The interview should be of reasonable length to cover all important points. A duration of 60 to 90 minutes should be sufficient.

- It is also important to have all the necessary documents ready, such as data protection statements and cooperation agreements.

This guide can be adapted as needed.

LITERATURE

Some of the key ideas in this guide refer to the following sources, which can also be used as further reading:

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