

# **Social Services for Elders from Ethnic Minority Groups – European Approaches**

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**Dr. Vera Gerling**

**Forschungsgesellschaft für Gerontologie e.V.**

**Institut für Gerontologie**

**an der Universität Dortmund**

**gerling@pop.uni-dortmund.de**

**www.uni-dortmund.de/ffg**



# Structure of the Presentation

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# **1. Background & Introduction of the European Project “Services for Elders from Ethnic Minorities” (SEEM II)**

- **European project funded by the European Commission and runs for two years until December 2005**
- **10 partners (local authorities, NGO’s and one academic institute) from Leeds/UK, Dortmund/Germany, Lille/France, Gothenburg/Sweden, Gent/Belgium and Bucharest/Romania**
- **Exchange and Research Agenda: 3 full partner meetings, 12 consultation meetings on local level, 6 city-specific MEE elders' partner exchanges, good practice checklist, seminar in Brussels, final report , evaluation of project**

## **2. Aims of SEEM II**

- **Combat isolation of minority ethnic elders (MEE)**
- **Improve consultation and involvement of MEE and their organisations**
- **Raise the profile of the contribution made by MEE**
- **Improve information about, and access to, services**
- **Share good practice (city, country, and EU)**
- **Support partner cities**
- **Disseminate the project and its results (city, country, and EU)**
- **Influence and inform European Union member states and European level social policy to take full account of the needs of MEE elders**

### 3. Minority Ethnic Elders in Germany, Great Britain, Sweden, Belgium, France, and Romania

#### Ethnic background:

- **Dortmund/Germany:** Turkish, former Yugoslavia, former Soviet Union, Greek, Italian, Spanish, Polish, Moroccan and Portuguese
- **Leeds/UK:** Indian, Irish, Black-Caribbean, Pakistani, Kashmiri, Jewish and Chinese
- **Lille/France:** Algerian, Moroccan, Austrian, Finnish, Swedish, Italian
- **Gothenburg/Sweden:** Finnish, Danish, Norwegian, former Yugoslavia, German, Polish, Iranian, Hungarian, Estonian and Turkish
- **Gent/Belgium:** Turkish, Moroccan, Italian, Spanish and Portuguese
- **Bucharest/Romania:** Roma, Hungarian, Turkish, Jewish, German, Chinese

### 3. Minority Ethnic Elders in Germany, Great Britain, Sweden, Belgium, France, and Romania

- Life circumstances: still small but increasing numbers; very heterogeneous ethnic groups; similar problems regarding to health, housing, and access to services; language barriers; low take up of services; common experiences of discrimination
- Legal framework: different concepts of citizenship and political power of immigrant groups; great differences concerning legal status of MEE; differences in the voicing of demand
- Social political framework: different concepts of integration / acceptance of cultural and ethnic differences; varying concepts of welfare and social policy; different ways of planning and delivering services on local level

## **4. Transferable Strategies to Deliver Social Services for Ethnic Minority Elders**

- **Outreaching Social Work**
- **Information Policy for Minority Ethnic Elders**
- **Translation and Interpretation Services**
- **Advocacy**
- **Conducting Studies / Working with Universities**
- **Evaluation of Existing Services**
- **Recruitment of Staff with Matching Ethnic Background**
- **Ethnic Monitoring**
- **Development Work with Organisations of MEE Groups**
- **Cultural Awareness Training**

## 5. Exchange Visits of Minority Ethnic Elders and their Organisations

- Aim: to encourage BME elders to influence service delivery in their interests
- Five MEE exchange visits between different partner cities: Gothenburg to Leeds, Dortmund to Leeds, Leeds to Lille, Gothenburg to Dortmund and Dortmund to Gent
- Two visits to Leeds mainly concerned organising in the voluntary sector
- Leeds to Lille visit focused on food projects
- Dortmund to Gent visit concentrated on how to run and build up self-help organisations
- First benefits are very positive for both sides:  
MEE: empowerment, pride, better links, more realistic analysis  
hosts: more backing, own achievements and lacks become clear, stimulating ideas, better networking on local level



## **6. First Results and Influences of SEEM II on Local Level**

- **In general more political and practical support and backing to work on the topic “Services for MEE”**
- **Increased sensitivity for MEE needs**
- **New projects, groups, approaches and strategies to improve social services for MEE**
- **Improved Networking**
- **Dortmund: Building up a Forum “Services for MEE”, including welfare associations, local authority and MEE and their organisations**
- **Leeds: Launching a new group “Leeds Black and Minority Ethnic Elders Action Group”**
- **Lille: Commissioning research regarding needs of MEE**

**Thank you very much  
for your attention !**

**More information:**

**[www.leeds.gov.uk/seem/](http://www.leeds.gov.uk/seem/)**

