

Nordic Council of Ministers

**Project against trafficking in women
and girls in the Barents Region**

– Final Report

Preface

This is the final report of the *Project against prostitution and trafficking in women and girls in the Barents Region*, which was carried out in the years 2004-2006. The report describes the different activities that have taken place in the Barents Region within the project framework.

The purpose of the project has been among other things to design and carry out actions which might contribute to an improvement in the overall situation for Russian women and girls in North Western Russia. The project also focused on men who are purchasers or potential purchasers of women or girls for the purpose of prostitution in the region, and how best to counteract the effects of men's abuse and exploitation of women and girls in border-zone communities in Norway, Sweden and Finland. The project also focused on education and cooperation to contribute towards raised competence, and a common approach and cooperation between authorities, voluntary organisations and other key actors in the work against trafficking in the region.

The extent of the activities by the different countries participating in the project has varied. The significant point, however, has been that national and joint activities have been carried out, and conclusions have been reached that contributed towards the continued work in the region to prevent and combat prostitution and trafficking for sexual purposes.

The project members would especially like to thank coordinator Irina Enbuska of the County Administrative Board in Norrbotten County, who carried out the project with great enthusiasm, creativity and integrity. The Nordic Working Group in addition comprised Katja Sukuvaara from Lapland County Administrative Board in Rovaniemi, Finland and Marit Alsaker Stemland from the Northern Feminist University, Nordfold, Norway. The final report was compiled by Irina Enbuska with contributions from the national coordinators.

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Project against prostitution and trafficking in women and girls in the Barents Region

Background

Prostitution and trafficking for sexual purposes are not new phenomena, but in recent decades have grown in extent through acquiring a more global form. Women and children, often from marginalised groups, fall victim to traffickers and are reduced to commodities on an international market. One of the most important prerequisites to international trafficking in women and children is the existence of a local prostitution market, where traffickers and pimps can sell and sex purchasers can buy women and children to abuse them sexually. Prostitution and trafficking form a problematic issue stemming from the demand primarily for women and children for sexual purposes, stemming from poverty, marginalisation, preconceptions of the subordinate status of women and children and the superordinate status of men, and from shortcomings in safeguards for human rights. Prostitution and trafficking can also be seen as signs of an uneven power balance between men and women and lack of respect for girls' and boys' rights.

Prostitution and trafficking in the Barents Region

Among other sources, police intelligence gathered in Norrbotten shows examples of the situation in the Barents Region as regards trafficking for sexual purposes. It indicates a certain volume of trade. According to this intelligence, there are sex buyers in northern and eastern Norrbotten among other areas. Trafficking has occurred and does occur in Norrbotten, but is thought to have declined there, among other things due to the media focus on the issue. It is further assumed that trafficking for sexual purposes has declined because the police in Norrbotten and in Finnish Lapland have disrupted the activities at the locations best known to have accommodated prostitution activities.

A study by researcher Pia Skaffari and Professor Kyösti Urponen in connection with the project reaches similar conclusions regarding the decline. According to the authors of the report, one of the factors behind this decline is thought to be increased cooperation between police, border patrols and customs, addressing trafficking for sexual purposes. Skaffari and Urponen also consider that cooperation with and monitoring of local campgrounds has become more intensive, and this is thought to have contributed to the reduction in trafficking in women in Finnish Lapland.

At the same time, the authors of the study consider that this trade may have assumed another, more organised, character. Despite the emphasis on the organised trade, the authors do not consider this activity always necessarily linked to other organised crime. There is similar reasoning in Swedish police

intelligence, where fears are expressed that the sex trade has not diminished, but perhaps found new routes and methods to continue activities despite disruptions and media focus. The National Swedish Police Board also states in the annual reports from its national rapporteurs that implementation of the legislation prohibiting the purchase of sexual services has a curbing effect on trafficking for sexual purposes.

Cooperation initiatives

In connection with Sweden's Presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers (NMR), in 2002 the Swedish government took the initiative together with Norway, Finland and North Western Russia to carry out a project against prostitution and trafficking in women in the northern areas of the respective countries. The NMR contributed 1 million DKK to finance the joint actions. In addition, Sweden, Norway and Finland undertook to contribute further funding for national projects in connection with this initiative.

The Project against prostitution and trafficking in women and girls in the Barents Region began with the survey carried out by the participating project countries in 2004-2005. The survey inventoried awareness of, and activities to prevent, prostitution and trafficking in women and girls, and the preventive and counteractive activities carried out in the region thus far. The result of the participating country's survey formed the basis for the subsequent planning of actions. The planning and implementation of the project was also based on experiences gained during the Nordic Baltic campaign against trafficking in women in the year 2002.

Project aims and goals

One of the aims of the project was to plan and carry out actions contributing to improvements in the overall situation of Russian women and girls in North Western Russia.

Another aim was to find alternative solutions leading to sustainable development for the women and young girls who were either victims or potential victims of trafficking in women for the purpose of prostitution in the Barents Region. These solutions could include labour market and education initiatives, actions to strengthen women's and girls' status in society, actions to combat poverty or different information drives.

A further project aim was to focus on those men in the region who are buyers or potential buyers of women and girls for the purpose of prostitution and to counteract the effects of men's abuse and exploitation of women and girls in communities in the border zone of Norway, Sweden and Finland.

By planning and carrying out different actions, the project intended to counteract men's demand for women and children for the purpose of prostitution in the border zone in Norway, Sweden and Finland.

The project also focused on education of and cooperation with the police and public prosecutor's offices, immigration and border authorities, healthcare and medical care, the social services and other public bodies. The setting up of lasting networks between these authorities and voluntary organisations was considered an important part of the work against prostitution and trafficking.

The project has contributed to raise competence, and a harmonised approach and cooperation between authorities, voluntary organisations and other key functions in the work against trafficking in women in the region. The project has also aimed to raise competence in the region concerning the subject of prostitution and trafficking for sexual purposes thus jointly to be able to counteract prostitution and trafficking in women and girls for sexual purposes in the region, as well as outside the region. One project aim therefore has been to involve the inhabitants and indigenous population in work against prostitution and trafficking.

Common starting point for the project

The United Nations supplementary protocol, - *on the prevention, suppression and punishment of trafficking in people, especially women and children*, supplementing the United Nations convention against transnational organised crime, the Palermo Protocol, has provided the common starting point for the project.

The supplementary protocol contains recommendations as to how cross-border crime, such as trafficking in women and children, can be combated. This is not least through measures to protect and support women and children who have fallen victim to trafficking. Articles 9 and 9.5 propose extensive actions to counteract trafficking for effective preventive work against trafficking. This can be achieved among other things through media and information campaigns, and through different social and economic measures. The work should furthermore include cooperation between authorities and for example voluntary organisations possessing specific competence in this field. The supplementary protocol also mentions the importance through legal, educational, social and cultural measures of combating men's demands that promote all forms of human exploitation, especially of women and children, a demand which among other things leads to trafficking.¹

¹ <http://untreaty.un.org/English/TreatyEvent2003/Texts/treaty2E.pdf>

The organisation of the project

The *Project against prostitution and trafficking in women and girls in the Barents Region* has been a multilateral cooperation project. The County Administrative Board in Norrbotten County has administrated the project, in which Berit Sunnerö, Director of Social Services, has had overall responsibility for the project. The project has been administrated by the Division for Gender Equality of the Ministry of Industry and Employment, where Assistant Undersecretary Marianne Laxén has been the contact. The Swedish Government special adviser on issues concerning prostitution and trafficking, Gunilla Ekberg, has acted as consultant and adviser to the project, and has also examined status reports during the course of the project as well as the final report. Furthermore, each participating country, Finland, Norway, Russia and Sweden, has appointed a representative to the original working group and a representative to the coordinators' group.

The representatives in the regional working group have been Per-Ola Eriksson, County Governor of Norrbotten County, Eine Heikkinen, Social Services Inspector for the County of Finnish Lapland, Rovaniemi and Helga Pedersen, County Chair of Finnmark County (succeeded by Kirsti Saxi on 1 November 2005) and Lyubov Shtyleva, appointed by the County Administration of Murmansk, North Western Russia.

In the coordinator group, Sweden was represented by Irina Enbuska from the County Administrative Board in Norrbotten County, Katja Sukuvaara from Lapland County Administrative Board in Rovaniemi, Finland and Norway by Marit Alsaker Stemland from the Northern Feminist University, Nordfold, Norway.

During the course of the project, the coordinators kept in contact with their country's representative in the regional working group to report and inform on the project status. The national coordinators have had six meetings during the project. The Russian representative from the regional working group participated at one of the meetings. At this meeting, the participants were given an opportunity to reflect and to put forward views on the activities intended in the cooperation phase of the project. Activities for the cooperation phase of the project have been proposed and decided within the coordinator group, whose members in turn presented the proposed actions to their country's project members.

The organisation of the work in national activities has varied between the countries (see the chapter National Activities).

The project period for the cooperation project was from 1 February 2005 to 28 February 2006.

Project budget

The Nordic Council of Ministers granted 1 million DKK to fund the joint effort in the Barents Region.

At the first meeting between the participating countries, the parties agreed that the joint funding should primarily be used for activities aimed at women and girls in the Murmansk region. Of the 1 million DKK, almost 650,000 DKK was used for activities aimed at the intended target group.

The governments of Finland, Norway and Sweden had furthermore undertaken to contribute their own funding in order to run national activities in each country during the project period. The funding contributed by the different countries governments has varied, and has affected the extent to which activities have been possible in each country. On the basis of this economic framework, each participating country has chosen activities which it considers benefit work against prostitution and trafficking for sexual purposes in that country.

Joint activities in Barents cooperation

With the help of the NMR funding, the participants in the cooperation project decided to carry out education and training activities, and to support the establishment of sheltered accommodation in Murmansk. These activities contribute to improvement in the situation of girls and women, and in a more long-term perspective can contribute to strengthening women's status in society.

The ALLA Project: sheltered accommodation for vulnerable women in Murmansk

Through the research study carried out within the framework of the Finnish national project, a female psychologist in Murmansk was contacted. The psychologist, previously engaged in women's helplines in Murmansk, runs a sheltered accommodation, named the ALLA Project, for especially vulnerable women. The emergency home is, and shall continue to be, open to women who are or who have been in prostitution, but can also receive women exposed to other forms of men's violence.

The sheltered accommodation functions well, according to the Finnish party, since the women who are exposed to violence have firm trust in the personnel. The vulnerable women therefore are willing to seek help and support at this shelter, where they have a point of contact for support and advice which can enable an escape from a difficult life.

The NMR funding among other things contributes to payroll costs for a number of months, but also to administrative running costs. Furthermore, a "hot-line" will be set up, to which those in need can turn for counselling and support. Through this initiative, the cooperation project has also contributed to activities, for example training volunteers, which makes it possible to expand operations so that more women exposed to violence can seek this sheltered accommodation and receive appropriate support. This project continues within the framework of the EU supported Finnish-Russian project "Challenges of Wellbeing".

CEN TEK: an educational alternative for unemployed young Russian women in the Murmansk region

Within the framework of the project, CEN TEK and the International Centre Women and Management at Murmansk University (ICWM), which together with CEN TEK has previously carried out a successful "Office Management" educational course for women, reports that the course has been run previously and greatly benefited the participants. The women who have taken part in these previous courses have been given a possible road to an independent livelihood. According to CEN TEK and ICWM, the course is a suitable alternative for promoting sustainable development for young Russian women in the Barents Region.

Through the educational course, the project aimed to give participating women a possibility to develop a service and business-oriented approach, thereby improving their prospects of gaining work and an independent livelihood.

The target group for the course was identified in cooperation with CENTEK, ICWM, the JobCentre in Murmansk and Lyubov Shtyleva, representative for the Women's Congress of the Kola Peninsula (WCKP), which among other things runs a women's helpline in Murmansk. The selection process was designed to access the category of women who are in a troublesome life situation but who express a strong wish to change their situation.

Of the 44 women called to an interview, 33 were selected to participate in the course. An additional 3 women were placed on a waiting list. The course, which ran for three months, offered the participants a possibility to study such subjects as business communication, business English, organisation theory, career and personal development and conflict management, and also involved a two-day section on women's rights and gender equality.

Of the 33 selected women, 27 completed the course. They received an international diploma as proof of their course participation. Those who were forced to break off their studies gave reasons that included the need to go to work during the course, sickness, their children's sickness, or problems in the family.

In the course evaluation, the majority of the women who had participated in the course stated that they were extremely satisfied with the course, among other things because they consider themselves to have acquired the necessary skills to enter the labour market. A large proportion of the participants also considered that the course had given them new self-confidence. A large number of the participants furthermore stated that the course had given them an opportunity to make the acquaintance of people in the same life situation as themselves. They also experienced a firm sense of community within the educational group. Most of the female participants wanted to stay in touch with their fellow course participants after the end of the course.

Gender equality, democracy, representation, gender and working life, as well as men's violence in close relationships and trafficking – a training sub-course for unemployed young women in Murmansk.

The cooperation project arranged the introduction of a new component into the educational package which CENTEK and ICWM offered to young women at risk. The course participants were to be offered an opportunity to acquire basic knowledge on the subject of gender equality. This education section, which took place at the end of the educational project, was organised and carried out by the Northern Feminist University, Nordfold, Norway.

A total of 21 women participated in the two-day seminar, which involved four different blocks of talks and group work. The blocks addressed subjects such as democratic development, depictions and myths about women, gender and working life, and violence in close relations, as well as trafficking for sexual purposes. The participants showed keen interest and were active participants during the two days, especially since they could relate the seminar topics to their own experiences.

Grenseløs verdighet: a conference on men's violence against women, the democratic process, and prostitution and trafficking in the Barents Region.

Ten Russian women were given an opportunity to participate in the conference, "Grenseløs verdighet" in Kirkenes, Northern Norway, on 29 November - 2 December 2005. The cooperation project contributed funding for their participation as a further opportunity to contribute to an improved life situation for women and girls in North Western Russia.

The conference, arranged jointly by the NCRB-nettverket (Network for Crisis Centres in the Russian Barents Region and the Barents Region as a Whole), Norasenteret (crisis and incest centre in Finnmark County) and the Northern Feminist University, dealt with issues such as men's violence against women, trafficking for sexual purposes and democracy issues in The Barents Region.

By inviting Russian participants, each of them in different ways engaged in work concerning men's violence against women and children, the participants had an opportunity to exchange experiences and knowledge. Such exchanges also favour the joint effort in the region to counteract men's exploitation of women and girls for sexual purposes. The conference also gave an opportunity for the participating countries (Norway, Sweden, Finland, Russia, Greenland, the United Kingdom and Canada) to gain insight into today's situation in the different countries as regards prostitution and trafficking for sexual purposes.

National activities

Finland –the County of Finnish Lapland

Study of the sex trade in Finnish Lapland

During spring 2004, the Finnish national project carried out a study of the present situation as regards prostitution and the sex trade in Finnish Lapland. The study was carried out by researcher Pia Skaffari and Professor Kyösti Urponen, both of The University of Lapland, Rovaniemi, Finland. The purpose of the investigation was to spotlight the form and structure of the today's sex trade in Finnish Lapland.

The conclusion which the researchers could reach was that the prostitution of and the trade in Russian women from the Murmansk region into northern Finland had declined. One of the reasons for the decline, according to the authors of the report, was the increased cooperation between the police, border control and customs with regard to trafficking for sexual purposes. Skaffari and Urponen furthermore believe that the cooperation with and control of local campgrounds has become more intensive, and have thus contributed to the decline in the trade in Russian women to and within Finnish Lapland.

At the same time, the authors believe that this trade has probably taken on another, more organised, form. Despite the emphasis on "organised", the authors do not consider this always necessarily linked to other organised crime. Prostitution in Finnish Lapland is mainly concentrated to the Rovaniemi area, and to the western part of Finnish Lapland.

The study was also intended to contribute to the development of forms for work to counteract trafficking for sexual purposes. The study aimed to find methods for women in prostitution to escape from it, and to work to prevent women ending up in prostitution. By the researchers seeking information about women's social, mental and economic situation, and their situation on the labour market in the Murmansk region, the researchers consider that they can form an opinion as to how such preventive work may be implemented.

After the completion of the research study, it has been presented in different contexts, among other things in the mass media (Finnish TV1 and TV2, Swedish TV4, BBC and a number of newspapers and radio programmes), as well as at two seminars arranged by The University of Lapland, Rovaniemi, Finland.

Cross-border cooperation against prostitution and trafficking for sexual purposes and against other forms of men's violence against women

In order to secure continued cross-border cooperation against prostitution and other forms of men's violence against women, the Finnish national project during the project period carried out thorough and comprehensive preparations for preventive measures against prostitution and trafficking for sexual purposes. This cooperation is to be carried out through the social welfare authorities in Murmansk and the region of Finnish Lapland.

Cooperation for future research, also with regard to preventive work against this behaviour (such as sexually transmitted diseases) with the regional AIDS centre, is being planned as part of the future cooperation between Finnish Lapland and the Murmansk region.

Furthermore, the Finnish national project has begun a survey of the situation as regards child prostitution in Murmansk. Through the survey, researchers wish for example to ascertain what support and help functions there are for children involved in street prostitution. This is being carried out in cooperation with children's specialists and consultants in the Murmansk region

Norway – Finnmark County

Cross-border conference and network in the Barents Region

The Northern Feminist University in Nordfold, Norway, is running a project against prostitution and trafficking for sexual purposes in the Barents Region. For several years, the Northern Feminist University has also carried out exchanges with Russian women in connection with work to counteract other forms of men's violence against women.

At the time the Northern Feminist University was asked to participate in the project, it was fully involved in planning the conference "Grenseløs verdighet". Approximately 80 people from seven different countries - Russia, Finland, Canada, Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Great Britain - took part in the conference, whose venue was in Kirkenes, northern Norway. The aim of the conference was to favour preventive work, find new solutions and to put the issues - men's violence against women including prostitution and trafficking in women for sexual purposes - on the political agenda.

The speakers at the conference included researchers Lise Bjerkan and Linda Dyrild, who spoke on the subject of "Silenced experiences: dilemmas and challenges in the reintegration of victims of trafficking for sexual purposes". Based on field studies carried out by Bjerkan and Dyrild in Serbia, Italy and Moldova, the researchers say that it is important to focus on factors which lead to trafficking for sexual purposes. The meetings they had had with victims of trafficking showed them that women seldom tell of their experiences for fear of being rejected by the community in which they live. There is it is therefore important to identify risk factors and risk groups in order to be able to carry out effective preventive work.

Undersecretary Anne Rygh Pedersen of the Norwegian Ministry of Justice spoke of the intentions of the Norwegian government and its work to counteract men's violence against women and trafficking for sexual purposes. With regard to trafficking for sexual purposes, Anne Rygh Pedersen stated that the Norwegian government sees it as its responsibility to work to prevent women and children becoming involved in prostitution, to reduce the demand and also to punish traffickers. This work, which is coordinated by the Ministry of Justice, Rygh Pedersen continued, is being carried out in cooperation between government bodies and voluntary organisations.

Mildred Hedberg, representative of the women's helpline Iris in Luleå, Sweden, spoke on the subject of "Trafficking for sexual purposes in the Barents Region", presenting the work of the women's helpline against prostitution and trafficking for sexual purposes. She told of the information campaigns which the women's helpline has carried out to increase awareness on the issue of prostitution and trafficking for sexual purposes. This work has focused on men's demand for

prostitution. Hedberg made the point that it is important to curb the demand and that men must take a clearer stance against other men's purchasing sexual services.

On the theme "Trafficking for sexual purposes in prostitution in the Murmansk region", the head of the women's helpline "Priyut", Lyubov Shtyleva, presented a Russian perspective on trafficking for sexual purposes. In Shtyleva's opinion, there are attitudes in Russia to the effect that women "travel willingly" from Russia to work abroad. If these women are then exploited when abroad, it is seen as their own fault, and not something with which the Russian state need concern itself. Shtyleva went on to tell of the unwillingness of the Russian authorities to support the work of women's organisations to counteract trafficking for sexual purposes. Shtyleva considered that work against trafficking should include work against the causes of trafficking as well as help for the victims. Shtyleva also said that it would be a fruitful solution to draft and implement a law against sex purchasing, similar to the Swedish Act Prohibiting the Purchase of Sexual Services.

The conference also offered a workshop with different speakers addressing the theme of prostitution and trafficking in the Barents Region. Other themes dealt with during the workshop included information campaigns on trafficking for sexual purposes targeting children and young people in the Murmansk region, the project against prostitution and trafficking in women and girls in the Barents Region, trafficking for sexual purposes in Apatity, preventive work with HIV infections and drug dependency among women in prostitution in Murmansk, and female migration in northern Europe.

The conference showed that all the countries in the Barents Region experience similar problems as regards for example men's violence against women in general, and more specifically, prostitution and trafficking for sexual purposes. This issue transcends borders and should therefore be counteracted across the borders. Those who took part in the conference see the importance of cross-border cooperation, and hope that this cooperation will continue.

Network in the Barents Region for women in the Barents Region

During the project period, Norway has furthermore worked to set up a network between different resource centres for women in the Barents Region. The network shall also highlight the challenges faced by women in the Barents Region in the form of globalisation, transregionalisation and socio-economic change in the region. A first meeting of this network took place in connection with the conference "Grenseløs verdighet", at which different proposals were put forward for a resource centre under the proposed name Barents Women Gender Watch (BWGW).

Sweden – Norrbotten County

Survey

The first stage of the project was carried out in 2004, in the form of a survey. The aim of the survey was a systematic inventory of the situation in Norrbotten as regards awareness of and efforts against prostitution and trafficking for sexual purposes. The summary, which contained brief facts about different projects and contact details of relevant bodies and organisations, formed the basis for the rest of the project work.

Education, training and lectures

Education and training are an important factor in work to prevent and combat prostitution and trade in humans for sexual purposes. Education gives an opportunity for participants to pursue more advanced work on the issue and to create understanding for the issue. While it is essential that educational initiatives target institutions, such as schools and other important public functions, the project has also chosen to offer the public opportunities to learn more about the issue, thereby intensifying, questioning and participating in the work against the sex trade in Norrbotten.

Work in the school sphere to prevent and counteract prostitution and trafficking for sexual purposes, especially among women and children

During spring 2005, the Swedish project contacted seven municipalities in Norrbotten County for permission to take part in a school principals' conference in each municipality. The purpose was in this way to encourage schools to carry out schoolwork on the issue of prostitution and trafficking for sexual purposes under project period. The national coordinator was invited to five school principals' conferences. These visits showed that a need for information on the issues, and for discussion about them in line with the gender equality work which schools should pursue.

Despite the expressions of enthusiasm over the issues at the five meetings, it has turned out, through the survey questionnaire which the project sent out at a later date, that there was neither time nor opportunity to work with the issue among those who chose to respond to the survey. Since the municipalities that received the survey questionnaire had not all chosen to reply, the picture is perhaps not representative. The survey responses that have come in show that in some cases the issue has been integrated with schoolwork regarding social studies and the school subject "sex and relationships". In other cases, it is expressed that the issue "has no place" on the school timetable since it is not adequate for the age group, and/or the subject will be taught if any pupil or pupils should express a wish for it.

One municipality offered the project coordinator the opportunity to talk on the topic to Years 7, 8, and 9 of comprehensive school and Year 1 of upper secondary school. During a one-hour talk/ discussion, pupils were given the opportunity to reflect over the media, music, fashion and trafficking. Among other things, the discussion dealt with how men and women are presented in the media, where women are supposedly willing and scantily dressed, and men fully dressed and/or successful. There was also discussion of whether this media presentation is connected to men's purchase of women's sexual services and their expectations that women shall meet their sexual "needs".

Public lectures on prostitution and trafficking for sexual purposes

On 24 October 2005, within the framework of the project, a series of four lectures started, aimed mainly at the general public. All the lectures were free of charge for those wishing to come and listen. They took place in different communities in Norrbotten and took up topics such as the Internet and the sex industry, prostitution and trauma, the trade in child sex and the sex-purchasing man. The lectures took place in different communities with the ambition that the general public in different parts of Norrbotten should be able to gain more knowledge about prostitution and trafficking.

The first lecture, "Pornography, prostitution and the Internet", took place in Kiruna, where global surveillance expert Peder Söderlind gave a talk. Söderlind presented the research report "Sexindustrin på nätet" (the sex industry on the Net) which he had produced together with Professor Sven-Axel Månsson. The lecture showed how simple it is to come into contact with the pornographic material that is on the Internet, and that the pornographic industry has close ties with the prostitution industry. The audience numbered about 20. One view expressed by the audience was a feeling of powerlessness at the overwhelming character of the Internet and what it offers. At the same time, they thought it was important to be aware of the nature of the Internet landscape as regards pornography and prostitution.

The second lecture, by psychotherapist Ann Wilkens from the Crisis and Trauma Centre at Danderyd Hospital, dealt with the topic of prostitution and trauma. The lecture was held in Pajala. On the basis of her own meetings with women exposed to prostitution, previous research and also the report "Prostitution and trauma" which she herself compiled, Wilkens chose to talk of how women who have been or are in prostitution see their situation. According to Wilkens, most cases indicate that women with experience of prostitution are traumatised and sometimes demonstrate similar symptoms to prisoners of war. About ten people came to hear the lecture. The following discussion dealt

among other things with how society sees the importance of work to prevent sex purchasing, and attitudes which trivialise prostitution and sex purchase.

The third lecture, “Time to abolish child slavery – in Sweden too”, was held in Piteå. A representative from ECPAT (End Child Prostitution, child pornography And Trafficking of children for sexual purposes) spoke about child prostitution, child pornography and paedophile tourism. ECPAT is a non-profit organisations working to combat the sex trade in children. Swedish ECPAT’s representative, Helena Klingvall, was of the opinion that the sex trade in children is not merely something that takes place in distant countries, but also goes on near us. Klingvall also spoke about the work of the National Swedish Criminal Investigation Department to stop those who produce and offer and/or download child pornography on the Internet by blocking material containing child pornography. Only a few people came to this lecture. The following discussion took up among other things the issue of how children and young people should be given more knowledge about the sex industry, and that it should be the responsibility of schools and of parents to inform them.

The fourth and last lecture, “Sex buyers – why do men go to prostitutes?”, was held in Luleå and the guest speaker was researcher Jari Kuosmanen from Gothenburg University. Kuosmanen spoke about sex-purchasing men and the different explanations that these men give for their actions. Kuosmanen referred to the study “Sex-buyers”, which he carried out, and showed what different types of sex purchasers this study identified. He also presented new material which shows that an increasing number of young men become prostitutes. About 30 people came to this last lecture. The thoughts that the audience expressed were among other things that there is too little knowledge about men’s sex purchasing. Another view expressed was that the explanations/excuses used for this behaviour lead to men not taking responsibility to change their behaviour.

Seminar for journalists and other media representatives

The Swedish project considered it of the utmost importance that journalists and other media representatives be given the opportunity to access information about prostitution and trafficking for sexual purposes. One way to increase understanding of the issue in the community as a whole is broadened - and in some cases renewed - knowledge of the issue among the media.

Within the framework of project therefore, a half-day seminar for journalists and media workers in Norrbotten was arranged on 2 February 2006. The main speaker at this seminar was the former journalist and now editor and researcher Trine Lyngaard from NIKK (the Nordic Institute for Women’s and Gender Research). The seminar, entitled “Media myths and stereotypes about

prostitution and trafficking for sexual purposes”, aimed mainly to spotlight media reporting in the Nordic countries on prostitution and trafficking. This half-day for the media was also intended to highlight research carried out in this field.

The seminar also intended to include a lecture by Jonas Trolle, from Stockholm City Police, giving his view on media reporting of prostitution and trafficking. The purpose of the day’s activities was to give an opportunity for people working in the media sphere to acquire knowledge, perspectives and tips for future reporting on the subject of the sex trade.

The project also sent targeted invitations to the media in the counties of Norrbotten and Västerbotten and to individual media actors in northern Norway. The seminar, which was free of charge to media representatives, had to be cancelled since the number of interested applicants was too small to enable the seminar to be carried out.

Educational course for authorities and other voluntary organisations

On 29 August 2005, an educational course took place in Luleå for authorities and voluntary organisations, in connection with the official start of the project. Three alternative lectures were offered during the day, spotlighting in different ways the subject of prostitution and trafficking in women and girls for sexual purposes.

Maija Strufve-Gustafsson and John Rydstedt from the KAST Group (acronym for Buyers Of Sexual Services) from the City Unit in Gothenburg sent two representatives, Maija Strufve-Gustafsson and John Rydstedt, who talked about their work with men who buy sexual services, and how in different ways these men need/receive support to escape from and change their behaviour.

Lotta Lundberg and Karin Pramberg, of the municipal anti-prostitution group in Malmö, spoke about the work carried out in Malmö to help women and girls in prostitution to escape from it.

From the National Swedish Criminal Investigation Department, Kajsa Wahlberg participated, national rapporteur on trafficking, along with Detective Inspector Karin Svedlund, who spoke about police work with cases of prostitution and trafficking for sexual purposes, especially women and children.

The response from the approximately 50 listeners was that priority must be given to collaboration between different actors in the community to reinforce work against prostitution and trafficking. Another opinion was that work against

prostitution and trafficking should take place in both the political and non-political spheres. The response was also that the participants would like to have attended all three alternative lectures, since all the subjects were interesting and thought-provoking.

Other lectures, meetings and debates

During the project year, the Swedish coordinator was invited to different events to speak about the project and the overall work to prevent and combat prostitution and trafficking for sexual purposes.

Among other things, the coordinator has addressed the Zonta Women's Club, and the medical emergency services in Norrbotten, at the conference on sexual exploitation of children "Sexuell exploatering av barn" in Luleå, organised by the Allmänna Barnhuset Foundation and the Ministry of Social Services, the Gender Equality Delegation in Norrbotten County; and on International Women's Day 2006 in Gällivare.

The project has also been represented at conferences concerning prostitution and trafficking for sexual purposes and other forms of men's violence against women and children. For example, the Swedish project was represented at the meeting of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council in Murmansk on police cooperation in the Barents Region against trafficking, and at a follow-up conference in Riga in connection with the Nordic-Baltic campaign against prostitution and trafficking in women. The Swedish coordinator also addressed the conference "Grenseløs verdighet" in Kirkenes, and in Umeå participated in the conference "Rädslans rum", on men's violence against women and children.

Within the framework of the activities in Norrbotten, the project has twice invited Norrbotten's representatives from all the parliamentary political parties to examine and discuss the project and its aims. Political representatives at county, national and EU level have taken part. The aim of these meetings was to give information about the project and its activities, and to inspire political representatives themselves to pursue a debate on the issues within the political organisation. This in turn is intended to inspire the different political organisations to run fruitful work against prostitution and trafficking for sexual purposes.

Other important actors in the work against prostitution and trafficking for sexual purposes

On several occasions, the Swedish section of the project has also had discussions with other relevant actors in Norrbotten as to how they can contribute to/participate in the work against prostitution and trafficking in women and girls for sexual purposes.

The central organisation of trade unions - LO

LO in Norrbotten has 60,000 members in nine LO offices in the municipalities, and 34 sections. The large number of members, along with LO's dedicated strategy to work for gender equality in the county, made LO a self-evident actor for the project to approach. A meeting took place with LO's gender equality officer in autumn 2005. At this meeting, LO stated that they intended in some way to integrate the issue of prostitution and trafficking for sexual purposes in the planned events aimed at LO members due during spring 2006. However, LO later informed the project that they have no possibility to address the issue due to lack of time.

The taxi industry and hotel industry

The Swedish project coordinator has also met representatives for the taxi industry in Norrbotten and a representative from the Taxi Owners' Association for Northern Sweden. There have been discussions on what the taxi industry might contribute to the work against prostitution and trafficking for sexual purposes. The coordinator suggested that the taxi industry in Norrbotten might adopt ethical guidelines stating that the taxi industry should not participate in procurement activities, for example by driving men to addresses/ locations where they may buy sex.

The representatives for the taxi companies/ organisations stated that they already work to the ethical guidelines which state that taxi drivers may not take part in criminal activities, which include procurement activities. However, it was added that opportunities should be arranged for taxi drivers to take part in discussions on the issue and training sessions where topics such as prostitution and trafficking are dealt with.

Similar thoughts about training were brought up when the project coordinator met representatives for the hotel industry. Hotel staff must be given the necessary tools to act upon suspicions of trafficking and prostitution, and adequate means to act as well as information about where to turn to if suspicions arise.

The world of sport

Many sports associations work energetically to combat the use of drugs and to promote gender equality in and outside sport. For that reason, the Swedish project coordinator contacted a number of actors in the world of sport in Norrbotten County to discuss what the world of sport can do to change attitudes about men's purchasing of sexual services, prostitution and trafficking for sexual purposes.

Interest in taking up the project theme has varied. Luleå Hockey was one of the clubs that most clearly wanted to manifest its stance against prostitution and trafficking for sexual purposes. Luleå Hockey invited the project to a cup match between Luleå and Timrå at COOP ice hockey arena in Luleå on 4 March 2006, where the project and Luleå Hockey together carried out an information campaign aimed at spectators and players. Among other things, the ice hockey spectators were given information about prostitution and trafficking for sexual purposes in the form of the flyer “Har du köpt...?” (Have you bought...?) which the project designed.

The arrangement, which attracted considerable media attention, was also appreciated by ice hockey spectators, some of whom expressed the opinion that it was “courageous” of Luleå Hockey to take a position on this issue. The event was of special significance in view of the discussion concerning the Football World Cup in Germany and the importance that the Swedish world of sports should take a stance against the purchase of sexual services, prostitution and trafficking for sexual purposes in connection with the World Cup and other national and international sports events. After Luleå Hockey’s drive, further sports associations have contacted the project to know whether and how they can show their position against prostitution and trafficking.

Collaboration between authorities and voluntary organisations against prostitution and trafficking for sexual purposes

With a view to bringing about collaboration, the Swedish project coordinator suggested to the existing “County Group for Women’s Protection” that the issue should be integrated in the existing county strategy for women’s protection. The County group consists of different public bodies such as police, medical services, social services etc, and the goal of the group is to cooperate on issues to do with men’s violence against women. As of autumn 2006, the County Group for Women’s Protection will include prostitution and trafficking for sexual purposes as one of the areas of its work. The County Group will also invite representatives from the Swedish Migration Board, and from the Swedish Customs in Norrbotten County.

The project also invited voluntary organisations, such as women’s and girls’ helplines, the Male Network, victims’ helplines, and the Red Cross, to a collaboration meeting. Before the meeting, the project sent out a survey questionnaire to those invited, which was intended to reflect the routines which the invited voluntary organisations apply with regard to work for example with victims of trafficking for sexual purposes, as well as preventive work against prostitution and trafficking.

Only a small number of the invited voluntary organisations chose to respond to the questionnaire. Most of those who responded stated that they had never had anything to do with persons exploited in the prostitution industry. This meant also that they did not consider themselves able to contribute to work against trafficking for sexual purposes. Only one voluntary organisation was actually represented at the meeting.

The work of the social services to prevent and combat prostitution and trafficking for sexual purposes

The project also sent questionnaires to the social services in all 14 municipalities in Norrbotten County, in order to gain a picture of how municipal social services pursue work to do with prostitution and trafficking for sexual purposes. Only a small number of social service offices chose to respond to the questionnaire. Those that responded stated that work against prostitution mostly applies to cases involving minors, since this comes under the Social Services Act. The municipal social services are responsible for hindering people aged under 18 from becoming involved in injurious activities and for providing support. They do not run special activities in order to counteract men's demand for sexual services.

Local projects to prevent prostitution and trafficking for sexual purposes

In order to contribute further to raising awareness and forming opinion in Norrbotten, the project made it possible for the general public to apply for project funding to carry out some form of activity. The activities were expected to focus principally on counteracting men's demand for sexual services. A number of people were in touch with respect to the announcement during the application period, but nobody applied for funding for activities.

Work against prostitution and trafficking for sexual purposes in the perspective of indigenous peoples

One of the goals of the cooperation project was in collaboration with the indigenous population of the region to work against prostitution and trafficking for sexual purposes. In autumn 2005, the project coordinator was contacted by a representative for the international organisation "Global Indigenous" and a representative for the project "På lika villkor i Sápmi" (on equal terms in Samiland). They wanted to discuss the possibility of carrying out a study among the Sami population in the Barents Region.

The study will survey the situation in the Sami community with regard to prostitution and trafficking for sexual purposes. One of the purposes of this study is to study Sami men's demand for and abuse of women for the purpose of prostitution, but also the possible spread of HIV/AIDS through men's abuse of

prostitutes. The investigation is expected to contribute to the preventive work against prostitution and trafficking among the Sami population.

Summary of the project against prostitution and trafficking in women and girls in the Barents Region

The cooperation project

Funds from the Nordic Council of Ministers (NMR) totalling approximately 1 mDKK were allocated to the cooperation project. Of this sum, approximately 650,000 DKK was used in activities expected to improve the life situation of women and girls in the Murmansk region. By offering training leading to increased knowledge and an international diploma, the participating women can find a way to an independent livelihood.

To further expand the knowledge that already exists in North Western Russia is an important step in work to promote favourable development in the region. Inviting women from North Western Russia who work to combat men's violence against women gave them opportunities to learn a new approach that can strengthen work against prostitution and trafficking. This in turn favours positive developments towards a united approach in the region.

To succeed in the work to prevent prostitution and trafficking for sexual purposes, it is also important to invest in adequate alternatives for women in a difficult social situation, to give them opportunities to make a livelihood. The emergency home named the ALLA Project offers such opportunities to women in the risk zone and those in prostitution. It was therefore considered by the cooperation project desirable to promote this alternative.

The national projects

The four countries that participated the cooperation project undertook to run national projects during the project period.

In Finland, the national activities began as early as 2004 in the form of a research study intended to examine the sex trade in Finnish Lapland. Through the study, the authors of the report wanted to determine how the sex trade in Finnish Lapland was organised. The research report also spotlights the economic and social situation of vulnerable women, in order on that basis to facilitate the production of relevant methods for preventive work.

During the project period, Norway chose to begin networking between resource centres for women in the Barents Region. Norway considers this an important factor to strengthen the status of women within the region. Furthermore, during the project period, Norway organised a one-week conference aimed at people/organisations actively working to counteract men's violence against women and children, including prostitution and trafficking for sexual purposes.

In Sweden, the national project has aimed its activities at the general public, public bodies and voluntary organisations, and the media. Education/training on these issues has been offered to different groups, as well as lectures and an information campaign about sex buying, prostitution and trafficking for sexual purposes in connection with a sporting event. The Swedish section of the project has also initiated collaboration between authorities and voluntary organisations to reach a consensus and preparedness to protect and assist victims of prostitution and trafficking for sexual purposes.

Proposals for future work against prostitution and trafficking

Studies on prostitution and trafficking for sexual purposes in the Barents Region

To be able to run fruitful work against prostitution and trafficking for sexual purposes, it is important to create basic but also uniform understanding of the problems of prostitution and trafficking for sexual purposes. It is also important that the subject is studied and problematised in a regional context in order to determine whether the issue has regionally specific aspects. This should also be taken into consideration in the work aimed to counteract prostitution and trafficking for sexual purposes. It is therefore proposed that an over-arching study of the situation as regards prostitution and trafficking for sexual purposes in the Barents Region be carried out. The study should focus on the extent, actors and effects of the problem, and on the attitudes and values that prevail in the region among public bodies, voluntary organisations and the general public.

Training and more open lectures

Further opportunities for training and education are required within all the countries in the region, for both authorities such as the police, medical services, social services and schools and for individuals, in order to keep knowledge updated. It is important that everyone should be given an opportunity to take part in the debate on the effects of men's purchase of sexual services, on how the problem is combated and on how victims are best protected and offered assistance in escaping from their situation. Since awareness of the issue is disparate, it is not given priority by the actors, allowing the problems to persist.

Focus on men's demand

It is important to turn our attention to the basic causes of prostitution and trafficking for sexual purposes: the men who provide the demand for sexual services and those who meet the demand, such as pimps and traffickers. For natural reasons, work against prostitution and trafficking easily tends to focus single-mindedly on the victims of crime, i.e. mostly women and children, but also young men. It is of course important that adequate efforts are made for the victims, so that they can escape their situation.

To especially spotlight the demand gives occasion but also a possibility to address the problem of why under certain circumstances men see it as self-evident to buy the right to somebody's body for sexual purposes. It is also important to initiate discussion on men's responsibility for their sexual behaviour. It is necessary to focus on the problem to avoid having the victims of prostitution – mostly women and children – identified as a problem which needs to be combated.

Training for media representatives

The media play an important role in how we perceive the world around us, but in creating understanding of the world. It is a perception largely shared by both the media and the general public. Nevertheless, the media picture of cases concerning prostitution and trafficking for sexual purposes is too seldom questioned, and in many cases is taken as a valid description of reality. For example, it is more common for the woman who is a victim of prostitution to be exposed, through detailed descriptions of her person and situation, while men who buy women and children for sexual purposes are anonymous in the reporting.

Therefore, media representatives in the Barents Region should take the responsibility for more active fact-finding. In addition, they should be given the opportunity to participate in educational sessions to do with prostitution, trafficking, gender equality and other education concerning men's violence against women and children. A unified yet critical view on the part of the media contributes in the long term to inhabitants in the region being able to come together to support the work against prostitution and trafficking for sexual purposes.

Educational alternatives for women and girls at risk

In order to counteract women and girls in the Barents Region being exposed to prostitution and trafficking for sexual and other purposes, it is important to meet the need for support, actions that contribute to strengthening their status in society. To contribute to the welfare of women and girls in a longer perspective means welfare for the entire region. By offering educational opportunities which strengthen women's position, for example on the labour market, women and girls themselves can contribute to a sustainable development and for a strengthened position in the community. By bringing about collaboration between functional education and training alternatives in the region aimed at those in the risk zone, general developments in the region can also be strengthened.

Closing words – unexpected meetings

To some extent, a year seems insufficient for work to counteract trafficking which exploits women and girls for sexual purposes in the Barents Region. The problem cannot be resolved overnight: it needs to be continuously counteracted. The activities carried out by the *Project against prostitution and trafficking in women and girls in the Barents Region* should however be seen as a step in the right direction. It is hoped that the project has acted as a catalyst for other actors in the region to start contributing to the work to prevent prostitution and trafficking for sexual purposes in the region.

Cooperation between authorities and with voluntary organisations in the Barents Region has taken place previously, among other things in the fields of business development and initiatives for a better environment, as well as with social issues such as health and combating alcoholism and drug abuse.

Cross-border cooperation in the Barents Region is an important strategy to keep the region vital. It is only by creating opportunities for meetings in the region, either expected or unexpected, that we can assemble to lead developments in the direction the region wants.

The *Project against prostitution and trafficking in women and girls in the Barents Region* is a good example of this. The project has spotlighted and focused on an issue that everyone in the Barents Region wishes to prevent and counteract. Barents cooperation should set its sights high as regards its social efforts, just as with the other issues pursued in the region. Work against prostitution and trafficking for sexual purposes contributes to a good general social standard of living and gender equality for all the inhabitants of the region. This is an ambition which can contribute to the Barents Region becoming the expansive and prosperous region which it wants to be – and can be.