

Professionals against Domestic Violence

Good Practice Brochure

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PACT

Promoting Awareness for Cooperation and Training in the Field of Domestic Violence



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword.....	4
Introduction	5
The Integrated Domestic Violence Programme in Malmoe, Sweden.....	8
BIG e. V. - Berliner Interventionszentrale bei häuslicher Gewalt, Berlin, Germany.....	12
Rede Municipal de Intervenção na Violência Doméstica (RMIVD), Loures, Portugal	19
Kaunas District Women Crisis Centre, Kaunas, Lithuania	23
The Municipal Interdisciplinary Team for Solving Domestic Violence Problems, Sopot, Poland.....	26
“Amica Donna” – From a grass root to a national organisation, Montepulciano, Italy	30
Austrian Anti-Violence Legislation – Network of legal and social institutions for women survivors of domestic violence, established by Austrian Legislation	34
Dignity for Domestic Violence Survivors (ESF 3.43) ESF project in Malta.....	39

Foreword

“Across the world - in rich and poor countries alike - women are being beaten, trafficked, raped and killed. These human rights abuses not only inflict great harm and suffering on individuals - they tear at the fabric of entire societies.” (UN Handbook for Legislation on Violence against Women, Department of Economic and Social Affairs Division for the Advancement of Women, 2010)..

Violence against women crosses all socio-economic levels, age, groups, races, religions and countries. Numerous studies have been published that document the prevalence of domestic violence and its serious effects on women and children. Often the violence itself and the problems in which it results (homelessness, shortage of money etc.) are not the only difficulties with which the victim has to cope. In order to obtain an adequate level of help, women who have been subjected to violence most commonly need to come into contact with several different agencies. They need high-quality medical treatment and care in connection with their injuries. Violent behaviour is illegal and should be reported to the police. The police and prosecutors investigate whether crimes have been committed and whether they can be proven and thus lead to the conviction of the perpetrator. In order for a woman to be able to move on with her life she needs psychosocial support. Children need help to work through their experiences, and the perpetrator needs to change his behaviour. If there is a failure in any one of these areas there is an obvious risk for negative consequences for the woman. It also becomes more difficult for the agencies involved to fulfil their various functions.

The project PACT, Promoting Awareness for Cooperation and Training in the Field of Domestic Violence, intends to increase the level of awareness and knowledge among all relevant vocational groups intervening in the field of domestic violence as well as among professionals in education and vocational training as multipliers.

The project run from January 2010 to December 2011 and is based on the contributions of the seven project partners. When talking to professionals in the seven partner countries (Austria, Germany, Italy, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Portugal) during the two-year project there were two main topics identified as essential with regard to successful prevention and intervention in the field of domestic violence, namely raising awareness and networking.

This booklet contains a selection of nine examples of good practice collected during the project PACT. The main criterion used for selection of practices was the capacity to support professionals to effectively tackle one or several of the issues highlighted in that area. In addition the practice had to be existing and operation and should be easily transferable.

Introduction

“One central criterion which characterises a network is the nature of its relationships, which in turn depends on the resources that are exchanged as a matter of priority. Differentiation can also be made between:

- Exchange network
- Support network
- Interest representation/advocacy network
- Result-oriented network
- Process-oriented networks

Networks assume different organisational forms that are functional according to their context. Different forms of networking, ranging from loose associations to club-type associations thus emerge. (...) For instance, factors like the frequency of meeting, the degree of formalisation, decision structures (joint sessions, moderation etc.), the numbers and heterogeneity of members involved, openness or exclusiveness of access, geographical range (e.g. working at communal or international level), which can be presented differently depending on the network and context all serve as elements for classification.” (More details The Art of Networking, p.15)

Networks are useful:

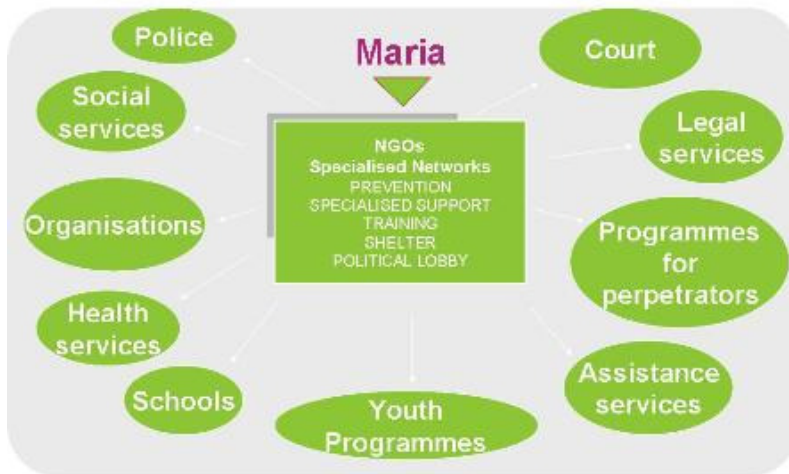
- if their actors have a common aim which can be reached better through the networking activities;
- to bundle resources;
- to exchange information and experience;
- to commonly represent the field of interest;
- to have a general concept for ensuring the effectiveness of intervention;
- to strengthen the acting persons;
- etc.

On the other hand, networks are not successful:

- if they cover a topic spectrum which is too broad;
- if they are too bureaucratic;
- if they are exploited by some at the expense of others;
- if single members are too dominant;
- if there is internal rivalry;
- if they are not open for new developments;
- if participants do not believe in the necessity of the project;
- etc.

In the field of domestic violence, experiences have shown that networking among relevant institutions from the field is an appropriate way to improve the situation of women/children and to make

Network of various facilities and institutions



work more efficient. Exchanging knowledge and experience, being well informed what the others are working, having direct streams to other organisations are the greatest advantages of these cooperation networks.

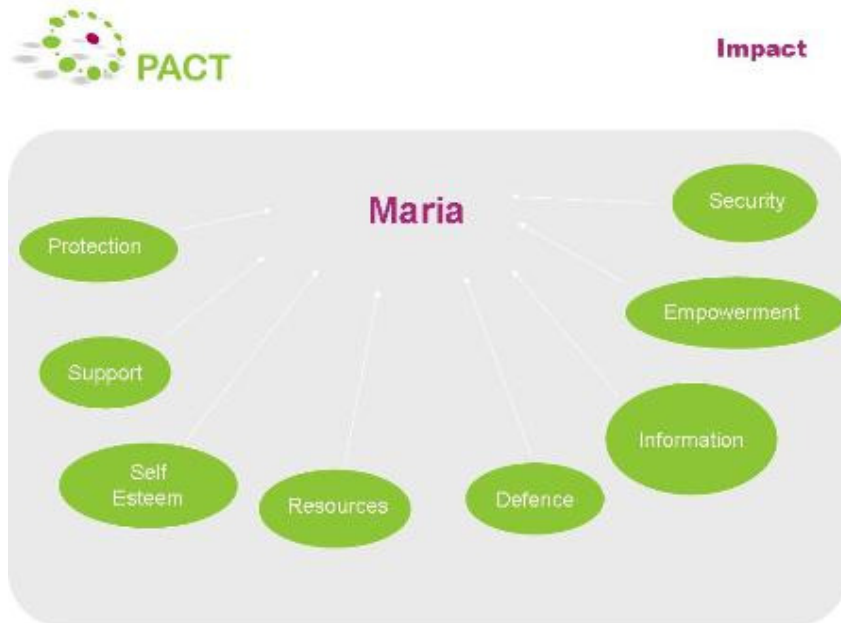
To put it more concretely: Which agencies should be involved to support Maria who was assaulted by her intimate partner and who decides to leave her

perpetrator with her two children? Assisting Maria necessitates an inter-disciplinary approach calling for co-operation with the staff of a wide variety of facilities and institutions. The efficient collaboration of all the bodies involved is essential in ensuring that Maria and her two children can be given a maximum of protection and security.

Maria needs medical treatment and care in connection with her injuries. She should be encouraged to report to the police, so that the police and prosecutor investigate whether the abuse can be proven and thus lead to the conviction of the perpetrator. In order for Maria to be able to move on with her life she needs psychosocial support. Her children need help to work through their experiences, and the perpetrator needs to change his behaviour.

If there is a failure in any one of these areas there is an obvious risk for negative consequences for the woman. It also becomes more difficult for the agencies involved to fulfil their various functions.

Different countries act on different levels referring to the topic of domestic violence. Models from other European countries give orientation and help to compare the current situation in the respective countries. For countries which are more or less starting dealing with the topic, intervention models can be a sort of guidelines. Several examples are available e.g. in the Internet that show effective collaboration in a multi-actor partnership, some are given also in the context of the PACT training course. Yet there are regions and countries where multi-actor partnerships and networks have not been established.



The seven PACT project partners collected good practice examples aiming to highlight different approaches to efficiently collaborate in a multi-disciplinary network. The main criterion used for the selection of chosen practices was on the one hand their descriptiveness and practicability and on the other hand their transferability. In addition the practice had to be existing and operational and should be easily transferable

The good practice examples highlight the following aspects:

- involved actors
- type of network
- background information
- main aims
- activities
- success and outcomes
- strategy / approach

These practices underpin importance and value of working in partnership to achieve sustainable outcomes for the victims. Yet the prevalence of domestic violence requires further efforts in terms of efficient prevention, intervention and support. The PACT team hopes that the chosen examples may serve as guideline to initiate new collaborations and to consolidate existing ones.

The Integrated Domestic Violence Programme in Malmoe, Sweden

The Integrated Domestic Violence Programme (IDVP) in Malmoe, established in 1999, is run primarily by the local authority, the police authority and the healthcare sector. It is coordinated by a coordinating and steering group and has a full-time coordinator. The IDVP constitutes an attempt to prevent the occurrence of violence against women and children in the context of intimate relationships. One of the most important objectives is that of making the violence that occurs in intimate relationships visible and providing the support women need in order to feel safe in reporting this violence. The collaboration of all involved agencies is based on common values and knowledge in relation to the topic. The work with domestic violence of each involved partner is clearly described in a handbook.

Actors in the network

- Malmoe City Council
- Malmoe Police District
- Malmoe University General Hospital
- Prison and Probation Service
- Prosecution Service
- Malmoe Women's Shelter and
- other voluntary organisations.

Type of network

Formalised network with its own steering group comprised of management representatives from the social services, the police, the healthcare sector and the prison and probation service, and a co-ordinating group comprised of representatives from the agencies affected. In addition, a full-time co-ordinator has been assigned responsibility for further developing the work of the programme.

Background information

The programme was established in 1999 and is a large-scale collaborative project run primarily by the local authority, the police authority and the healthcare sector. These three actors have played a central role in designing the programme and its content. The Integrated Domestic Violence Programme has been designed on the basis of a concrete picture of what a woman needs when she has been subjected to assault. Women who have been the victims of assault need treatment for their injuries (from the healthcare sector), they need to report the assault (to the police) and they

need support in the form of counselling (provided by the local authority) to enable them to break off the abusive relationship.

Aim / mission

- to make violence against women and children visible
- to prevent violence against women and children
- to work to promote equality between men and women

Description of activities

- developing a special programme for providing medical treatment in connection with sexual and physical assaults (University General Hospital);
- developing a programme designed to influence the behaviour of men convicted of domestic violence (prison);
- creating special domestic violence division (police) and introduction of special domestic violence prosecutors encouraging more women to report violence to the police and increase the likelihood of convicting the perpetrators;
- publishing a handbook by the agencies involved in the programme in which each agency describes its work with domestic violence;
- establishing an organisation which includes a steering group, a co-ordinating group and a full time co-ordinator.

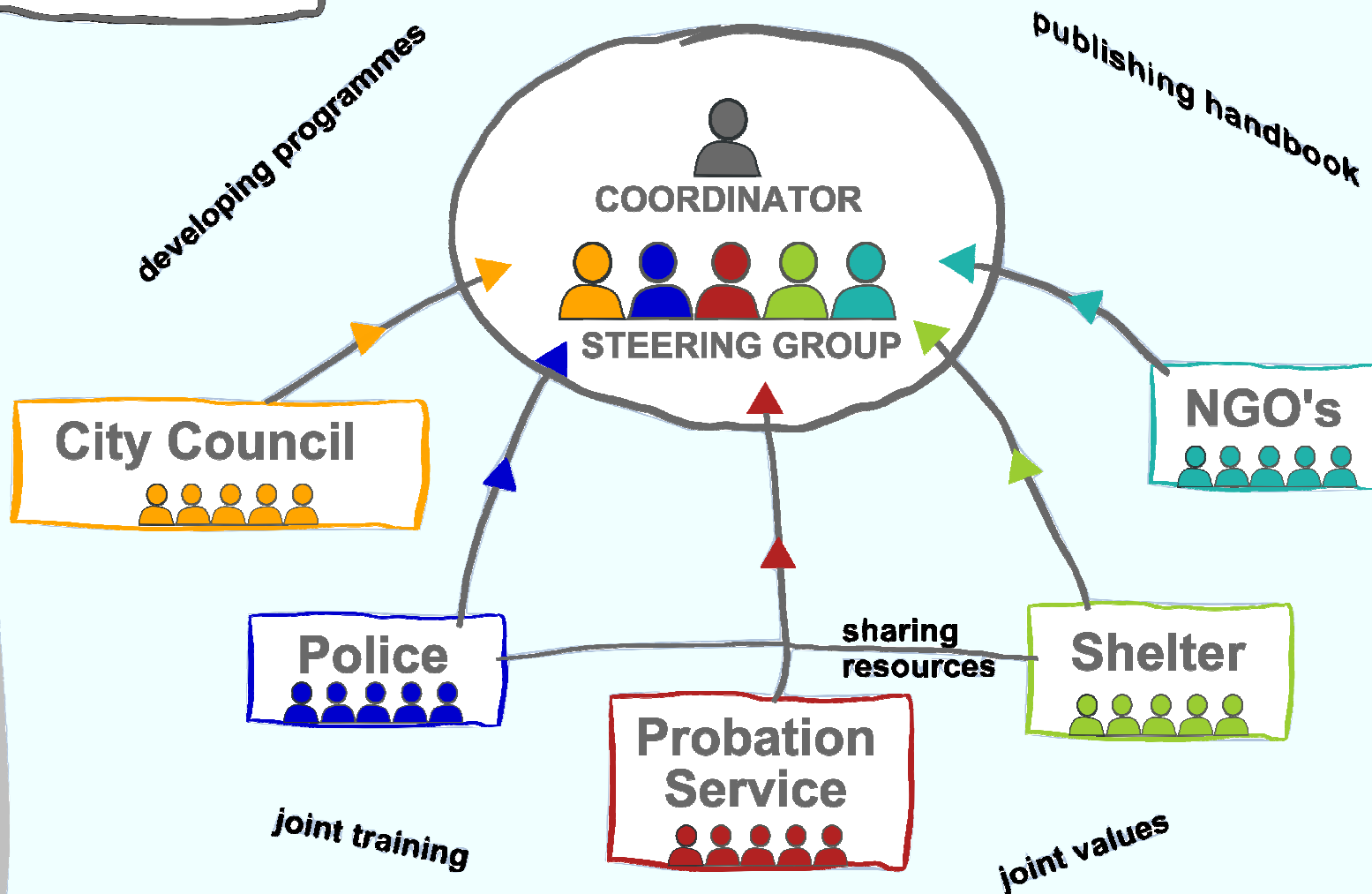
Success / outcomes

The project has achieved one of its most important goals, i.e. that of “making the violence committed in intimate relationships more visible and providing women with the support they need to feel safe in reporting this violence”. The number of cases of women reporting having been assaulted by a male acquaintance has increased by 50 percent. The proportion of such reports that result in a prosecution has increased by almost 100 percent since the start of the project.

Strategy / approach / principles / culture of collaboration

- strong collaborative work: jointly producing data and developing proposals for where to direct activities and the measures to be introduced; all involved partners have participated in the implementation of the programme and participate in the ongoing work;
- common values: training programmes have been conducted jointly to develop a common base of values and knowledge both in relation to the subject itself and one another's tasks and working methods;
- sharing resources: jointly creating and using resources, e.g. the crisis centre for children and youth provides interview and examination rooms to police and forensic medical services on the premises of the local authority.
- common agreements: staff agree in consultation as to what the respective professional groups will do and when it will be done.

Malmö, Sweden



BIG e. V. - Berliner Interventionszentrale bei häuslicher Gewalt, Berlin, Germany

BIG (Domestic Violence Intervention Centre Berlin), Germany is a Berlin-based non-profit organisation whose mission is to reduce domestic violence. BIG was founded in 1995 by women and men working in projects against domestic violence in Berlin. It ran as a national model project until 2001 and throughout this period was supported by the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth as well as by the Berlin Department of Labour, Women and Social Affairs.

As a result of the cooperation of more than 150 experts BIG has developed new and effective measures and strategies against domestic violence. This had a great impact on German federal policies: The First and the Second Action Plan to Combat Violence against Women – formulated by the German Federal Government – integrating 133 Federal Government measures to counteract all forms of violence against women including domestic violence, is based on the knowledge and experience gained by BIG.

Actors in the network

- police
- civil and criminal justice systems
- youth welfare
- aliens office
- representatives of the women's projects and children's protection organisations

Type of network

Formalised network with its own steering group comprised of management representatives from the social services, the police, the healthcare sector and the prison and probation service, and a co-ordinating group comprised of representatives from the agencies affected. In addition, a full-time co-ordinator has been assigned responsibility for further developing the work of the programme.

Background information

Since 1995 BIG has brought together all different professions concerned with domestic violence as well as political decision-makers. As a result of the cooperation of more than 150 experts BIG has developed new and effective measures and strategies against domestic violence. This had a great impact on German federal policies: The First and the Second Action Plan to Combat Violence against Women – formulated by the German Federal Government – integrating 133 Federal Gov-

ernment measures to counteract all forms of violence against women including domestic violence, is based on the knowledge and experience gained by BIG.

Aim / mission

- to establish cooperation and networking between all institutions and organisations whose work involves dealing with domestic violence;
- to improve the legal framework conditions;
- to provide more effective assistance plans for the women and children concerned;
- to ensure appropriate criminal prosecution and sanctioning of the perpetrators;
- to provide in-depth information/knowledge about the extent and consequences of domestic violence;
- to raise awareness by providing information for the public;
- to raise awareness among the victims and among the institutions involved;
- to create and implement prevention.

Description of activities

- making experts on domestic violence (women and men on the staff of women's projects as well as from the domains of policing, justice administration, migration, youth welfare, social affairs and health) conduct a dialogue, to improve their co-operation;
- planning and deciding on specific action against domestic violence, together with all the parties involved;
- offering support for the victims of domestic violence, e.g. via the BIG Hotline, and to see whether the assistance and support for victims is functioning as well as possible;
- recording gaps and deficiencies in practice and to see to it that they are eliminated;
- accepting complaints, to bring about improvements in the assistance given to women who are affected by domestic violence and their children - also in specific individual cases;
- offering mediation between the parties involved if complaints or conflicts take place;
- providing training for different groups of professionals and extensive prevention at elementary schools.

Success / outcomes

- Guiding principles for policing in DV-cases.
- Proposal for a new law for the protection from violence and for police laws
- Model applications for protection orders.
- Directive for the improvement of the legal situation of migrant women.

- In 2002 a new law was enacted, specifically designed for women being subordinated to domestic violence and/or stalking.
- BIG Hotline and Mobile Intervention: In 1999, the first German hotline against domestic violence was set up in Berlin. The BIG hotline still provides daily services to all persons affected by and institutions dealing with domestic violence. If advice by telephone is not sufficient, a co-operator can also give advice on the spot.

Strategy / approach / principles / culture of collaboration

- Interdisciplinary approach: all involved partners discovered both the opportunities and limits of the other professions and exchanged know-how across different sectors and departments. Establishing and making use of these cooperation structures has led to effective working results.

Source and further information: www.big-interventionszentrale.de (available in DE and partially in EN).

Good practice example provided by BUPNET, Germany

Rede de Apoio a Mulheres em Situação de Violência (RAMSV), Montijo, Portugal

The Support Network to Women in Violence Situation (RAMSV) in Montijo, Portugal, started in 2001 and was established formally through a formalised collaboration protocol in 2005. The main aim of the network is to provide an effective response to survivors of domestic violence and prevent the relapse of the perpetrator/violence. To achieve this aim the network meets regularly, but also communicate between the meetings with each other, whenever it is necessary. The role of all partners is clearly described. The network members collaborate in the field of risk assessment, safety planning, and accompaniment of the women and implement respective actions.

Actors in the network

- Municipality of Montijo
- Women Information Space
- Housing Department
- Urban Rehabilitation
- Social Security Institute
- Employment Centre of Montijo
- ARS LVT/Sub-região de Saúde de Setúbal (Health Centre of Montijo)
- Hospital Centre Barreiro-Montijo
- Public Security Police
- National Guard
- Directorate General of Social reintegration
- Commission for the Protection of Children and Youth of Montijo (CPCJ Montijo)
- CERCIMA
- Community Centre Mais Cidadão (Esteval neighbourhood) - UMNSC
- Shelter - UMNSC

Type of network

The evaluation of Training Actions on Domestic Violence held in March 2001 directed to professionals of local entities, who deal direct or indirectly in this field, resulted in an integrated response by the participant entities, named – Support Network to Women in Violence Situation (RAMSV). The network was formalised through a collaboration protocol signed on March 8th, 2005.

Background information

Initially the Network was founded by the Municipality of Montijo by Women Information Space and Housing Department, the CPCJ Montijo, Employment Centre of Montijo, PISCA do Esteval (Intervention Project in a Social Neighbourhood), Social Reintegration Institute (Team of Montijo), ECAE and Adult Education (Montijo and Alcochete), the Health Centre and CERCIMA.

Months later, the Network was extended to the Public Security Police, National Guard of Afonsoeiro and Barreiro Hospital. In March 2002 it was once again extended to the Shelter for Women and Children Victims of Violence (equipment built by the Municipality) to the Montijo Hospital.

Aim / mission

The main aim of the network is to provide an effective response to survivors of domestic violence and prevent the relapse of the perpetrator/violence.

Description of activities

- organising periodical meetings of the network for partnership maintenance, procedures evaluation, experience sharing and training actions;
- providing information and training actions directed to the local community on topics such as gender equality, domestic violence, multiple discrimination, among others;
- working along the principles commonly established in the protocol, i.e. that different entities have specific roles according to their competencies: different partners give support in their field of action and within the limits of their skills.
- The network allows an effective collaboration and communication among partners avoiding that the victim has to go to every service, enhancing thus the available answers.

Success / outcomes:

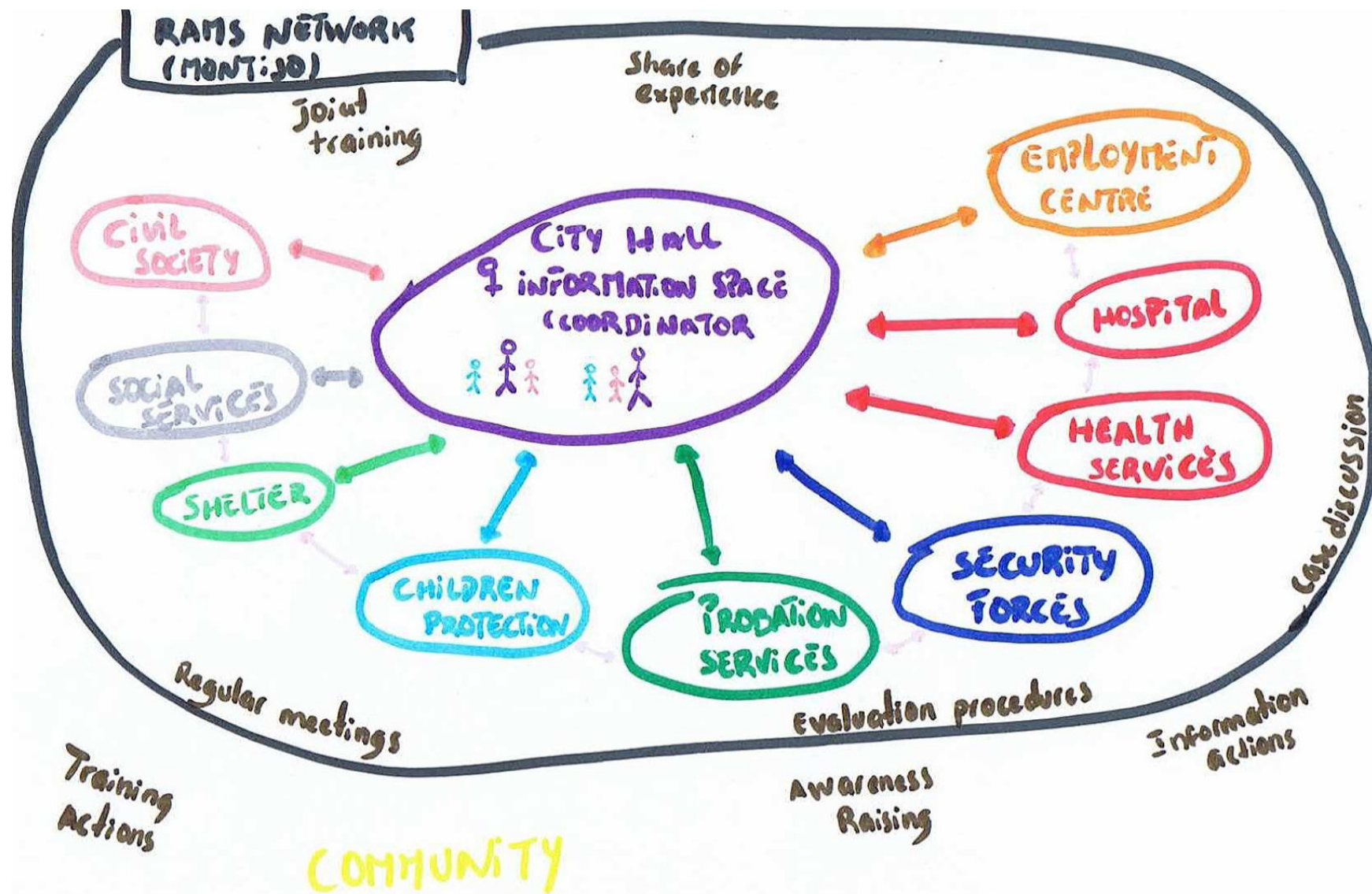
The constitution of the network allowed to raise institutional and technical awareness about the issue through the partnership interaction, sharing and training activities promoted in the context of the network activities. As a consequence, the skills level of the professionals involved has increased and the communication among the partners has improved. This has resulted in an effective forwarding of domestic violence cases.

The network has given effective support to women who have been looking for juridical, psychological, social support and, in the most extreme cases, for shelter. Till June 2011, 816 women have been accompanied by the Women Information Space of the Municipality of Montijo. From 2008 to 2010 there was an increase of 56% of requests from women asking for support services and accompaniment.

Strategy / approach / principles / culture of collaboration

Besides the communication among partners, as referred previously, the strategy of the network is based on risk assessment, accompaniment of the survivors, designing a safety strategy and implementing respective actions. The network intends to make available the required resources in order to provide survivors and victims of domestic violence with integrated support services in the social and juridical areas, all by promoting women's autonomy and empowerment. The network also provides the maximum protection of the victims and their children.

Good practice example provided by AMCV, Portugal.



Rede Municipal de Intervenção na Violência Doméstica (RMIVD), Loures, Portugal

The Municipal Network on Domestic Violence Intervention (RMIVD) in Loures, Portugal, was established formally in October 2011, but it was running informally since 2010. The network is coordinated by the Municipality of Loures – namely by the “Espaço Vida – Centro de Atendimento a Vítimas de Violência Doméstica do Concelho de Loures” (Life Space). This specialised and multidisciplinary network seeks to prevent domestic violence, provides counselling and protection to survivors, psychosocial accompaniment of perpetrators and familiar mediation. The network intends to optimise the resources and promotes an integrated response to the domestic violence issue. The collaboration of all involved agencies is based on common values and knowledge in relation to the topic, as well as on the need of an effective and timely response to domestic violence situations, combined with preventive initiatives and immediate intervention.

Actors in the Network

- Municipality of Loures
- Public Prosecutor
- Public Security Police
- National Guard
- Health Centres Group of Loures and Sacavém
- Commission for the Protection of Children and Youth of Loures

Type of Network

Formalised network, where partners' organisations signed a collaboration protocol. The network has its own steering group composed by representatives of the social services, police and guard, healthcare sector, childcare protection commission and legal area. The direct communication among the entities is one of the characteristics of the network ensuring an effective response to the situation. Since it is quite a new partnership, the concrete work programme is still to be established by all members, and the coordinator will be responsible for its implementation. It is foreseen to have a meeting every three months in order to speak about specific cases to establish an action plan and to discuss the intervention process.

Background Information

The network was formally established in October 2011, but started the cooperation in May 2010 with the perspective of becoming a formalised structure. The organisations involved had previously worked closely together with the Municipality. The setting up of the network is a result of the identified needs by the Municipality and Life Space that the response in this field not always worked smoothly and there was also a need for a closed intervention. The design of the network is based on the women's needs when facing a domestic violence situation, namely: counselling (municipal-

ity), healthcare (healthcare sector), report the situation and request for safety measures (police/guard), legal information, requests, juridical processes (prosecutor) child protection (CPCJs). All actors involved are aware of their role in the network.

Aim / mission

This specialised and multidisciplinary network intends to prevent domestic violence, to provide counselling and protection to survivors, psychosocial accompaniment of perpetrators and familiar mediation.

Other objectives include:

- to define and implement prevention strategies of D.V. in the region of Loures;
- to enhance the partner organisations' intervention, promoting a concerted and specialised social intervention in the field of domestic violence;
- to contribute to reduce the number of victims of D.V. in the region of Loures;
- to collect, treat and disseminate information about D.V.;
- to assure the qualification, permanent training and supervision of professionals who participate in RMIVD;

Description of activities

- implementing prevention actions;
- creating, implementing and monitoring the municipal plan for Domestic Violence Prevention in a participatory and integrated manner;
- preventing relapse by reducing, changing or eliminating violent behaviours;
- providing counselling services;
- intervening at counselling level, either in the response planning or in the accompaniment, promoting communication among different partners in the specific response seeking, addressing the qualification of the counselling and decreasing secondary victimisation;
- offering training;
- preparing training and awareness plans directed to professionals that take part of RMIV according to their needs;
- carrying out evaluation;
- defining and applying evaluation methodologies and tools regarding the work accomplished in the RMIVD.

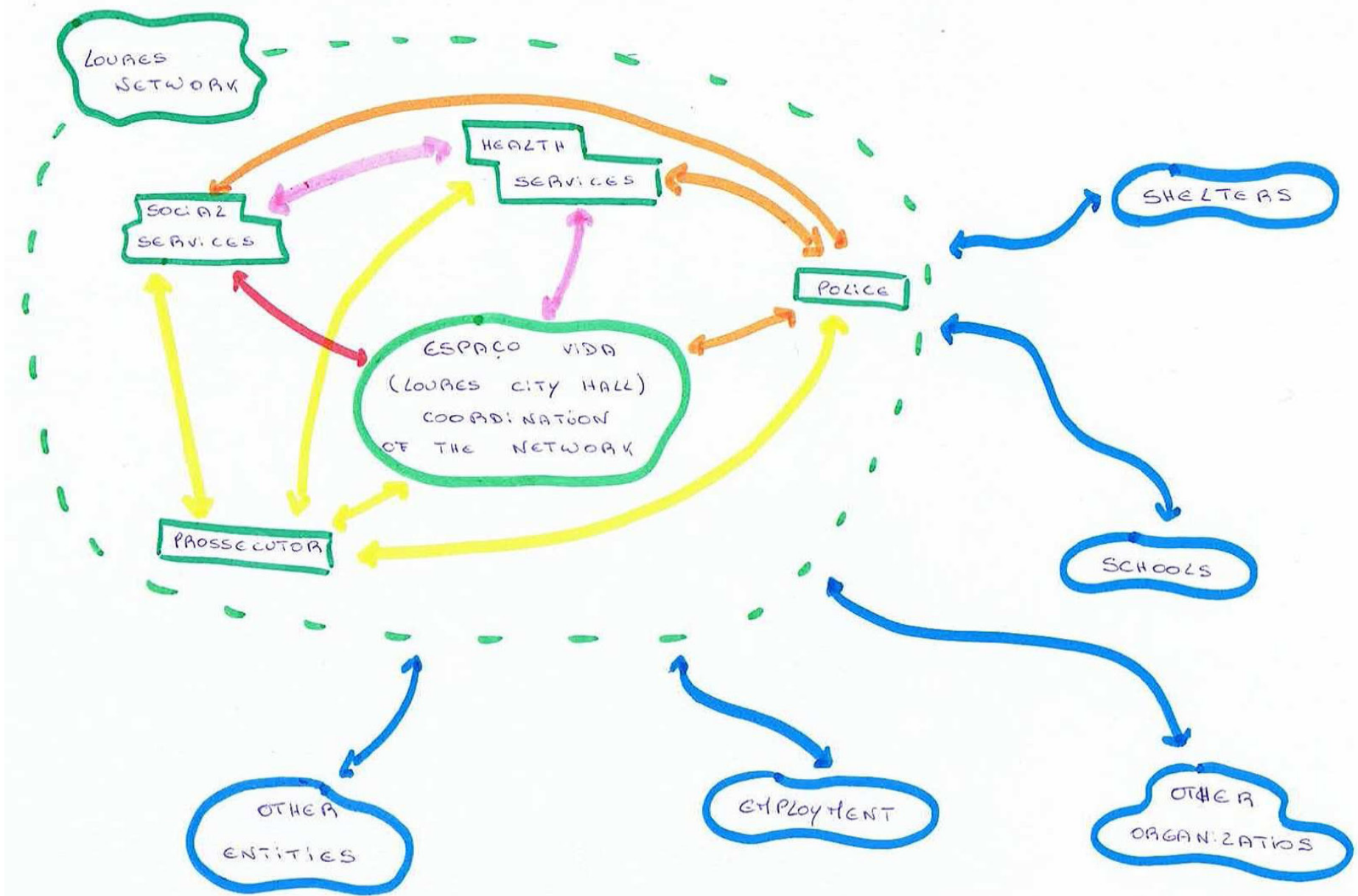
Success / outcomes

The project has accomplished one of the proposed goals, namely the formalisation of the partnership through the signature of a Cooperation Protocol. Since it is a new network, the success is based at this moment on the recognition of its importance and its usefulness. All partner organisations are willing to offer integrated and effective answers to cases of domestic violence. Since the beginning of the Life Space (May 2010), the network has already accompanied 206 cases of D.V. and receive on average 14 new cases per week. At external level: survivors report the fact of having someone to trust and not being isolated.

Strategy / approach / principles / culture of collaboration

- Strong collaborative work: network members cooperate, in accordance with their specific area of expertise, to elaborate and implement the Action Plan of RMIVD; to elaborate dissemination products in the field of domestic violence and to promote awareness raising campaigns.
- Common values: a training programme was implemented to develop a common language, knowledge and understanding as well as to build a common basis of values regarding domestic violence and the area of competence of each member.
- Common agreements: participate in RMIVD meetings; ensure privileged communication channels for a quick and effective intervention in given situations.

Good practice example provided by AMCV, Portugal.



Kaunas District Women Crisis Centre, Kaunas, Lithuania

Kaunas District Women Crisis Centre (KDWCC) started its activities as a non-governmental organisation in 1999 on the initiative of local women who wanted to improve the situation of women, to promote equal opportunities, and to reduce the problem of violence within the family and society. In the same year, Kaunas District Women Crisis Centre started to initiate and coordinate a number of national and international projects, thus developing a network of different organisations whose activities are linked to domestic violence, its prevention or support to the victims. The main mission of the established network is to supply social services for women and their family members who are in critical situation, protect their rights and influence society approach to violence.

Actors in the network

Cooperation among all bodies aims at attaining the goals specified above. In some cases the co-operation agreements are signed in order to implement a certain project.

Under cooperation agreements (in total 12 organisations):

- Children Rights Protection Services in Kaunas City and Kaunas District
- Kaunas County Police Headquarters
- Centres of Social Services in Kaunas City and Kaunas District
- Lodging House
- Centres for addictive disorders
- Other bodies

Under verbal agreements:

- Christian Charitable Foundation "Tevo namai" (Father's home)
- Kaunas Grace Homes
- Kaunas House of Generations
- other related NGOs

Aim / mission

- to provide assistance to individuals in emergency situations, as well as to victims of violence of any kind,
- to carry out educational and preventive actions on violence against women, children and men;
- to organise discussions, conferences, training courses, workshops, lectures;
- to establish and maintain a network with other NGOs and to participate in their programmes;
- to cooperate with state authorities;
- to publish materials on, family communication, domestic violence against women, and other issues relevant within society.

Success / outcomes:

- KDWCC became well known in certain sectors of society through the partners in the network.
- The number of clients asking for support from KDWCC increased significantly thanks to the well-spread information on the centre and its services via network.
- Common work helps to find better and more efficient solutions to arising problems.
- Networking with partners helps to implement the projects in a better quality thus achieving better results to prevent domestic violence.

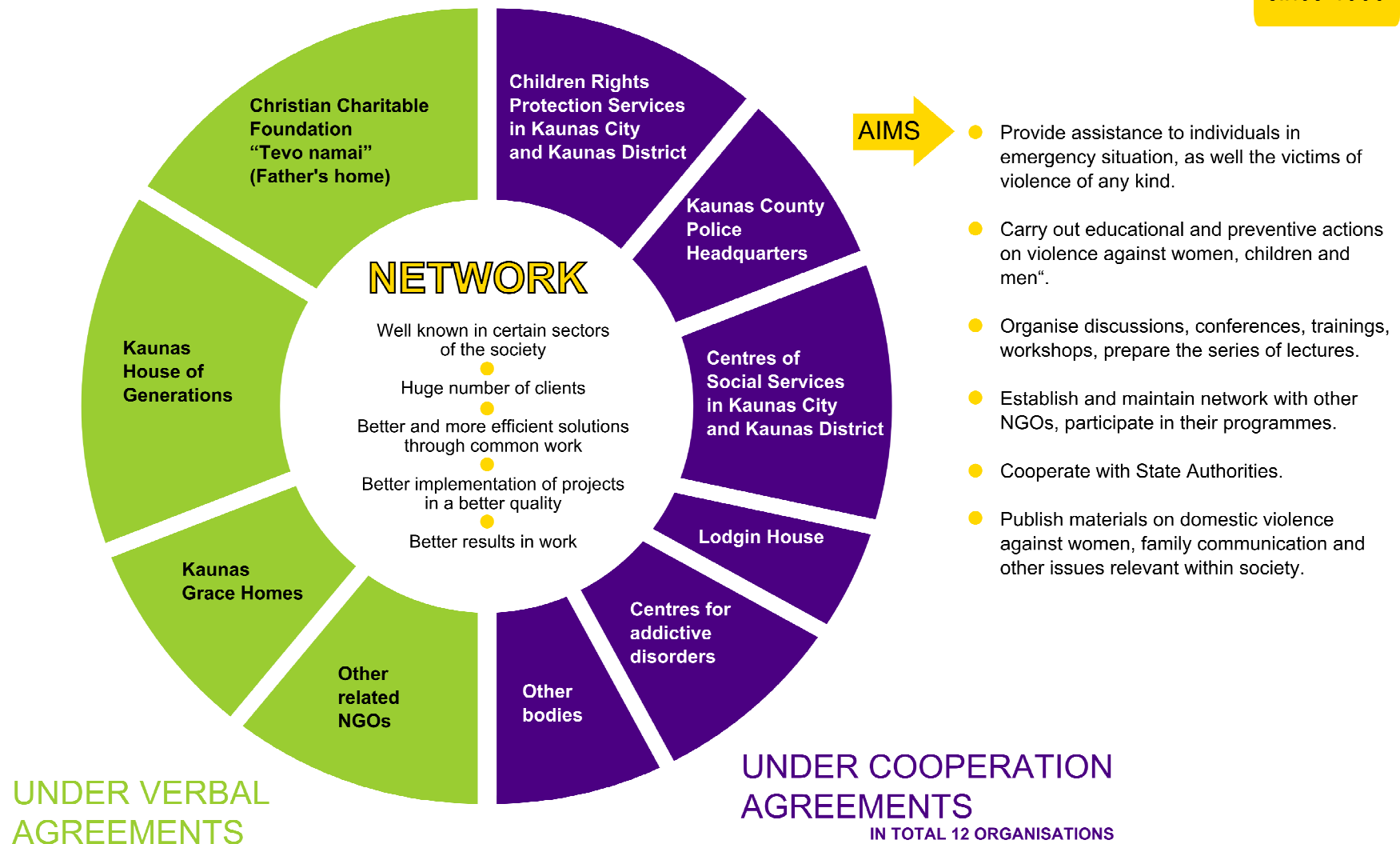
Strategy / approach / principles / culture of collaboration

- Clear roles and areas of intervention: the Centre makes sure that the victims of domestic violence are addressed directly to the entity which can provide the service which is mostly needed in a given situation, e.g. if a woman who experienced domestic violence contacts the KDWCC the specialists of the centre inform her on her rights and support her to report to the police. Moreover, the Centre urges her to go to the Children Rights Protection Service if the situation of violence faced by the woman can have negative influence on her children.
- Organisation of round table discussions: At least twice a year (or rather every three months), KDWCC organises round-table discussions with their partners to talk about problems and difficulties encountered in the common work in order to identify strong and weak points. These are analysed to detect areas of improvement to plan possible changes that would prove to be more effective and to establish future cooperation guidelines. According to the provision stated in the cooperation agreement, partners tend to invite each other to the seminars, workshops and/or other events.
- Extending the network: In 2006 KDWCC joined National Coalition against Domestic Violence “Ne – šeimiam smurtui!” (NO to Domestic Violence!) together with other five Lithuanian NGOs working in the field of prevention of domestic violence. The Coalition members meet once a year to discuss their activities, the further cooperation with the Ministry of Social Security and Labour and other related bodies.

Good practice example provided by SIF, Lithuania

Kaunas District Women Crisis Center (KDWCC)

since 1999



The Municipal Interdisciplinary Team for Solving Domestic Violence Problems, Sopot, Poland

The National Programme of Counteracting Domestic Violence in Poland is meant to coordinate efforts and ensure an interdisciplinary approach to combating domestic violence. The Programme is implemented at different levels by the local government. Each of almost 2500 municipalities¹ is obliged to create “The Municipal Interdisciplinary Team for Solving Domestic Violence Problems” as introduced in Polish law on the 10th of June 2010. These are teams of people seconded from professional backgrounds to the coordination, standardisation, analysis and solving local problems of domestic violence. Aim of each team is to diagnose the problem of domestic violence in their region, then either to take preventive actions in community or to make interventions in families affected by pathology. These teams develop and implement individual assistance plans, initiate actions against those using violence, and then monitor the situation in families. Members of these teams must document the actions taken and their effects. The board usually establish “working groups” working directly in the community to solve problems related to individual cases of domestic violence. The collaboration of all involved actors is based on common values and various experiences. Members of these teams are representatives of different entities involved in combating violence, i.e. local government, social welfare centres, police, court but also different organisations. Nowadays about seventy percent of cases of domestic violence in Poland are by an interdisciplinary teams.

Actors in the network

The composition of interdisciplinary teams has been specified in Polish legal regulations. Each team is a network of professionals representing:

- social welfare centres,
- the municipal committee of solving alcohol problems,
- the Police,
- education organisations,
- health organisations,
- NGOs,
- as well as superintendents and probation officers.

¹ Since 1999 Polish State is divided to 2478 municipalities, 379 counties and 16 provinces.

Type of network

Interdisciplinary teams are appointed by the district or city mayor. This multifaceted approach is based on the close interdisciplinary cooperation of local institutions, entities involved in combating domestic violence and services working in the field.

Background information

Creation of interdisciplinary teams is part of the national system of counteracting the domestic violence which consists also in:

- developing and implementing the municipal programme to prevent domestic violence and protecting victims of domestic violence;
- providing counselling and intervention for the prevention of domestic violence, in particular through educational activities designed to strengthen care and educational competences of parents in families being at risk of domestic violence;
- ensuring that people affected by domestic violence get necessary support in the centres providing the support for victims.

Aim / mission:

“To intervene, to prevent violence against women and children, to help efficiently, quickly and professionally in case of child and family abuse situation.”

Description of activities:

- implementing activities identified in the municipal programme against domestic violence and protection of victims of domestic violence;
- integrating and coordinating the activities of entities included in the team, in particular:
 - making a diagnosis of the problem of domestic violence;
 - taking actions in the field to combat phenomenon of the violence;
 - taking intervention in the environment affected by domestic violence;
 - disseminating information on institutions, people and opportunities for getting support in the local environment;
 - initiating action against those using violence in the family.

Success / outcomes:

The strength of the interdisciplinary team is its scope of action. It covers the entire environment of the victim: home, school or institutions already giving support. Interdisciplinary team is not a random group of people. Normally, members of the working group are professionals being the closest to the family in the system, i.e. social worker, representative of health care and police officer from

the particular family's district as well as the representative of the school which the children attend. In this way the support is real and brings tangible benefits. Working with members of the families in which violence occurs has the greatest chance of success when it is carried out by an interdisciplinary team and when the cooperation relies primarily on the exchange of information adequate to a given situation, without artificially dividing responsibilities of team members. Thus it can be avoided that the victim suffers from conflicting or duplicative activities of the different specialists. Work of interdisciplinary teams benefits both team members and families assisted. The possibility of bringing a common diagnosis of the problem in the family and developing joint support strategies as well as the possibility of taking planned, coordinated, not overlapping and not mutually exclusive actions are only few of the positive outcomes of common work of different professionals in interdisciplinary teams. As a consequence they give faster, fuller and more adequate support to victims. Such system of prevention and solving of violence problems is considered to be efficient. However, being relatively new approach, there is still potential for development and improvement to make it even more effective. This is why it remains open to the implementation of efficient and verified methods aimed at reducing negative consequences of violence.

Strategy / approach / principles / culture of collaboration:

- Common goals and values, strong collaborative work between individual services and institutions operating in local community; all involved entities agree to participate in the ongoing work; all agree in consultation as to what the respective professional will do and when it will be done
- Regular meetings at strategic level (interdisciplinary board) and at the operational level (working groups): The interdisciplinary team meets with the heads of various departments and institutions. These meetings are carried out at least once every three months and are currently evaluating the effectiveness of actions taken, and planning of change and adaptation to the evolving needs and legislation. Working groups meet more often to determine the methods and tools for their work and the methods of evaluation from their every day work as well as to discuss processes of solving problem in particular families.
- Sharing of responsibility (which under no circumstances can mean avoid liability) for actions which for a single family increases the efficiency of each worker, or all the links in the interdisciplinary team.

Good practice example provided by CKU, Poland

“Amica Donna” – From a grass root to a national organisation, Montepulciano, Italy

The women's organisation “Amica Donna” (female friend of a woman) was founded in 2003 as a grass root organisation supporting women victims and survivors of domestic violence in Montepulciano. In June 2009, Amica Donna built its first network called “Aurore” with two other self-help organisations. In April 2010, Amica Donna joined the coordination network “TOSCA”, a congregation of all Tuscan help centres. In November 2010 it became member of the national coordination organisation of Italian crisis centres called “,DIRE”. In 2011, Amica Donna joined the EU-Project PACT as an associated partner and participated in the piloting of the PACT training programme. This successful progression towards a formalised organisation had been possible, because, ab initio, Amica Donna had a clear mission and has established strong relationships between all members as well as with non-member institutions in the support chain against domestic violence. In addition, all members are committed to enhancing their professionalisation through continuous training.

Actors in the network

- Amica Donna, Montepulciano
- Montepulciano City Council
- Ministry of Equality, Provincia di Siena
- Regional social services and ambulance
- Regional consultant services
- Regional services for health education
- Carabinieri, police and lawyers
- National network of women's shelters “Dire”
- Regional network TOSCA of help centres in Tuscany

Type of network

Amica Donna is a formalised network: working in a formalised network helps to facilitate and to optimise the proceedings for support and protection of women victims of domestic violence and women at risk; helping individual women to get out of violent relationships means also to interact in society and to combat every type of violence against women.

Background information

All services are run by volunteers, who get continuously trained, such as in training courses financed by the Provincial government of Siena or self-financed. Further training is run by supervision sessions with a psychologist and self-training through group discussion. Only the lawyer and the psychologists get a professional fee.

Working as volunteers is one of the principles of Amica Donna, because all staff members define themselves as women on their own way to autonomy, liberation from any kind of ideology and traditional conditionings.

All members of Amica Donna are aware of taking responsibility for their own lives as a self conducted process. Working as a volunteer means to practice and to develop three talents: Competence, Voluntariness, Responsibility.

Aim / mission

- to support and protect women from violence;
- to promote the change of cultural norms that consider violence as an anti-social and unacceptable behaviour;
- to counsel and receive women who experienced any form of domestic violence or maltreatment (physical, psychological, sexual, economical, stalking and assisted violence);
- The network works along the following three principles called the “Rule with the three A”:
 - *Ascoltare* – to listen to the others without judging;
 - *Accogliere* – to receive a women in difficulties with empathy;
 - *Accompagnare* – to accompany a women during the whole process of leaving a violent relationship

Description of the activities

- Helpline 24 hours (landline during the office time, a mobile phone during the rest of the day rotating among the staff member of Amica Donna).
- Reception and accompaniment of women who want to leave their violent relationships. Assistance by a psychologist
- Legal counselling.
- Prevention and awareness rising.
- Project planning.
- Participation in national conferences and coordination meetings of the head-organisations “TOSCA” and “DIRE”.
- Research and development of training material.
- Training: Amica Donna offers training sessions to other organisations such as women’s organisations, medical staff and police.

Strategies / approach /principles / culture of collaboration

The method of assisting women to get out of violent relationships is based on strong and empathic relationships between women and on the valorisation of the female gender. The strength lies in recognising women's specific needs and interests with the aim to enhance their auto-determination and autonomy thanks to empowerment. The underlying principle is the recognition of a woman as a subject and not as an object. This includes also the relationship between the woman who looks for help and the one who assists her.

The woman who receives a woman victim or survivor of violence listens to her with empathy and without judging. She compiles all facts of violence and maltreatment, assesses the risk and elaborates a safety plan for the woman and, if necessary, also for the involved children, and gives first information about the possibilities where and how to find help. In case children are involved Amica Donna helps to get into contact with the appropriate help organisations, such as social services which are specialised in child care.

Values and strategies on which Amica Donna takes action:

1. The woman stands in the centre of all activities.
2. To listen and to recognize others and their opinions.
3. Empowerment of women – be it within or beyond the network of Amica Donna.
4. Promoting cultural change of society to achieve equality between women and men.
5. Promoting self-determination of women.
6. Giving a platform to gender questions.
7. Self-esteem as the first step of all activities.
8. Working as a group and not only as individuals.
9. Sharing decision making processes with all members.
10. Willingness to change personally and to improve all abilities continuously.

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Good practice example provided by Orizzonte, Italy

"AMICA DONNA" NETWORK

- Montepulciano City Council
- Ministry of Equality, Provincia di Siena

supported by

TOSCA

Congregation
of all Help Centres in Tuscany

DIRE

National Coordination
Organisation of Italian Crisis Centres

MEMBER
COLLABORATION

EU-Project

as a Stakeholder
COLLABORATION

AMICA DONNA
Grass Root Organisation

Self Help Org 1

Self Help Org 2

Offers Training to other Self Help Organisations
Counselling and Support for Victims of DV

● Regional Social Services and Ambulance

● Regional Consultant Services

● Regional Services for Health Education

● Carabinieri, Police and Lawyers

COLLABORATION

contribution to changing Culture
which violence is considered as an anti-social and
unacceptable behaviour

Austrian Anti-Violence Legislation – Network of legal and social institutions for women survivors of domestic violence, established by Austrian Legislation

With the Austrian Federal Law on protection against domestic violence (Gewaltschutzgesetz), which came into force on 1st May 1997, Austria has created the legal basis for a comprehensive set of measures for protection against domestic violence which is regarded as a "model of best practice" throughout Europe. The framework's success is based on a combination of legal and social measures with the close cooperation of the legal and social institutions, including the police, the family court and Austrian intervention offices, which offer direct help and support for victims of domestic violence.

Actors in the network

- Police
- Family Court
- Intervention offices (one in each Austrian province), which cooperate with other supporting organisation/institutions (women shelters, etc.)

Type of network

Formalised Network which is established by Austrian legislation.

Background information of the NW:

In 1997 the Federal Act on Protection Against Domestic Violence came into force in Austria. This Act is based on the principle that victims of violence may stay in their homes and perpetrators have to leave the environment of the persons towards whom they have been violent.

This law was eventually a product of the continuous cooperation of Austria's women's shelters movement with the police and individual court representatives on the one hand and the former Minister of women, who had defined violence against women as one of the focuses of her work, on the other.

Women's organisations, and especially the Association of Women's Shelters in Vienna, were involved in the preparation of the Act from the very start.

The Act consists of three elements that are linked to each other:

1. eviction order by the police: the perpetrator has to leave the flat for 10 days;
2. interim injunction under civil law, which provides protection for a longer period;
3. support of victims by domestic abuse in intervention centres.

The latter measure is most essential, because victims need active assistance to enforce their rights vis-à-vis the perpetrator.

There are intervention centres in all nine provinces of Austria, which pursue a proactive approach: the police communicate the reports on interventions in cases of domestic violence to the intervention centre in charge, and the centre actively contacts the victim and offers assistance.

Aim / mission:

- The Act focuses on the state's obligation to protect women and children in their own homes.
- The main aspect of this Act has been to provide effective instruments to deal with and prevent domestic violence, such as the possibility to issue eviction orders and the corresponding barring orders.
- Protection of people experiencing violence
- Efficient cooperation between the police and competent victims' protection services, which will actively contact at-risk persons and offer support and counselling
- Prevention of violence against women and children to the greatest possible extent.

Description of activities:

- Fostering the cooperation between police and court: Exclusion and prohibition of entry of the offender, which must be imposed and implemented by the police if, on the basis of certain facts, it can be assumed that a dangerous attack on life, health or freedom is imminent. During this period or after a maximum of 10 days, the vulnerable person herself may demand an interlocutory injunction at the framework's second pillar, at the family court.
- Providing victims with immediate comprehensive support services. This is realised through the development of intervention offices - independent victim protection centres set up (one in each county) to implement the aims of the abovementioned Law. They have NGO status and are subsidised by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Ministry responsible for women (currently the Ministry for Social Security and Generations). Their advice is free and available for women, children, men, regardless of their citizenship. These intervention offices are responsible for networking and cooperation between all institutions involved, including also men's support offices and women's shelters. The latter are autonomous NGOs, which offer housing and protection to abused or vulnerable women and children.
- The theme of responding to violence against women and children is an integral part of police training in Austria.
- A model project for working with perpetrators has been established.
- An advisory council for the prevention of violence has been established.

Success / outcomes:

- Since the Act has come into force the number of eviction orders issued by the police has risen steadily: from 2,673 in 1998 to 6,347 in 2007. This is most probably not the result of an increase in violence but indicates a change in attitude among the authorities concerned, in particular the police: violence against women and children is no longer regarded as a private matter, but the state intervenes and those affected have access to concrete protection measures.
- Evaluation studies show that intervention centres are of great significance for the empowerment of women suffering from violence.
- The budgets of the intervention centres have been increased. Since then it has again been possible to support all victims of domestic violence after eviction orders have been issued. The Women's Minister also achieved a budget increase by more than 30% for women's agencies active in the field of violence.
- A number of other measures were also taken in Austria, such as the passing of the Anti-Stalking Act, which came into force in July 2006, and the right to Court Assistance Services: as of January 2006, all victims of domestic violence have been granted the right to cost-free psychosocial and legal court assistance during criminal proceedings, and in addition, the victims' rights to information, considerate treatment and participation in proceedings have been enhanced.
- The Act has set the course for the cooperation of the institutions in charge of domestic violence, in particular cooperation between the police, intervention centres, youth welfare departments and family courts.

Strategy / approach / principles / culture of collaboration:

The Austrian Federal Act on Protection Against Domestic Violence follows seven principles:

1. Violence in the domestic environment is a public matter and has to be prevented in the sense of public interest.
2. Principle of priority for the safety of those at risk of domestic violence
3. Principle to focus on the relationship of violence – since domestic violence is a result of an in balance of power within the family.
4. Principle of a 2-phase model: in the initial stage, intervention doesn't depend on the will of the victim, but is a statutory procedure. The second phase, however, relies more on the autonomy of the victim, and their will to change the situation.

5. Violence has to be banned – even if it is carried out in the private environment. Domestic violence has to be treated as a crime
6. Emphasis on the perpetrators' responsibility
7. Necessity to follow an holistic and multi-institutional approach

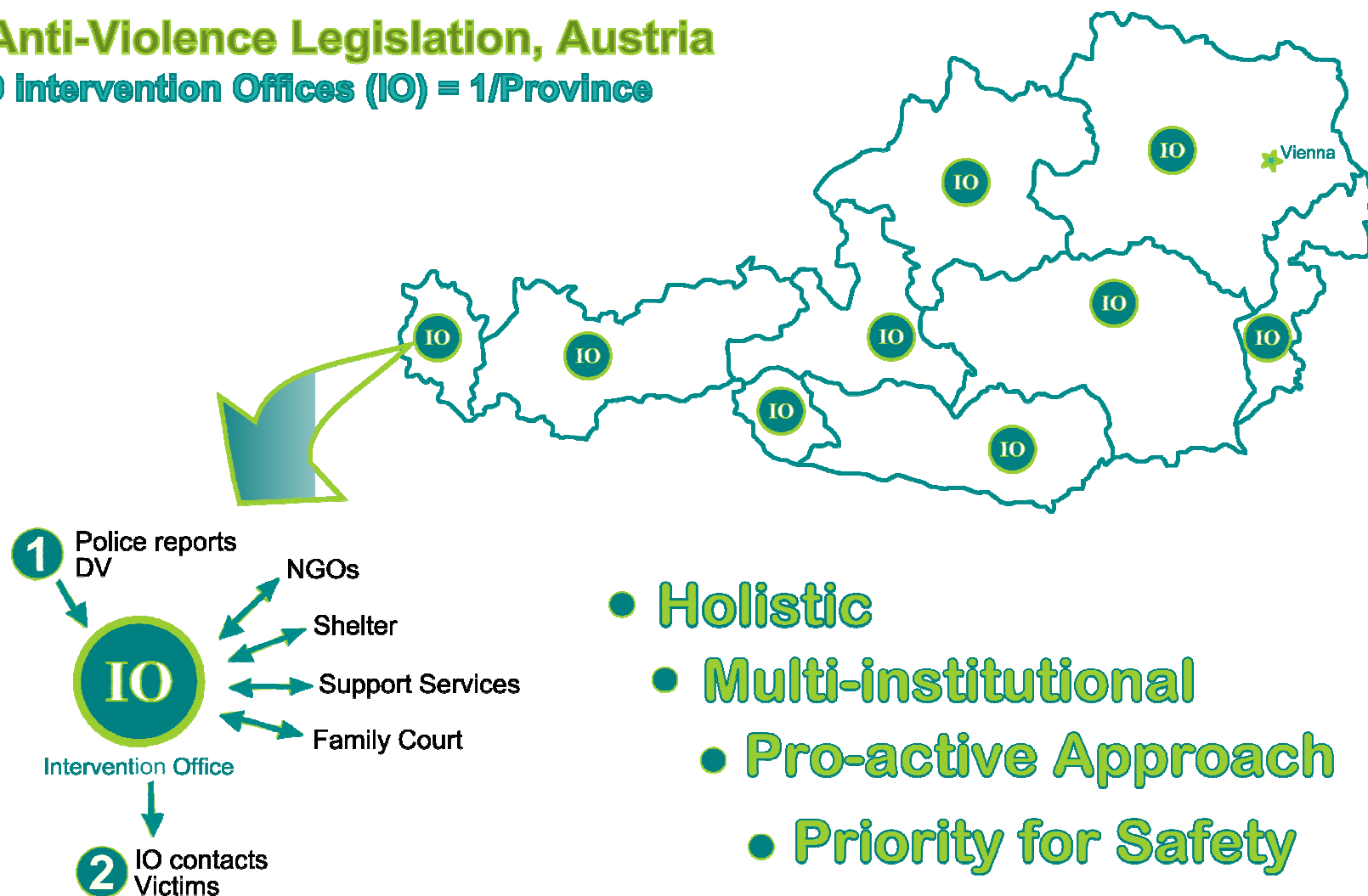
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Anti-Violence Legislation, Austria

9 Intervention Offices (IO) = 1/Province



- Holistic
- Multi-institutional
- Pro-active Approach
- Priority for Safety



Dignity for Domestic Violence Survivors (ESF 3.43) European Social Fund project in Malta

This EU-funded project (ESF 3.43) contributes towards the capacity building of personnel working with vulnerable groups in order to increase social cohesion. This includes work on empowerment of the victims, enabling them towards effective participation, inclusion and well-being. Inclusion into the labour market ensures that victims living with/escaping from domestic violence are able to better contribute to the general wealth of society while enhancing their dignity and financial independence. This project also aims at building networks among NGOs and other agencies, to share best practices and experiences.

Actors in the network

- National Commission on Domestic Violence
- Stakeholders including police, education authorities, support organisations

Type of network

National Commission is the beneficiary of the project funding and organised all activities with the other stakeholders in DV as beneficiaries of training, participants in networking activities and exchange.

Background information of the NW:

The Commission on Domestic Violence was set up under Article 3 of the Domestic Violence Act (Chapter 481) on March 1, 2006. The main role of the Commission is that of advising the Minister responsible for social policy on all aspects of Domestic Violence.

These aspects include:

- the fight against domestic violence, especially in raising awareness of the problem;
- suggesting areas for research, identifying training for professional groups.

The Commission has set up a Subcommittee on Service Development, which brings together representatives from the Commission, Agenzija Appogg (Designated Agency), the various Shelters in Malta, a practitioner in the field from Gozo and a former service user. The main aim of this Subcommittee is to help the Commission in its task of monitoring and safeguarding standards of practice and to further facilitate networking between practitioners in the field and others in related spheres.

DIGNITY was proposed by the Commission as a European Social Fund project and it was approved in 2010. Implementation was between 2010 and 2012.

Aim / mission:

- capacity building of personnel working with vulnerable groups
- increase social cohesion
- empowerment of the victims, enabling them towards effective participation, inclusion and well-being
- inclusion into the labour market
- building networks among NGOs and other agencies
- share best practices and experiences.

Description of activities:

The project is made up of a number of components, and some components have already been concluded. These include:

- the organisation of an international visit by professionals to a domestic violence shelter in the Czech Republic;
- the carrying out of a nationwide research study on 'the prevalence of domestic violence against women in Malta and its impact on employment prospects'; and
- the organisation of specialised training for various professionals who come in contact with domestic violence victims/survivors.

Success / outcomes:

Training activities have been well attended and participation was active. It was representative of the stakeholders that was expected and desired, i.e. included actors that occupy key positions in the support chain of survivors of domestic violence.