

**Annual COHEHRE Conference 2004 in Bad Elster, Germany 21-25th April
Entitled 'Client-centred Care'**

Report on Thematic Working Group on Intercultural Education

There were 21 participants in the group this time coming from 10 different countries and representing a number of different professional groups.

One whole day was devoted to working group activities. During the first part of the morning 3 papers were presented. The first was my report on the US Transcultural Nursing Society's annual conference. The main reason for introducing this was to explore the US approach to cultural issues particularly in relation to its theoretical base. Discussion took place around the similarities and differences between Europe and the US in respect of multiculturalism both amongst client groups and the workforce.

Two other papers were given, first by Raija Sairanen from Turku on a programme for Immigrant nurses. She gave some very interesting insights not just into the content and outcomes of her programme but also in relation to group dynamics. The last paper was by David Sharp from the US on an e-based project for cross-cultural student interaction. Making possible for those students who are unable to travel abroad to have some contact and debate with people from other countries and cultures.

In the latter part of the morning we discussed the results of a survey sent out to Institutes prior to the meeting. There were 7 responses from 6 countries so it was minimally representative but did give some basis for discussion. The main findings suggested that everyone had a multicultural client group but the number of immigrants in the workforce was variable. Everyone had some cultural input in the undergraduate programme but few had post graduate level programmes. However most schools represented did not provide postgraduate education. This was mainly described as a separate unit rather than a continuous thread. Overwhelmingly everyone felt that there was a need for a common European Framework for culture in the curriculum and that teaching methods, religion and cultural assessment were areas of difficulty.

The afternoon was devoted to considering the way forward in addressing the issues raised. The outcome of this was to agree a strategy for a web based discussion on 4 agreed topics. Facility for this would be set up on the Web using Blackboard. This facility will be developed by Andy Pullman from the IT group.

The topics are

- a) Teaching Strategies
- b) Curricular topics on cultural issues
- c) Framework for a database of cultural knowledge
- d) Assessment of student outcomes

Various members of the group put their names against each topic and named people will be responsible for focussing the information and reporting back. This work may lead to project development after the Budapest conference.