

## **Partner Search Form**

<b>TITLE</b>
MAD WOMEN IN THE ATTIC
<b>DEADLINE (DD/MM/YYYY):</b>
30/04/2010
<b>ABSTRACT</b>
<p>The project applicant is a non-profit organization, focused on providing diverse assistance to people with mental disorders, thereby running 8 centers in 3 different provinces in Spain with over 80 professionals. The institution provides services for the mentally ill in the form of various activities and actions, including rehabilitation, vocational and leisure workshops.</p> <p>The project aims at reaching women who suffer from mental illness by instigating a reflective process about the fragile system of sanity, existing in our society, which we call reality and often take for granted. Throughout history, women have been the alleged bearers of madness, hysteria, nonsense and insanity, dangerously existing on the margins of the 'logic-and-reason' ruled reality. Attic in the project title of <i>Mad women in the attic</i> thus represents a metaphor of the Victorian attic with a mad woman locked up there, threatening to burn the Victorian mansion and the entire male-ruled system of sanity down to the ground. <b>The project aims at empowering the women involved in the project to protect themselves against violence of different power structures towards them, either in the form of fighting off the stigmatic attitude of the 'normal' environment or questioning the authorities and their intrusive knowledge about their own self.</b></p> <p>Potential partner institutions to enter the project will be either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Institutions with an established network of rehabilitative, educational, artistic and/or leisure activities offered to the mentally ill with a number of at least 15 women patients/users to participate in the workshops for approximately a year</li><li>• Academics working in the field of literature and feminism to prepare the course content</li></ul>
<b>DESCRIPTION</b>
<p>The goal of the project is to undermine the illusion that there is any such thing as a rigid border between madness and sanity, between health and illness, between normality and pathology. <b>Even more, the project starts with a premise that the question of madness and sanity constitutes the crucial question of a power discourse, which inevitably comes down to the question of gender and inter-gender relations.</b> Through participating in reading workshops and encountering works of literature by female authors that address these issues, the women involved in the project will be guided to ask questions: Can madness enrich one's life? Can one go mad from being called mad long enough, being laughed at and being sanctioned? Is madness something to be feared? Can madness provide a different source of knowledge, which doesn't threaten but tells us profound things about who we are and what we want to hide? Are attics something that should be explored and opened up, enriching rather than burning down our lives? <b>The project proposed aims at empowering the mentally ill women to fend off mental violence by questioning the laws, authorities, institutions and decision-makers, who produce knowledge and reality, in a more profound</b></p>

**and analytic way, bringing the participating women closer to their intuitive and subtle selves through the works of certain female authors.**

### **1. CURRICULUM PREPARATION**

There will be a team of academics preparing the module content – determining the reading list, the authors, the themes covered and their relation to the lives of women participating. Apart from the standard corpus of female authors falling within the canon of female writing on or in relation to madness and women (Virginia Woolf, Sylvia Plath, Doris Lessing, Anne Sexton,...), a national corpus of authors will be represented, thus every group participating also reading about works from perhaps less recognized female national authors writing on the subject. This way, national female authors will also be promoted and included into the “corpus of knowledge”, the project thus showing how the margins can be incorporated into the center, turning the marginalized into a general standard. Which is indeed the most important lesson to be learnt through the project – mad women have the power to subvert dead institutional structures, to question the centers of knowledge telling them who they are and what they are, and to produce knowledge, which leaves room for the marginalized Other to enter.

### **2. READING WORKSHOPS**

The women in each partner institution will form reading groups, which shall be run by a suitable staff member previously trained in how to run the workshops. The debate guided by the coordinator will take place then, thinking through an interaction about how the text relates to their own realities. Once the debate will be over, the participants will write down their own thoughts in relation to the text, how the issues in the text touch them and how they apply to what they have been through or what they are thinking about and feeling. Another option will be for the women to produce visual arts as their response to the texts read, but writing is preferred. These texts/visual art works will be used in two ways in the course of the project and they may vary for the two purposes:

### **3. THE ‘MAD WOMEN’ WEBSITE**

One is to post them on the website, where each text read at the workshops will have its own section for the attendees to post their comments on. Each authorial text read will therefore have a lot of responses from the workshop attendees from each country, which will have the opportunity to enter a vibrant debate. On the other hand, the website will also function as a networking tool, allowing for live chat between the logged on members with each member having a personal mailbox. This is how “friendships through madness” will be formed, allowing for workshop participants to connect through the contents read and turn them into an international reflective process about the status of madness and women in the society, seen from the perspective of individual lives of women participating.

### **4. THE BOOK ON MADNESS**

The other way to use the workshop texts is for the latter to be compiled into a book, comprising most striking thoughts/visual art works about the texts read from all participants, thus publishing a book on madness and women. A book, which is to speak of madness by the mad through a profoundly honest, shaking and personal revelation.

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS/SPECIFIC TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS OF THE REQUEST	
<p>The Project will apply for the Daphne III (to prevent and combat violence against children, young people and women and to protect victims and groups at risk, PRIORITY: Field work at grass-roots level) call for projects for 2 years, starting in March/April 2011.</p> <p>The approximate amount requested: 600.000,00 EUR Amount of the EU funding: 80% (20% co-financed)</p> <p>All partners will take part in all of the above described activities, apart from those developing the methodology.</p>	
COLLABORATION TYPE	
<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Technical co-operation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Joint further development</p>	
COMMENTS	
Type of partner sought	<p>Potential partner institutions to enter the project will be either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Institutions with an established network of rehabilitative, educational, artistic and/or leisure activities offered to the mentally ill with a number of at least 15 women patients to participate in the workshops for approximately a year</li> </ul> <p>Academics working in the field of literature and feminism to prepare the course content</p>
Specific Area of Activity of the Partner:	Mental health/literature
Task to be Performed:	<p>Partners implementing the curriculum with their target groups will :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attend the training of the trainers</li> <li>Prepare the reading material in their own partner languages</li> <li>Ensure a group of at least 15 female participants</li> <li>Organize reading workshops (1/week for a year)</li> <li>Collect the texts/visual arts produced by the workshop attendees</li> <li>Post them on the website and review them to extract most striking passages to be published in a book</li> </ul>
EU/International project experience	Experience of potential partners in any of the EU projects, especially Daphne, would be particularly beneficial.
Preferred countries for	Any except the partner country of the applicant (Spain)

dissemination:		
<b>ORGANISATION/COMPANY SUBMITTING THE PARTNER SEARCH</b>		
Type	<input type="checkbox"/> Industry	<input type="checkbox"/> Technical Centre / Technology transfer centre
	<input type="checkbox"/> Research institute / University	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Services
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other: please specify*	
*Comments		
Size		
<input type="checkbox"/> > 10 employees	<input type="checkbox"/> 11-49 employees	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 50-249 employees
<input type="checkbox"/> 250-500 employees	<input type="checkbox"/> > 500 employees	

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