

Preventing bullying against women with learning difficulties

Austria – Ninlil

SUMMARY OF PROJECT

The goal of the Ninlil empowerment seminars is the prevention of violence against women with learning difficulties or multiple disabilities, based on the strong belief that bullying can only be stopped, if these women develop more self-determination in their everyday life. Their experiences, needs, and desires are the focus of these seminars.

QUOTE:

“Empowerment seminars: Women growing stronger together.”

— Ms. Elisabeth Udl, Manager, Ninlil

FACTS & FIGURES

- 210 seminars were held from 1999 to 2014, reaching 1,159 participants.
- Today, there are on average 12 seminars and 68 participants per year.
- Annual cost of the project is about 11,000 €, and attendance is free.

PROBLEMS TARGETED

Women with learning difficulties are often living and working in shelters where personal self-determination can be harshly restricted, and where physical violence is not uncommon. This is one of the reasons why women with disabilities are subject to sexual violence much more often than non-disabled women.

SOLUTION & METHODOLOGY

The first seminars, titled “I am a woman,” were developed in 1999 by the women who had recently founded the organization “Ninlil” with the goal of fighting sexual violence against women with learning difficulties. They were convinced that in order to prevent violence it is necessary to work towards empowering these women – a conviction that remains valid today. Since then its founding many seminars have been developed – all with the goal of “empowering” women with learning disabilities. The

organization includes the views and opinions of these women in its planning process by: (1) using feedback-sheets from the seminars as a starting point for developing new seminars or deciding which seminars will be offered again; and (2) collecting direct and indirect feedback to find new topics. The various approaches enable the participants to have individually structured empowerment experiences. Further, the seminars are kept small, each with up to just seven participants and two seminar leaders, so that every woman, regardless of her disability, has plenty of time and space for discussion.

OUTLOOK & TRANSFERABILITY

The project will be continued at the current rate of 10-14 seminars a year, depending on available funding. If possible, Ninlil would like to offer even more seminars, as the demand is always higher than the number of seats available. The association is also working on growing the accessibility of the seminars. Currently, information is sent by mail to about 700 addresses, mostly in Vienna but also to other areas of Austria. Since last summer, the group has been increasing its presence on Facebook, and is currently planning to start an e-mail newsletter that will also be used to promote the seminars.

Photo: NO – Topic is too sensitive!!

Women strong together!

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