

Fact Sheet

Strengthening National Capacities to Prevent Domestic Violence



The Challenge

Domestic violence is a crime. Studies show that as many as 50% of women in the country are affected by this crime at some point in their lives. Yet, the majority suffer in silence – not realizing their legal rights or that help is available. The Government is concerned about the rate of domestic violence and lack of awareness. They are also concerned about weak coordination between the different government and non-government bodies that respond when victims do come forward. In 2008 the Government adopted the National Strategy for Protection Against Domestic Violence. It focuses on improving awareness, response and prevention. A key aim is improving cooperation between different government and non-government bodies so that anyone who comes forward can expect an appropriate range of coordinated services—from medical to legal aid—no matter in which town or to which institution they report the crime. The hope is that standardized and efficient responses, alongside better public awareness, will reduce domestic violence in the country.

How the UN helps

By 2011, the UN and its partners expect that victims of domestic violence will be able to access better support services, enabling them to make the changes they need to prevent becoming victims again. The programme targets national policy, victims support, and public awareness in five ways:

Better National Policy by:

- Providing technical advice and training to the National Coordinative Body (tasked with implementing the Protection strategy). Enabling the Body to effectively coordinate the roll out of the Strategy across all relevant ministries and NGOs, and to develop related policies.
- To assist policy makers in gaining a better understanding and to monitor the domestic violence situation, the programme will establish a system for collecting and analyzing data, and train relevant people to manage the system.

Better Victim Support through:

- The programme will help standardize the national protection system by providing training, testing models, establishing counseling services for victims, their families and perpetrators.
- Many victims are financially dependent on their abuser, so to empower victims, the programme offers training, grants and other support to enable them to get a job or start their own business.

Better Public Understanding:

- Through awareness campaigns targeting vulnerable groups, young people, children, and university students, the programme seeks to change attitudes towards domestic violence.

Programme at a glance

Duration: December 2008 - August 2012

UN Agencies:

UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, WHO, UNIFEM

Partners:

Ministry of Labor and Social Politics,
Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Justice,
Ministry of Health,
Ministry of Education and Science

Funding (US\$):

2,458,000 Netherlands

958,000 UN Trust Fund in Support of Actions
to Eliminate Violence against Women

43,000 UN Agencies

70,000 Government in-kind

¹ latest domestic violence survey carried out in 2006 by the Association for Emancipation, Solidarity and Equality of Women (ESE)



The impact so far...

Better Public Understanding

- Two national scale public awareness campaigns have been launched. At the first one, 'A Real Man Never Hits a Woman' was the theme of a national campaign featuring famous sports stars, which reached 89% of television viewers across the country in 2009. The six-month campaign included flyers, posters, public appearances, TV and radio spots, print ads. During and shortly after the campaign, calls to the national domestic violence helpline doubled. The second campaign is focused on women's empowerment and involves 16 recognized women- role models in different fields of social life.
- Meanwhile, in 34 municipalities across the country, civil society organizations are using grants provided by the programme to raise awareness and change community behavior through campaigns.
- In 1/3 of all municipalities in the country for the first time ever an institutional coordination mechanism is established in a form of local coordinative bodies. These bodies involve all affected stakeholders by the Domestic violence at municipal level.
- A study into the perceptions of seventh-grade students revealed that all forms of violent behavior are observed in schools. Children point to ignorance, prejudice and stereotypes related to gender, ethnicity, disabilities, culture, appearance, religion, as the reasons for violence. The findings have been used to design a campaign for schools.

Better Victim Support

- The first ever institutional support mechanism for economic empowerment of victims was developed and it is already effective! In its first year, the mechanism has supported 22 victims of domestic violence. They have successfully completed the 'From Ideas to Business' course and are now working with mentors to realize their business plans in fields ranging from hairdressing, tailoring and car washing.
- A guide for NGOs and the Bar Association on the provision of legal aid to victims of domestic violence is now available in English, Albanian and Macedonian.
- Almost all (25 out of 30) Centers for social work employees and judges gained knowledge about how to protect the best interests of children in cases of divorce and separation, particularly when it is related to domestic violence. While 25 civil judges, criminal judges, and public prosecutors increased knowledge about legislative framework on domestic violence.
- 17 NGOs with nationwide distribution, and 35 members of the Bar Association have been provided with training on the specificities of provision of legal aid to victims of domestic violence
- 7 NGOs have been financially supported in their efforts to enhance the outreach of free legal aid services to victims of domestic violence and increase the awareness of local communities on the provision of free legal aid.

Better National Policy:

- The National Coordinative Body website was launched. The site is aimed at promoting understanding and awareness of the Body's role and to provide information about the situation and response with regard to domestic violence in the country.
- National Coordinative Body members have improved their ability to use monitoring and evaluation techniques. With this they have the necessary tools to provide substantive input to gender based approaches in policy analysis and design.

"Violence is when the stronger humiliates and abuses the weaker"
– 7th grade student.

"I decided long time ago that I have to change something in my life. I hope that with the business I'm doing, in a few years I will be able to continue my life the way I want to live it"
– Victim