



## **TRAMIG**

### **Workshop in Thessaloniki, 23.10.2019**

The workshop took place in Thessaloniki on the 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2019; the participants were community interpreters or intercultural mediators, who come mostly from Arabic speaking countries. Most of them have been working for years in this sector.

In the beginning Mr. Ampntel Nour Allous and Mr. Hamed Rouzbehani made a presentation of the TRAMIG project. The participants asked several questions about the project, a thorough conversation followed and in the end some exercises were introduced like from the material of the University of Oslo.

In addition to this, the participants talked about their working conditions and the problems they must deal with, which complicate or disrupt the interaction between the beneficiary and the public official. Moreover, when it comes to cultural barriers, e.g. an interpreter from Syria who speaks Arabic might not be well-acquainted with the cultural differences between Syria and other Arabic speaking countries.

There was a particular reference to interpreting during psychotherapy sessions, which are equally complicated for community interpreters, who are expected to handle traumatic situations, despite their lack of experience and training. A special case that was mentioned during the workshop in relation with cultural barriers is the one of psychological support groups that cooperate with women. The establishment of a trusting atmosphere cannot be achieved in many cases or at all if the session is conducted by male psychologists or interpreters.

This is the reason why the interested parties who participated in the project stressed the importance of psychological support they need to be provided with, in order for them to handle difficult situations like the ones mentioned above. On top of that, while an interpreting session is characterized by intense stress, the interpreter's intuition and experience might lead to ambivalent information. Lack of training is another factor which contributes to this situation.

Finally, participants expressed their wish to have some vocational training as well as studies in an undergraduate or postgraduate level or even part-time studies in interpreting, because the demand for community interpreting is increasing more and more. Special emphasis was placed on the following points:

1. Exercises and techniques for the interpreters in order to be able to deal with the denial and establish an environment of mutual respect and trust, where all participants' roles will be explicit.



2. Ways of tackling potentially inappropriate attitude and avoidance of such incidents.
3. Use of the first singular person or the third singular during interpreting. Not all interpreters apply the same technique.
4. The importance of posture of the participants during interpreting. The interpreter must always stand or sit between the two parties and if possible, sit slightly behind them so that the “communicative triangle” is established. In this way, bilateral communication is achieved and, at the same time, the interpreter does not possess the major role.
5. Most participants also mentioned that they feel that their names should be omitted or that they should not even greet the beneficiary and the involved parties in order to maintain a distance and avoid disturbing situations.
6. Special management techniques for interpreting for minors.
7. Workshops for anger management and psychological support for the interpreters.