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Exchange of good practices on gender equality

Awareness raising activities to fight violence against women and girls

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Awareness raising campaigns on family-related violence

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1. Introduction: Situation in Macedonia

Unlike countries presenters (UK and Greece), in Macedonia has not been undertaken a campaign to raise awareness about violence against women and girls. The activities of this plan are within the raising the awareness against domestic violence and human trafficking. For these reasons, the data on the situation in the country, that are presented in this report refer only to women victims of domestic violence and women and girls victims of a human trafficking, and actions taken for prevention (primary and secondary) of these two target groups.

The first activities for the prevention of domestic violence (DV) in our country began in 1994 with the opening of the first SOS line for victims of DV. For the functioning of the same were trained 40 volunteers. In the coming period, by women's NGOs were organised seminars to raise awareness for DV and encourage women to report violence and perpetrator. Today operates a national SOS line and 3 local SOS lines.

In 1999/2000, the first counselling for psychological, medical and legal assistance to women victims of DV was opened. In 2000 was conducted the first survey of DV and the results from 600 women showed that: 72.28% of women suffered physical assault or threats in the family, 10.4% suffered sexual assault or threats; 12.87% suffered physical and sexual assault, 4.46% did not answer the questionnaire. The same year (2000) was opened the first Shelter Center (Safe house for women victims of DV) and in the same were sheltered women and their children. From 2000 to 2011 were sheltered 3011 women with different length of stay from 1 day to several years. In 2007 at the national level and within the CSW six Shelter centers for women victims of domestic violence were opened. Currently four State Shelters are working and a one NGO Shelter. In the past five years there were several legal aid centers for victims of DV supported by the UW-WOMAN. But, upon termination of the financing some of them are closed.

It is necessary to be mentioned activities for prevention of DV that were undertaken by UNDP in collaboration with the MLSP and the Embassy of Netherlands in Macedonia. They raised joint project titled: "Strengthening National capacities to prevent Domestic Violence". Within the same project have been undertaken numerous activities to raise awareness about domestic violence among the general population and empowering the victims to report violence; it was conducted a survey of the institutional response to the DV, prepared the National Strategy to combat domestic violence (2008 -2011). One of the most important segments which should be emphasised by the Strategy and

which are of interest for the decrease of domestic violence against women is the following:

- a) Programme for Economic Strengthening of the Victims;
- b) Counselling Centre for Victims of Domestic violence;
- c) Treatment of perpetrators of domestic violence;
- d) Training for work with victims of domestic violence;
- e) Establishing a system for collecting data on domestic violence.

The NGO organised training for police, judges, health workers, professional services of education and NGOs for direct assistance to victims of DV, delivered 750 posters and 5000 leaflets in 25 municipalities. Organised 3 national campaigns to raise awareness of DV titled: "The real man does not hit a woman" (2009); "I have the courage to say NO to violence, and you can against DV Along" (2010); "To shed light on violence against women" (2011). All 3 campaigns aired on national television.

Also it was prepared joint Protocol for dealing with victims of DV, and together with WHO, were held seminars for their use.

The situation of women and children victims of human trafficking is the following: Since 2000 when this problem was for the first time discovered by IOM, in the Reception Centre in Skopje, were sheltered 741 foreign victims (women and children) and 7 victims Macedonian citizens. In the period of 2002 -2008 within the Reception Centre was functioning psychological counselling managed by NGO "For Happy Childhood". Since 2008, there are no foreign citizens victims of trafficking and it is increase the number of domestic victims, so in April 2011 it was opened State Shelter for children and women victims of trafficking. In the period 2005 to 2011 were registered 98 victims of trafficking Macedonian citizens. It was established a National Commission to Combating trafficking, a National Strategy and Action Plan to combat human trafficking.

It is worth to be mentioned that in our Country there is successful inter institutional cooperation in the field of DV against women and trafficking in human being, as well as cooperation between Institutions and NGOs.

Law regulative

The term (definition) on domestic violence is prescribed by Penal Code of the Republic, Art. St.17 122 (1996) where, domestic violence includes harassment, rude insults, threatening the safety, physical abuse, sexual or other psychological or physical violence that causes a feeling of insecurity, threat or fear towards a spouse, parent or children or other persons living in a marital or extramarital community or household, and toward a former spouse or persons who have a common child or are in close personal relationships. "

The family Law Reform in 2004, when in fact the first time domestic violence is regulated in this area, introduced a series of individual measures protection. In this sense, the Centre for Social Work and NGOs working in the field of education and prevention of domestic violence received legal possibility of building the necessary coordinate system of protection. In addition to individual measures envisaged in the

law, given an opportunity to be taken and any other measures that will be used to achieve protection of the victim.

In Family law (2004) domestic violence is the conduct of a family member by force, threat to family, intimidation, carries bodily injury, emotional or sexual abuse and material, sexual or labor exploitation of another family member.

The term (definition) on human trafficking is prescribed by Penal Code of the Republic, Art. 419-a (2004).

2. Comments on the UK Discussion paper

How are we theorising the connections between gender equality and VAWG?

General Recommendation 19 to the CEDAW recognises the discrimination against women, among others, as well as the gender based violence “that is, violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately. It includes acts that inflict physical, mental or sexual harm or suffering, threats of such acts, coercion and other deprivations of liberty” Art. 6.

Therefore, the theorising the connections between gender equality and VAWG are related to theorising the gender based discrimination, or discrimination upon sex.

In Macedonian soft law (national strategies and policies¹) the gender based discrimination has been defined, as well as the Macedonian law is recognising it as punishable act.

As described in the text, the definition or the distinction of the gender roles in family and society is generating gender inequality that leads towards gender based violence or VAWG. Therefore, theorising the connections between gender equality and VAWG are actually connections between gender inequality and VAWG.

The gender roles (in the family and society) are coming from the basic distinction and the biological and societal construction of the terms of sex and gender. Upon the gender roles the gender based discrimination is arising in the family and society. Woman upon the stereotyped defining of the term of gender becomes a victim of the gender based violence such as the family violence, human trafficking in purpose of sexual exploitation, harassment and the sexual harassment etc.

What is the difference between awareness raising and prevention?

The awareness raising represents one part of the prevention. The prevention should represent a systematic approach towards eliminating some unwanted phenomenon, such as the VAWG.

¹ National Action Plan on Gender Equality, 2007-2012, National strategy against domestic violence, National strategy on alleviation of poverty and social inclusion, National strategy against discrimination.

As regards to the VAWG, the awareness raising is encompassing only the transfer of the information. The information is shaped in dependence to the target group. But, the prevention encompasses concrete set of preventing measures in the frames of the formal and informal system of prevention, such as the SOS lines, counselling etc. Awareness rising is dealing with the level of information among the targeted group in the VAWG phenomenon (they can be victims of violence, perpetrators, the general population, perpetrators, men, officials working in the field or civil society). The prevention represents a more complex process that should be conducted at several levels and needs more systematic approach, as described in the following question.

What constitutes a coherent prevention strategy? Responses to the EVAW model and pathways to perpetration.

A coherent prevention strategy should be constituted on several levels, such as:

- Education;
- Awareness raising;
- Informal and formal system of prevention (SOS lines and legal aid or counselling).

Most important in coherent prevention strategy is for these three levels of prevention to be conducted systematically.

- Education – should encompass inclusion of the educational material in educative curricula of the formal education from basic educational level. Only on that way, the results can be long-term.
- Education accompanied by the awareness raising should be also directed towards different target groups: persons dealing with WAVG, women, girls, men, boys, persons from the judicial system, journalists, decision makers at both local and national level, employers etc.
- Awareness raising campaigns and activities are most often undertaken periodically in dependence to celebration of certain human –or women`s rights days, or days celebrating activities on violence against women and girls. The awareness raising campaigns should be conducted in continuity as part of governmental programmes, not dependent on foreign donors.

Should interventions be targeted to interrupt specific pathways?

The interventions should be aimed at elimination of the factors that cause violence against women and girls, as follows: gender inequality; unequal power relations between women and men; failure of justice system to respond with sanctions for perpetrators; discrimination against women and girls in society; gender stereotypes through education, etc.

How can we measure the impact of specific interventions, especially when they use new technologies? What counts as a „success“ with respect to women and men?

The following could be the Indicators to measure the impact of specific interventions:

- Increased number of women and girls who reported violence;
- Regulated media violence;
- Increased number of services to assist and protect women and girls victims of violence;
- Reduced number of violence between boys and girls in schools;
- Increased availability of interventions to vulnerable groups of women and girls;
- Change of the gender norms that tolerate violence;
- Increased cooperation between state institutions and NGOs in combating violence against women;
- Increased number of sanctions for all forms of violence against women (domestic, sexual, work etc.);
- Reinforced system of laws to sanction violence against women;
- Reinforced system of laws for the treatment of perpetrators (counseling, therapy, punishment. etc.)

Are the criteria for good/promising practices the right ones?

Firstly, the term of promising practice has smaller significance of importance than the term Good practice. Due to practical reasons the term good practice than have been shown as good should be further used rather than the term promising. The promising – as term means that something hasn't been still shown and proven as good and functional but has a possibility to become good. Therefore, the distinction between good and promising should be reconsidered in linguistic manner.

Among the listed, there are several things that have been overlooked as criteria for good/promising practices:

- Sustainable approach towards the VAWG
Capacity building of the relevant officials and persons working in the field of VAWG (institutional or non-institutional) in purpose of enhancement better prevention activities and sustainable process of having skilled stuff to work in the field.

- Sustainable solutions for the Victims
Through initiating, developing and undertaking measures for economic empowerment of victims or the potential victims (groups in risks – low educated, girls coming from violent environment, or more generally - poor persons) or, through active employment measures that should really encompass number of victims (or potential victims) through which a effective and real result will be feasible and achieved.

What are the best ways to work with media?

The best ways to work with media can be also divided at two levels:

- level of prevention; and
- level of informing.

Level of prevention is referring to the work with media, journalists, editors and media owners on their gender sensitisation and sensitisation for the VAWG issue. The purpose can be multiple:

- Proper informing on the issue of violence against women and girls;
- Ensuring time in the broadcasting policy in purpose of informative programmes on gender, violence etc.

Something for sure has to be achieved: continuity in conducting preventive measures. Mechanisms should be provided in purpose proper informing on the violence against women, eliminating gender stereotypes in media, continuity in informing for the gender issues as well as the VAWG.

Laws in regards to the broadcasting policy in terms of VAWG and gender equality should be strongly implemented or supervised, and where needed amended and changed.

How can we best build capacity in communities?

Strengthening the social responsibility of the enterprises by different methods: programmes, agendas, amending law provisions etc., is one of the ways for building communities' capacity in responding on the victims' needs and helping them.

In the prevention process community leaders should be firstly sensitised on the issue in order for them to support the prevention activities.

Prevention activities can be also divided by sectors:

- Education,
- Health;
- Media;
- Judicial system; and
- Labour market.

The given example in the text on the initiative of the employers to make public their intolerance of domestic violence and abuse can be also replicated in the media area.

The second example can be used in all areas: education, health media, the judicial system on different issues in the frames of the VAWG.

Still, there should be some kind of in-formal mechanisms in purpose of building capacities of the community members such as: Coordinative bodies on VAWG, Women`s forums or other ways of sharing knowledge and information on VAWG.

The commitment of the key personnel needed in all areas is crucial in conduction preventive activities and building capacities in communities.

Development different methods for ensuring the commitment are also required, such as: awards, acknowledgement etc.

Establishing and development of funds

Educative system is the best way of building capacities. Incorporation of the gender concept in the education curricula as well as the lectures on the violence and non-violent behaviours can bring long-term results in building capacities in communities in terms of future conduction of preventive activities.

How should men be addressed? Compare the Home Office 2006 campaign with We Are Man.

As mentioned repeatedly above, men, or more precisely boys, should be firstly and systematically targeted through the educational system, by introducing the gender concept in the educative curricula.

Men should be targeted in two ways:

- By conducting informative activities and campaigns aimed towards the general population. It should be done, as it is already practiced by sending messages through influent and famous men for non-violent behaviour. It should be also done by sending messages that the VAWG is punishable and that it is a criminal act.
- By including more male representatives at the preventive activities. Men should be included as target groups as well as bearers of certain duties in the preventive activities.

3. Comments on the Greek Discussion Paper

The Greek Awareness Raising Campaign (ARC) should represent only one part of a systematic approach towards fighting the VAW.

The existence of continuity of data gathering of the prevalence and incidence of VAW is one of the crucial factors in the measurement of the results of any awareness raising campaigns.

Measurement of the awareness changes regarding any issue without permanent monitoring and gathering of relevant statistics is not possible.

There should be appropriate methodological approach that should contain relevant and scientific tools of awareness` changes measurement. One of the most important tools of measurement of the awareness changes is having data for the awareness situation before and after the conducted campaign.

Phenomenon such as VAW is in most cases is still hidden phenomenon, and therefore more sensitive approaches should be used in measurement awareness.

Having only one survey of the prevalence and incidence of the VAW from 2002-3 is making real and scientific problem in measuring changes in the phenomenon of VAW regarding the prevalence, as well as regarding the awareness changes.

The presented awareness raising campaign in the document seems to be properly planned, but still, what`s the effect of a campaign if there is not existence of an ahead conducted activities in strengthening the mechanisms for protection (work of all the relevant institutions of the formal system of protection to be effective and their capacities to be strengthened)? There are parallel planned activities, within the campaign regarding these instruments, but the mechanisms are supposed to be strengthened before starting the awareness raising campaign in order to achieve some results in declining the violence incidence.

Effective and proper mechanisms to work with media are also supposed to be deliberate before starting the campaign in order to achieve good cooperation with them. That shouldn't be assumed risk but, solved risk in advance.

The absence of data is disabling measurement of the effects from the ARC at all levels encompassed with the campaign: all target groups.

The campaign should have firstly scheduled the assessment of the situation and at the end measuring changes. Comparing the measurements of two periods of time - the calls on the SOS line in the time the spot is broadcasted and the period after that is not a proper instrument for measuring ARC`s effects.

It is supposed to be a measurement of the calls on the SOS line before starting the campaign and a period of at least 6 months after the campaign is finished. A period of

one month before the campaign is not enough in measuring phenomenon such as the violence, due to its nature of a hidden phenomenon.

4. Questions and remarks for discussion

For the following discussion we can conclude several remarks:

- The need of campaigns to awareness raising violence against women;
- The needs for research in Macedonia for incidence and prevalence regarding raising awareness about all kind of violence against women DV and HT issues;
- The need of official data base on violence against women and girls on national level;
- Ways of sustainability of the projects and follow up activities;
- The needs of the rehabilitation centre for women victims of all kind of violence;
- The need of psychological counselling centres for support of women and girls victims of violence;
- To talk more openly about mobbing which is the most common way of psychical violence in workplace;
- The needs of objective indicators for measure the results of the activities in the field of combating violence against women.

5. Transferability issues

We can use best practices from the UK and Greece in several ways, like:

- Their experiences from the public campaigns for Awareness raising activities to fight violence against women and girls;
- Good practices from conducting that kind of campaign;
- Ways of measures same indicators;
- Other positive experiences that they present in their papers.

List of acronyms

- DV- Domestic violence
- HT-Trafficking in Human being
- CSW-Center for Social Work
- UNDP-United National Development Programme
- UN-WOMEN – United Nations entity for gender equality and the empowerment of women
- IOM-International Organisation for migration
- MTSP-Ministry of Labor and Social policy