

## SHORT TERM SCIENTIFIC MISSION (STSM) SCIENTIFIC REPORT

This report is submitted for approval by the STSM applicant to the STSM coordinator

Action number: CA18124-47576

STSM title: Sexuality and Functional Diversity (SEXFUN)

STSM start and end date: 27/09/2021 to 10/10/2021

Grantee name: Hernando Carlos Gómez Prada

### PURPOSE OF THE STSM:

*The aim of this Short-Term Scientific Mission (STSM) is to obtain an international perspective, through a comparative study between Spain and Austria in the field of sexual medicine, looking for new frontiers to the normative definitions of sexuality for people with disabilities and investigating the sexual health of people with disabilities from new perspectives. This STSM provides a necessary and interesting follow-up to the work started with the national investigation, Sexuality and Functional Diversity (SEXFUN) in Spain, and thanks to the collaboration with the Center for Inter-American Studies at the University of Graz, Austria led by Prof. Roberta Maierhofer, who is a benchmark in aging studies. The primary scientific outcome of this STSM will be the formation of new alliances between the University of Murcia and the University of Graz to continue researching in a coordinated way, when combined with the work that is done from different points of view, especially from gender, age, class, sexual orientation and other items in a transdisciplinary way. This will yield fresh insights towards the achievement of the Action's objectives.*

### DESCRIPTION OF WORK CARRIED OUT DURING THE STSM

*The STSM began with a meeting with my host, Prof. Roberta Maierhofer at the C.IAS at the University of Graz. We discussed the best way to get the SEXFUN project to the center and we schedule a meeting with the entire center team to explain my work and to coordinate with the rest of the team during the two weeks of the STSM. Following the schedule presented previously on the workplan summary submitted to COST, we agreed to give two lectures on SEXFUN on Wednesday, September 29, 2021, at CIAS headquarters, where I presented the research and methodology of the project, and later, on Wednesday, October 6 2021, in a second lecture, I presented the results of the research, focusing on the aspects of sex, gender and age. During the first week of the stay I conducted in-depth interviews of approximately one hour with different members of C.IAS and the University of Graz, following this, and a further meeting with my host, we had the team meeting on Friday, October 1, 2021. This meeting provided me with interesting insights into the structure of C.IAS and I learned more about its work and the future congresses that they will organize. In addition, we agreed to start working on the achievement of a COST Action that we will present jointly before October 29, 2021. The first lecture had a very high attendance of students, even with the COVID restrictions, and the students were very happy with the presentation. In addition, they asked many questions, which led us to develop a final debate that was very useful for the research. In the second lecture, again I was surprised by the number of attendees and I was able to verify the interest in the subject. Again, I was able to contrast our data with the Austrian situation and learn new ways of relating the different items, especially age, with sexual health research. This two lectures involved critically examining the themes (sexual health) and sub-themes (age/gender) in terms of these geographical different contexts, assumptions and structures. In particular, the analysis examined how the various themes and sub-themes connected together in both a constructive and deconstructive manner. I completed the thematic analysis report providing an introduction, a key findings section and the analysis of*

*the major themes. I sent this report to my host at the end of the second week of the STSM (Friday November 8, 2021). I met with my host on November 9, 2021. At our final meeting Prof. Roberta Maierhofer reported that she was happy with the report and found it very insightful. In addition, she emphasized the need to continue working together in the future and how my visit has been of great interest to her team, as they had transmitted to her during these weeks.*

#### **DESCRIPTION OF THE MAIN RESULTS OBTAINED**

*This exchange visit has strengthened existing networks and fostered collaboration between the University of Murcia and the University of Graz. We had the opportunity to establish new partnerships, which in the future will be developed in new joint projects, learn new techniques and ways of approaching our research in different ways. For me, as a young researcher, this opportunity will define my career in the future, as it opens new doors for me, professional and personal, within the world of research. From the first meeting we could see how we carry out similar research and have common interests and the need to explore new ways of looking at our study subjects to significantly expand the necessary growth of the social sciences and its interdisciplinarity with sexual medicine and aging. The most important thing has been to know first-hand the actions carried out and the methodology used in the framework of the ERA Gender-Net Plus Project.*

*MASCAGE, where I was able to verify the importance of in-depth interviews and life stories as key elements in the investigation. For the Austrian team, what attracted them the most was our way of working during the pandemic and how we adapted our work and our interviews to different exceptional situations due to COVID.*

*Based on the work carried out in the field of sexual health and disability, the Austrian team helped me develop new strategies from the field of sociology to approach our future research in new ways, focusing on in-depth interviews as a fundamental element. The experience of working in networks with other European countries also gave me new ideas on how to develop focus group techniques, in this case with visual input. Specifically, I was able to see how they had worked with older men in focus groups and how through audiovisual pieces they had come to a better understanding of their self-perception of masculinity. For my part, I was able to convey to my Austrian colleagues the importance of highlighting how the data on the consequences of the pandemic are alarming to the extent that scientific evidence shows us its effects on general and mental health, as well as the worsening of exclusion and inequality.*

*In general, all the objectives proposed for the stay have been met and, above all, new ways of collaboration have been opened for the future.*

#### **FUTURE COLLABORATIONS (if applicable)**

*My host and I discussed the importance and value of maintaining networks and continuing collaboration throughout the course of the Action. We also discussed to start a next phase of the project, which will involve analyzing sexual orientation/age as an important key factor to look up, and the need to examine the incidence of Covid and how the next European policies on disability will be developed in a post-Covid scenario perhaps as part of another STSM, we could carry on this follow-up.*

*In addition, we will jointly submit a proposal for a COST Action in order to start the first Network of Masculinities Studies, together with other researchers from 16 countries.*