

9. PREVENTION

Introduction

Prevention is an important aspect of combating violence against women as avoiding and limiting violence from occurring improves women's lives and lessens the overall burden that the impact of violence has on individual women and society.

The concept of prevention, or stopping something from occurring has evolved from the medical profession and has become utilized in the area of violence against women over the last 20 years.

There are three stages of prevention: primary prevention, secondary prevention and tertiary prevention. Primary prevention aims to "obviate violence before it occurs", secondary prevention aims to "detect violence in time or to terminate it at the earliest possible juncture", and tertiary prevention aims to "prevent a renewed outbreak of violence or to soften the impact of violence" (WAVE, 2000, p. 5).

Investing in measures at all three levels of prevention is necessary to achieve the goal of reducing and eliminating violence against women and domestic violence. Consequences of intimate partner violence as well as sexual violence or rape are severe, and women whose lives have been deeply impacted by violence as well as by having experienced long-term, severe, and/or frequent violence may suffer significant harm that otherwise could have been avoided. For some forms of violence, like female genital mutilation, where apart from the mental damage, the physical damage is permanent, primary prevention is of even greater importance.

The Istanbul Convention includes a chapter on prevention (Chapter III). Articles 12-17 cover the following topics respectively: general obligations, awareness raising, education, training of professionals, preventive intervention and treatment programs, and participation of the private sector and the media. This chapter focuses mainly on a discussion of awareness-raising activities by women's NGOs, and other types of prevention activities that include education and training of professionals, and treatment programs are discussed in chapters 10 and 13 respectively. The general obligations instruct State parties to promote changes in social and cultural patterns of behaviour, while the article on awareness raising calls on State parties to "conduct on a regular basis and at all levels, awareness raising campaigns or programs, including in cooperation with national human rights institutions and equality bodies, civil society and non-governmental organizations, especially women's organizations, where appropriate, to increase awareness and understanding among the general public of the different manifestations of all forms of violence..." (Council of Europe, 2012, p. 9 - 11).

In terms of prevention of violence, preventive actions have been classified into two tiers: actions directed at individuals and actions directed at society, based on the idea that violence is a result of both environmental and individual factors (WAVE, 2000, p. 4). According to a paper on the implementation of the Istanbul Convention in the area of prevention, theoretical models of prevention can help provide a basis for structuring effective activities. There are four levels at which prevention activities can be conducted (macro, meso, micro and ontogenetic) referring respectively to the overall social order, social norms, day to day interactions, and individual life history. Each level has specific elements such as violence in the media or masculinity. The model provides information on the role policy plays in order to challenge each of the elements (see http://ec.europa.eu/justice/funding/daphne3/multi-level_interactive_model/understanding_perpetration_start_unix.html)[®]. Activities in the area of prevention should be considered essential but always be implemented as part of a broader strategy and set of measures to combat violence against women (Council of Europe, 2014, p. 8).

Women's NGOs are part of the specialist women's sector, including women's support services, and are representing women's rights and interests. Women's NGOs have been active in the area of prevention and their activities have contributed to significant progress over the last four decades, which can be

quantified by the presence of various measures that are indicative of progress, such as legislation on violence, trainings, funding for specialist services, and cooperation among various stakeholders in the area of combating violence against women (Htun & Weldon, 2012).

Aims of Data Collection

The aim of presenting data on prevention activities in the WAVE Report is to reveal the work that women's NGOs have done and continue to do, and to show the role of women's NGOs in implementing the provisions on prevention found in the Istanbul Convention. It should be noted however that prevention activities in form of awareness-raising may also be conducted in partnership with other stakeholders such as government ministries or other institutions. The report however collected data from women's NGOs only, and hence includes only their perspective.

For the purpose of the report, data was collected to see to what extent women's networks, shelters, helplines and centres conduct awareness raising activities, as well as to gain an understanding of how much funding is allocated for prevention activities and to gauge the level of difficulty in collecting such information, especially related to funding. The questions aimed to estimate whether all, most, some or none of the specific organizations or services (i.e. women's networks, women's shelters, helplines and centres) conduct prevention activities.

In addition to asking specific questions related to prevention work, WAVE asked the respondents to provide examples of prevention work as a way to exchange ideas about activities conducted and to showcase the important work done by women's NGOs.

Findings on the Situation of Prevention Activities in Europe

Overall Situation in Europe

When asked about whether national women's networks conduct prevention activities, 29 out of 46 countries responded. Of these, about 86% or 25 stated that all or most national women's networks conduct prevention activities. The remaining answers included some and none. In countries where no national women's networks exist (seven countries), the questions did not apply (see Chapter 8).

When asked about whether women's shelters conduct prevention activities, 29 provided a response, out of 45 countries, where shelters are present (see Chapter 5), with 69% (20) stating that all or most of the women's shelters conduct prevention activities, or that some (8) do. Only one country reported that no shelters conduct prevention activities.

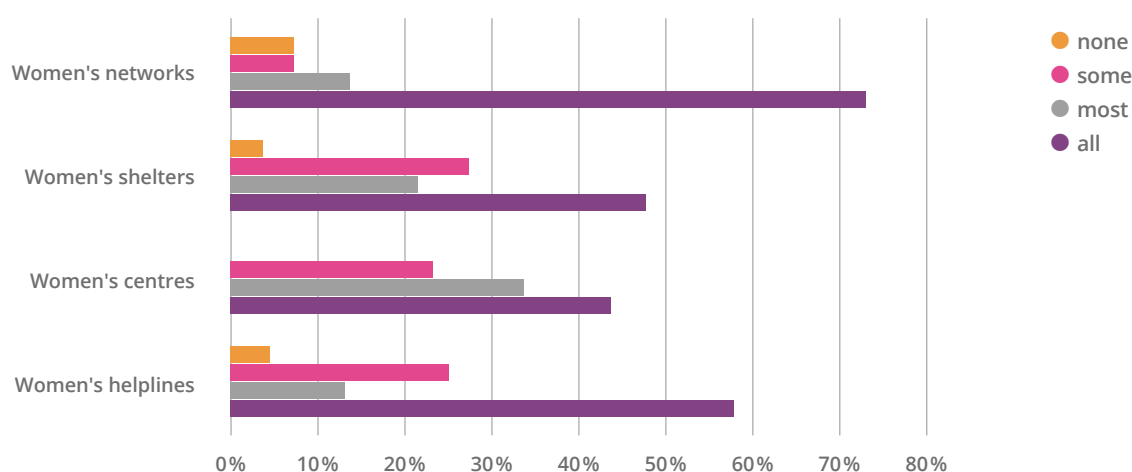
When asked about whether women's helplines conduct prevention activities, there were a total of 24 responses received, showing that all or most helplines conduct such activities in about 70% of the countries or 17 countries. In six countries, some helplines conduct prevention activities. Only one country reported that there were no prevention activities conducted by helplines. In some countries the answer was 'not applicable' as some countries do not have a national women's helpline or other helplines that could conduct such activities (see Chapter 4 for more information on national women's helplines).

When asked about whether women's centres conduct prevention activities, there were a total of 30 responses of the 46 countries asked. Twenty three or 76% stated that all women's centres conduct prevention activities, and seven stated that some centres conduct such activities. This shows that in all countries that provided data for this question, women's centres engage in prevention activities (see Chapter 6 for more information on women's centres). As a result, prevention activities seem to be very typical of women's centres.

The findings show that the vast majority of women's support services and networks are active in prevention, with women's networks most likely to conduct prevention activities such as awareness raising (86%). The latter are presumably most involved because it is part of their core activities, unlike service provision for shelters, helplines and centres, although those organizations still work at raising awareness as a supplementary activity.

The graph below shows the type of women's organizations conducting prevention activities in form of awareness raising and shows, in what percentage of countries all, most, some or none of the organizations conduct such activities. For example, in terms of women's networks, it can be seen that in more than 70% of the countries, all existing women's networks conduct awareness raising activities, in comparison to only about 50% of countries, where it could be said that all women's shelters conduct awareness raising activities. While the graph is presented in relative percentages, the figures are based on different totals (responses) (i.e. women's networks – 29 responses, women's shelters 29 responses, women's helplines – 24 responses, and women's centres – 30 responses).

FIGURE 15 – Types of Women's Organizations Conducting Prevention Activities throughout Europe



Funding for Prevention Work

Gathering information on the actual funding allocated to various types of organizations is difficult and the data is scarce. This can be taken as a sign that no separate budgets are allocated to the prevention work that women's organizations, including support services, are carrying out. Only in six countries (Ireland, Kosovo, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Russia and United Kingdom) were specific sums allocated to prevention work in the year 2014. These sums ranged from EUR 3,000 to about EUR 305,000. Given that the six countries have a total population of over 200,000 inhabitants, the sum invested in prevention appears small. One issue related to funding for prevention work involves the source of funding, for example, whether the funds granted came from the national government or from international donors. The question simply asked the amount of funding received for prevention work. The data collection for this report did not address this issue, however, it is an important one to raise.

It was possible to see that in Ireland, one of the national women's networks 'Safe Ireland' received EUR 100,000 in 2014 for funding their campaign entitled 'Man Up Campaign', however, this reflects only one prevention activity and the information is available due to a government published report available on the website of 'Cosc' The National Office for the Prevention of Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence. The document also shows that the organization running the women's helpline received about EUR 100,000 for three different projects. In Kosovo, we were made aware that women's shelters received about EUR 25,000 for their prevention work, however, this data was available because of the presence of one network of women's shelters that was able to provide the information. Otherwise, data

is rarely available. Furthermore, without a descriptive narrative, it is not clear what the funding actually encompassed. At the same time, level of funding alone as a comparative indicator among countries on prevention work may not be most useful. This is because prevention activities differ greatly, as do costs of the activities (e.g. producing a video versus printing of posters), and cost does not necessarily equate to impact. Nevertheless, it is useful to know which organizations are receiving money for prevention activities to address violence against women, including information on the source of funding, whether it comes from state or international sources.

Lastly, the data shows that there are very few women's non-governmental organizations in Europe that work solely in the area of prevention, as most often prevention work is done by organizations on the side of their core activities that may include service provision. Examples were only provided in Belgium and France, and only in Belgium an amount of EUR 130,000 could be provided to show the amount of state funding allocated to the specific organization, whereas in France, this wasn't possible.

Examples of Good Practices

As part of data collection a variety of examples of prevention activities conducted by women's NGOs were gathered. We received numerous examples of interesting activities, but could only share a few in the space available. For examples from other countries, please visit the country profiles online at <http://www.wave-network.org/>. The examples below come from Armenia, Belgium, Greece, Iceland, and Romania and include activities such as public information exchange, workshops targeted at empowering migrant women, development of informational pamphlets to inform survivors of violence about their rights, public conference involving a variety of stakeholders, and public awareness raising activities in form of a festival.

Country: ICELAND

TIMEFRAME OF ACTIVITY: 12–15 June 2014

TITLE OF ACTIVITY: Nordiskt Forum (Nordic Forum) in Malmö

TARGET GROUPS: Representatives of the women's movement, activists, organizations, groups, political parties, private sector, authorities and the general public.

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY: The Nordic Forum took place in Malmö in 2014 involving persons from the Scandinavian region from Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. The conference is conducted in a way that each participant is involved and provides an active contribution with discussions on the topic of violence against women and girls. The Nordic Forum was connected to the Nordic Tour, which in 2014 focused on family formation in the Nordic countries with special attention to cases regarding



custody and visitation that also had issues of violence and abuse. During this tour, five Nordic countries were visited. One inspiration, of many, for the Nordic Tour was the 2014 FRA study on violence against women in Europe, demonstrating that policy makers need to recognize the extent of the violence that women are exposed to, and ensure that State action translates into meeting all the needs and rights of female victims. Particularly unique to the tour and forum is the close cooperation and collaboration of the organizations throughout the region.

Country: BELGIUM

ORGANIZATION CARRYING OUT THE ACTIVITY: Garance asbl

TIMEFRAME OF ACTIVITY: Since 2009

TITLE OF ACTIVITY: Femmes migrantes, actrices de leur sécurité

GOALS AND TARGET GROUPS: Migrant groups

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY: The activity involves Garance conducting training of peer educators in order to facilitate group meetings for migrant women on the topic of safety and violence prevention. In addition, topics of intimate partner violence and violence in the family, by friends and within the community, as well as sexist and racist discrimination are discussed. The materials for the activity can be downloaded online: www.garance.be/docs/14abcdelasecurite.pdf

MAIN RESULTS: Participants report less isolation, less fear of crime and more self-confidence. They leave the workshops with basic knowledge about what works in violence prevention.



Country: GREECE

ORGANIZATION CARRYING OUT THE ACTIVITY: European Anti-Violence Network

TIMEFRAME OF ACTIVITY: 2012–2014

TITLE OF ACTIVITY: Re-Actions against Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) – Actions in favor of women-survivors of IPV

GOALS AND TARGET GROUPS: The objectives of the project were to contribute mostly to secondary and tertiary prevention of intimate partner violence (IPV) via targeted provision of specialized information and support to women survivors of IPV via a publication of the book ‘Guide on how to escape from a violent relationship’ and operation of an information center for IPV issues.

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY: One of the main activities involve the development of a book, where a hypothetical woman who is a survivor of IPV describes how she escaped from the violent relationship. The aim is to reach other women in similar situation to make the journey easier for them. The book describes what the life of an abused woman looks like, how she feels, which factors trap her in the violent relationship, what the warning signs are, and what the myths are. The book also provides guidance for the development of a personal safety plan, describes the legal framework, explains the options available, and what the woman’s expectations should be when she approaches the police, the courts or other services, from the perspective of her rights and obligations. The book can be downloaded from: www.antiviolence-net.eu/Odigos_apodrasis.pdf

MAIN RESULTS: In less than two months, 3,000 Guides were disseminated upon request. The Guide was proven to be empowering to women and to counsellors. The counsellors were able to provide information in written form to their clients, and the clients were able to use the Guide, when requesting support from institutions and in some cases, using the Guide as confirmation that certain institutions had to take action on behalf of the women.



Country: ROMANIA

ORGANIZATION CARRYING OUT THE ACTIVITY:

A.L.E.G

TIMEFRAME OF ACTIVITY: Annual event

TITLE OF ACTIVITY: Gender Equality Festival

GOALS AND TARGET GROUPS: The aim was to draw attention to the fact that violence against women stems from prejudices and stereotypes. Young women, men, girls and boys were the outreach group.

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY: The festival includes

several interactive activities: movie screening followed by debates, forum theatre, interactive map of urban discrimination, gender treasure hunt, living library, marches and artwork or sports competitions.

MAIN RESULTS: The festival increases public awareness, supports the process of eliminating prejudices and stereotypes regarding gender and gender roles, promoting the change of public perceptions about appropriate patterns of behaviour for women and men. A proof of the larger impact is the replication of the festival (organized usually in the city of Sibiu) as part of the project of the Gender Equality Coalition during NGO Fest (a large civil society event) in 2015 in Bucharest.



Country: ARMENIA

ORGANIZATION CARRYING OUT THE ACTIVITY: Women's Rights Center

TIMEFRAME OF ACTIVITY: 9 October 2014

TITLE OF ACTIVITY: Raising awareness about domestic violence

GOALS AND TARGET GROUPS: The goal was to inform persons on the street about domestic violence and available support services

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY: The activity was a 'Street Action' and involved distribution of booklets, leaflets and purple bracelets with «No to Domestic Violence» message printed on them.

MAIN RESULTS: About 150 persons were informed about domestic violence phenomenon and support services for women.

The examples show that women's NGOs are engaged in organizing a variety of activities, ranging from formal activities such as conferences or festivals to less formal, such as passing out information to people in public spaces or organizing empowerment groups for women on the topic of safety from violence. While the costs of the activities vary and some are also organized on a volunteer basis, they all involve connecting with others and exchanging information, all slowly leading to the build-up of awareness about violence against women, contributing to its prevention.



Conclusions and Recommendations

- ▶ Prevention in form of awareness-raising is an important aspect of an overall coordinated system of measures to prevent and combat violence against women. Work in the area of prevention is fairly new and has also been included as an obligation of State parties to the Istanbul Convention. Prevention in form of awareness-raising implies various levels and models, however, the work itself is mostly about providing information about violence as a way to change social attitudes, but may also include information about seeking help, or how to support and help survivors, in addition to other types of prevention work such as education and training of professionals, for example.
- ▶ In Europe, a significant majority of women's organizations conduct prevention activities. The ones most likely to conduct them are national women's networks, followed by women's helplines, shelters and then centres. Data on funding allocated to NGOs for prevention activities is scarce, and could also be a result of lack of commitment by States to fund activities like awareness raising. Lack of funding in the area of prevention seriously hampers the effectiveness of the work. Given the fact that women's NGOs are important actors in communities, when it comes to awareness raising and changing violent behaviour, it would be important to allocate more resources to this work. Where information on funding is available, it comes from a central authority responsible for preventing and combating of violence against women, or from the women's organization itself. Lastly, there are not many women's NGOs with the main focus on prevention; most often, NGOs providing services as their core operations conduct prevention activities in form of awareness-raising as an additional activity.
- ▶ Measuring impact of prevention is difficult. For example speaking to 150 people on a street in Armenia may not sound like changing the world, however, if it results in 150 people thinking about violence against women and having a conversation with their family, colleagues, friends and neighbours, the impact can be considerable. Public attitudes do not change overnight, but private conversations play a significant role in slowly changing individual attitudes. The existence alone of a helpline or a women's centre has an awareness raising impact as it makes the issue of violence against women visible to the public, especially when the organizations have the ability to effectively advertise their presence. At this time, most prevention work appears to be low-key and a result of individuals working in unpaid capacity. Prevention work is invaluable and much of it is conducted by unpaid volunteers.
- ▶ WAVE recommends that States revisit and consider their obligations in the area of prevention as provided for in the Istanbul Convention; a document created as guidance for implementation of the relevant provisions is available online as means to support the implementation process (Council of Europe, 2014). Additionally, States should ensure continuous budgetary allocation for prevention activities, focusing on all forms of violence against women, to be conducted by women's NGOs. Adequate investment in prevention would also support the implementation of Article 9 of the Istanbul Convention that calls on State parties to recognize, encourage and support NGOs working in the area of preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Council of Europe, 2012, p. 8). Last, but not least, information on funding provided to various projects should be made publically available to allow for monitoring, although meaningful indicators should be elaborated for that purpose.