

# STOP VIOLENCE

WOMEN'S LAW CENTER

nr. 23 [2020]

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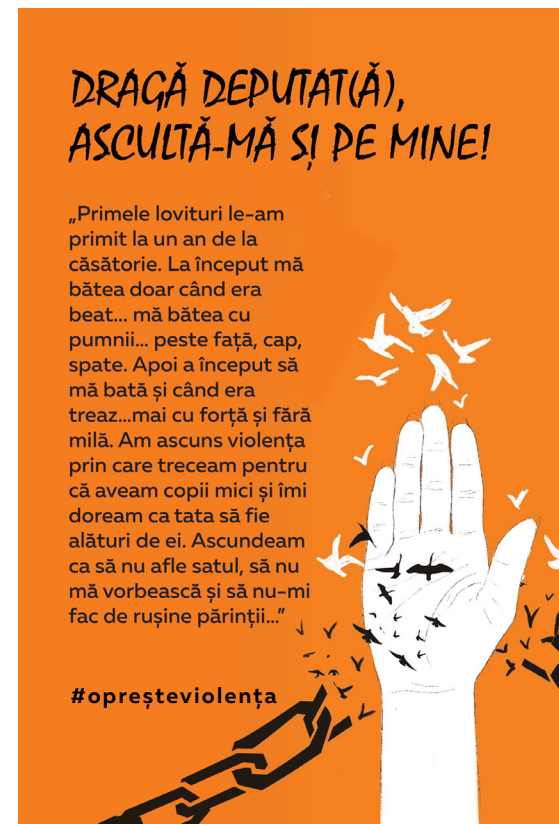
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## 'DEAR MP, HEAR ME TOO!' CAMPAIGN MAKES THE VOICE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIMS HEARD



Supported by Sweden, the Women's Law Centre carried out during November-December 2020 the 'Dear MP, Hear Me Too!' awareness-raising campaign. The initiative was different from anything we have ever undertaken. Through this campaign, we managed to address directly those who can contribute to curtailing the domestic violence phenomenon. We urged those close to domestic violence victims to support them. We encouraged victims to seek help. We brought this topic back on the authorities' agenda, while – supported by the mass media and via social media – we prompted people not to tolerate violence around themselves and in their own families.

The messages conveyed under the 'Dear MP, Hear Me Too!' campaign reached more than one million citizens. **As many as 20 national and regional TV Channels** will broadcast in January - March 2021 the social video spot filmed for this initiative. Around **8,400 people** watched the two webinars that presented legal solutions to protect domestic violence victims and the impact of domestic violence on children. More than **100,000 people** viewed the online awareness video with statistics on the incidence of this phenomenon in Moldova, as well as the video





letter of a domestic violence victim, symbolically read out by the actress Diana Decuseara. We would like to thank all public figures, journalists and civil society peers for being there for us and for calling to action.

Women victims of domestic violence shared with us – by Messenger, e-mail or phone – their painful stories and sought help and advice. The system problems and difficulties they encountered will be compiled and formulated as recommendations aimed at amending the law in force. We will share their stories with MPs and we will urge them to take all required measures to ensure efficient assistance for and protection of domestic violence victims.

**WEBINAR: „VIOLENȚA ÎN FAMILIE:  
SOLUȚII LEGALE PENTRU PROTEJAREA VICTIMELOR”**

**Moderatoare**

**Diana Raileanu**  
jurnalistă

**Arina Țurcan-Donțu**  
avocată

**Centrul de Drept al Femeilor**

**Suedia Sverige**

**#opreșteviolența**

**10 decembrie 2020 ora 15:00**



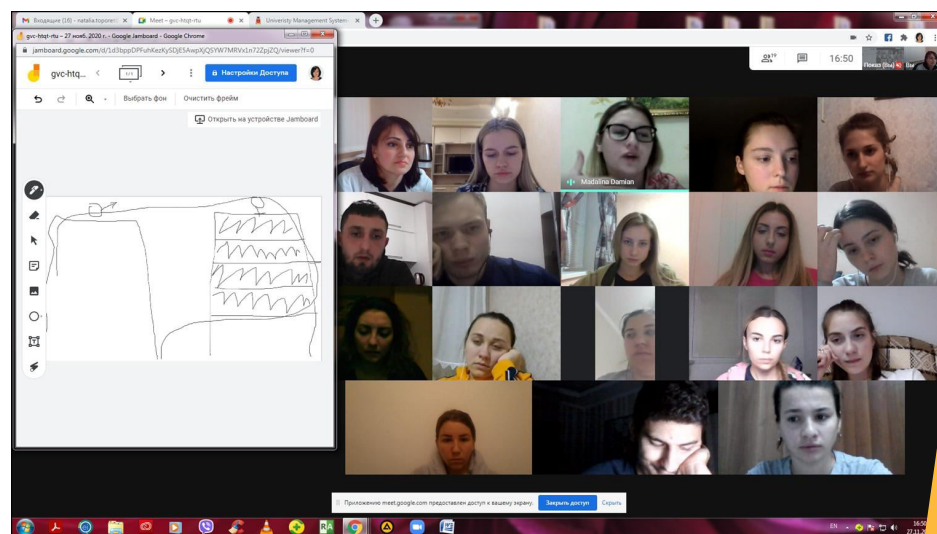
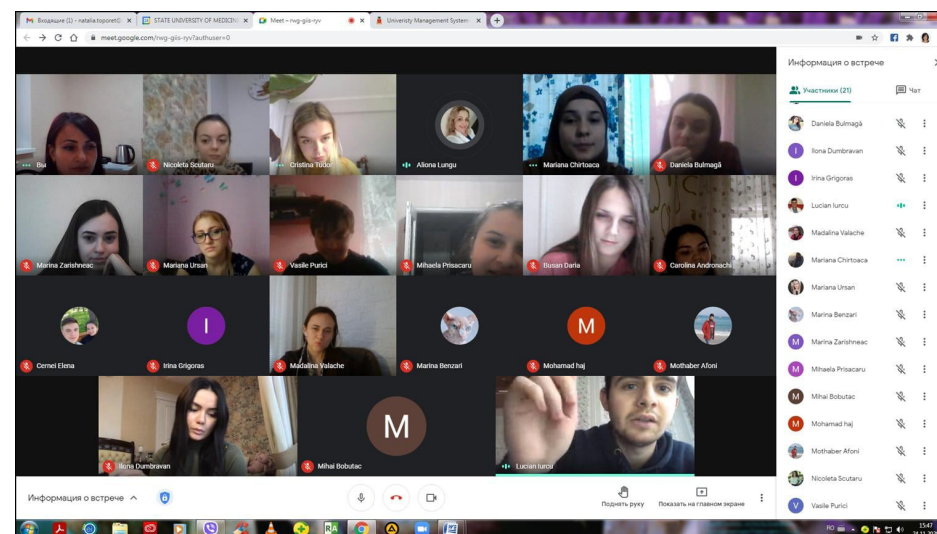
# THE IMPULS SMALL GRANTS PROGRAM – NEW ACHIEVEMENTS AT YEAR END



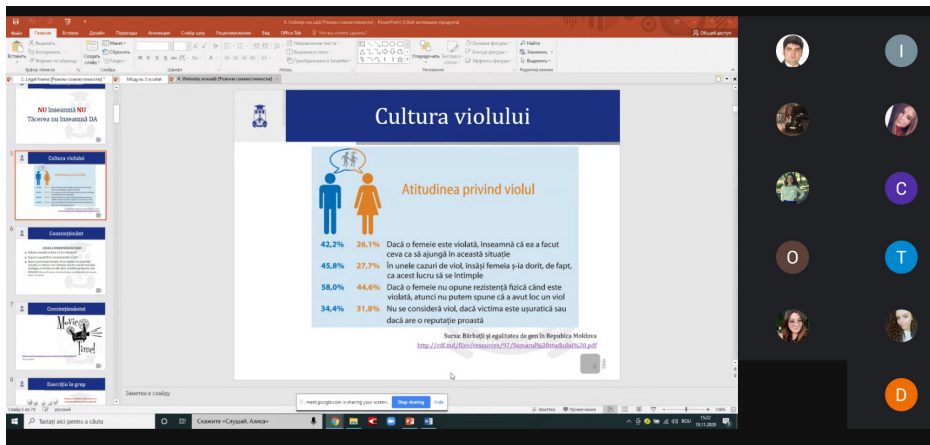
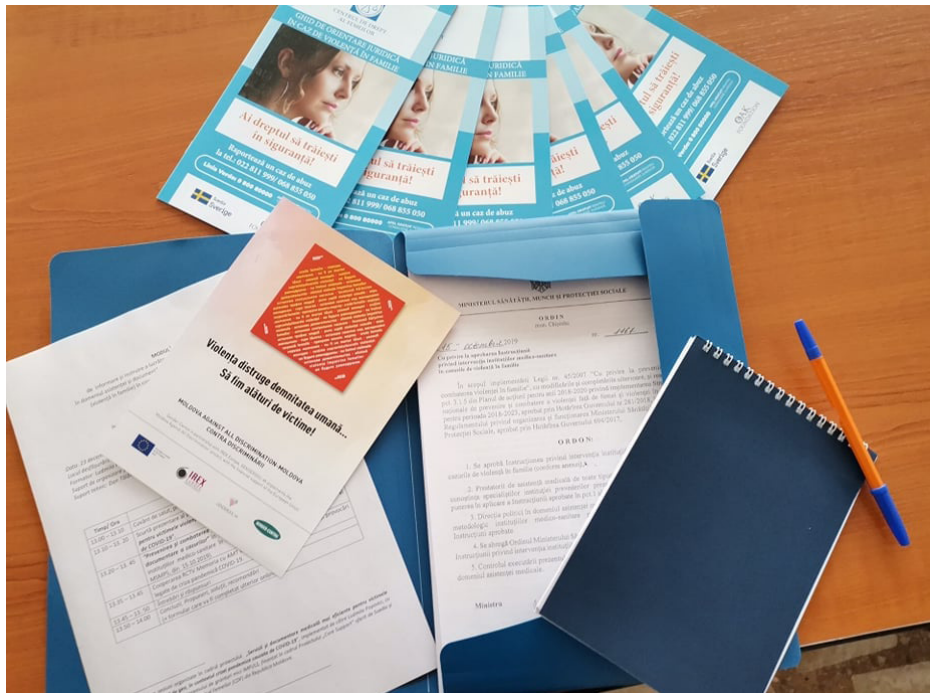
During the first six months, the beneficiaries of the IMPULS Small Grants Program managed to bring to a successful conclusion a number of activities planned for June-December 2020. Five projects designed and developed by graduates of the **'Prevent and Respond to Gender Based Violence – Strengthening Agents of Change' Advanced International Training Programme** were selected for the first round of the program.

The grant beneficiaries are representatives of public authorities, NGOs and university professors. Through their projects, they pursue changing the perception of gender-based violence and domestic violence in their activity areas.

One of the projects that was successfully implemented in this period focused on building doctors' capacity to respond to domestic violence. For this purpose, educational materials were developed to be used in the course on *'Domestic and Gender-Based Violence'* delivered at the 'Nicolae Testemitanu' State University of Medicine and Pharmacy. This activity focused on training medical students and medical practitioners in line with international standards in this area. The course, albeit optional, was attended by about 300 people, among which local and international students, and fellow university professors. The students showed huge interest in the topic and asked for more additional







information. Upon completion, they graded both the theoretical and the practical parts of the course with a satisfaction rate of 97.7%.

Another project in the medical area endeavoured to adapt – in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic – the provision of health care services to victims of domestic and gender-based violence using telemedicine methods. A protocol on assistance and cooperation in telemedicine was developed to this end under the project. Two awareness sessions were held on the response of healthcare facilities to domestic violence cases. The 40 family doctors and medical specialists from the 'Centru' Territorial Medical Association, who participated in the awareness sessions, analysed and discussed the remote health care methods, emphasising the provision of more efficient services to victims of gender-based violence amid the COVID-19 pandemic. The project will continue next year and will entail the development of a comprehensive

methodology on the use of telemedicine, and the organisation of some additional sessions aimed at informing healthcare professionals.

The other projects funded via the IMPULS Small Grants Program focused on:

- exploring the perceptions of women in police around sexual harassment at work
- training social workers from five districts on gender-based violence and domestic violence
- carrying out an analysis of the statistics on preventing and combating domestic violence and gender-based violence.

The IMPULS Small Grants Program will last until 2022. A new funding application round will be launched in January, the current year.

The IMPULS Small Grants Program is implemented by the WLC, with financial support from Sweden.

# LAUNCHING OF 'ECONOMIC COST OF GENDER INEQUALITIES IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA' STUDY

'Gender inequality in the Republic of Moldova costs us tens of billions of lei loss in the State Budget. If economic inequalities between men and women were eliminated, the country's GDP would grow by up to 20%, i.e. by about MDL 39 billion' says the study entitled 'Economic Cost of Gender Inequalities in the Republic of Moldova', launched in October 2020.

According to the study developed by Expert-Grup in partnership with the Women's Law Centre, women face difficulties in returning to work after having had a child. Challenges arise from the design of policies in this area, shortage of quality nursery services, inflexible attitudes of employers, as well as from tradition, cultural peculiarities and gender prejudice that determine women to give up on their professional life. According to the data of the National Social Insurance House, as of 1 January 2020, from the category of socially insured individuals, 39,458 mothers and 7,136 fathers were on partially paid childcare leave and were receiving monthly childcare allowance.

The authors of this study believe that the national law does not contain provisions that would encourage mothers and fathers to share the childcare leave, and if women decide to use nursery services, they face preju-



dice and judgement. '...In our culture, mothers who take their little children to nursery are labelled as bad mothers. I took my elder child, who was 1 year and 8 months old at the time, to a nursery in another settlement because I started working, and most of my relatives were criticising me for that. In my opinion, many mothers would like to use nursery services, if there were any, but because of social pressure, they relinquish and give up on their professional career', said one of the interviewees of this study.

In 2019, the Republic of Moldova had two nurseries and both of them were located in

the urban area. Given that 32.6 thousand children were born in 2018 and 34.1 thousand – in 2017, the number of ante-preschool education institutions and of available places is obviously insufficient.

To improve the state of affairs in this field, the study puts forward recommendations aimed at reducing gender gaps and their economic costs. The recommendations tackle legal amendments, awareness-raising and information activities around gender equality, the role of women and men in the society and family, work-life balance, overcoming gender stereotypes.

Concediul parțial plătit pentru îngrijirea copilului până la vârsta de 3 ani				
	Mame	Tați	Alte persoane	Total
Persoane asigurate (copii până la 3 ani)	39 458	7 136	335	46 929
Persoane neasigurate (copii până la 2 ani)	37 835	206	25	38 066

The study is available in electronic format and can be accessed on – <https://bit.ly/2GOp9NB>.



## TRAINING OF TRAINERS FOR POLICE



The Women's Law Centre, in partnership with the Integrated Law Enforcement Training Centre (ILETC) under the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Moldova finalised, in November, the third module of the ToT course for police and other law enforcement bodies. Participants were tasked with something they had never experienced before. Working in teams, they took the place of trainers and simulated training their police colleagues. Every team was careful to apply the training methods and techniques learned earlier. The other participants, alongside trainers from the 'Nicolae Dumitrescu' Academy, provided feedback, analysed every aspect of the presentation – from content to delivery, so that at the end of the module all participants knew where the potential for improvement was.

The entire program consisted of three modules, each lasting for three days. Its goal was to have the participants understand the dynamics of the domestic violence phenomenon. It included risk assessment tools and methodologies and good practices of response to cases of domestic violence.

The trainees learned about the fundamental causes of domestic violence and about the link between violence and gender equality. They were taught adult education methods and practised active participation methods. They will subsequently be involved in the training of about 400 representatives of police and public order and security bodies.

The ToT Course is part of the 'Capacity building of the justice and law enforcement sector representatives in the efficient application of domestic violence legislation' project implemented by the Women's Law Centre (WLC) in partnership with ILETC and supported by UN Women Moldova and Sweden.



# THE REPORT ON INTERIM EVALUATION OF THE NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR PREVENTING AND COMBATING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FOR 2018-2023

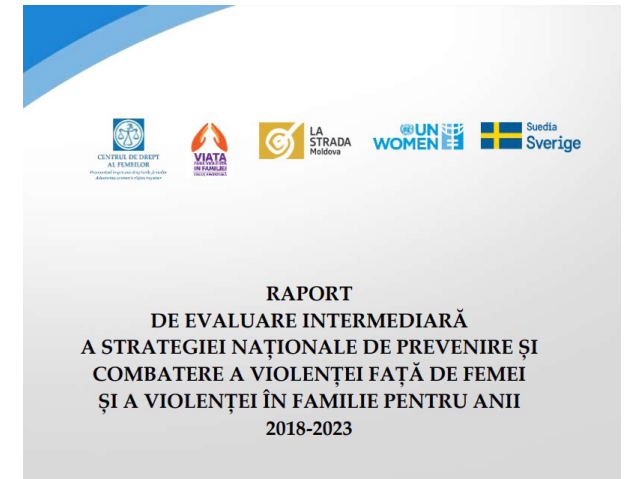
The Report on Interim Evaluation of the National Strategy for Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence for 2018-2023 was launched in October 2020. The analysis highlighted results, delays and recommendations developed by the evaluation team.

## Key achievements:

- the 2018-2019 General Police Inspectorate statistics reveal ascending dynamics in the number of reported cases
- trainings were carried out for a number of categories of professionals: especially for representatives of law enforcement bodies, but fewer for healthcare professionals and social workers
- sectoral guidelines on response to cases of gender-based and domestic violence were developed
- three more centres of assistance and counselling for domestic violence perpetrators were established, and probation programs for perpetrators were developed
- development of social services system funding mechanism;
- persistence of discriminatory and deterring attitudes towards victims of gender-based and domestic violence;
- the funds allotted from the public budget are not adjusted to real cost of living and to the needs of beneficiaries placed in specialised centres;
- the regulatory framework on the mandatory treatment of alcohol and/or drug addiction with a view to rehabilitating the domestic violence perpetrators was not amended;
- the number of cases of domestic violence rated as crimes halved since 2016;
- the shortage of financial and human resources hampers the proper coordination of central- and local-level actions aimed at preventing and combating violence.

## Identified shortcomings refer to:

- the insufficient number of specialised short- and long-term services for domestic violence victims;



The Report on Interim Evaluation was coordinated and developed by the Women's Law Centre, in partnership with the National Coalition 'Life without Domestic Violence', supported by UN Women Moldova and Sweden, under the 'Bringing Moldova Closer to the Ratification of Istanbul Convention' Project.

The report can be found here:  
<https://bit.ly/2HFy3gu>



## NEW PROJECTS ON STRENGTHENING EFFICIENCY AND ACCESS TO JUSTICE IN MOLDOVA

The Women's Law Centre has become a grant beneficiary under the 'Strengthening Efficiency and Access to Justice in Moldova' Project, implemented by UNDP Moldova, with Sweden's support. The input of WLC will be focused on improving the access of domestic violence victims to justice. WLC activities will contribute to achieving several key objectives:

- capitalizing on the expertise and good international practices in the field of forensic medicine in the part related to the interaction of the forensic medicine system with the victims;
- documenting domestic violence cases;
- developing internal procedures for the intervention of forensic doctors in domestic violence cases;
- initiating the review of the Regulation on the Forensic Assessment of Bodily Injury Severity.

Another component of WLC input is the identification, validation and comparison of coordinated intervention practices of actors in the justice sector in cases of domestic violence. Aspects related to cooperation between actors from justice sector in Comrat, Cimișlia, Criuleni and Soroca districts will be analyzed. Based on the analysis, a series of recommendations will be formulated in order to ensure a more efficient coordination of the intervention in accordance with the international standards in the field.

At the same time, a practical model of coordinated response of the justice sector to cases of domestic violence will be proposed and promoted and the capacities of professionals from the four districts in applying the proposed model will be strengthened.



## PATROL AND LOCAL POLICE OFFICERS TO BE TRAINED ON HOW TO RESPOND TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CASES

Activities carried out during the '16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence' Campaign were supplemented by trainings on the best practices in terms of police response to domestic violence cases. The participants were patrol and local police officers. The two-day training helped the trainees enrich their knowledge about:

- factors that trigger and maintain violence;
- myths and realities about domestic violence;
- the forms violence can take;
- the power and control concept;
- the psychosocial profile of the victim and of the abuser;
- police response to domestic violence cases;
- the liability and consequences for people who inflict domestic violence;
- coordinated response of specialists in the field, roles and responsibilities in addressing cases of violence.

The trainings were delivered by the Women's Law Centre, on the basis of the Partnership Agreement with the GPI and in cooperation with the National Public Security Inspectorate of the GPI, with financial support from Sweden, the OAK Foundation and the Embassy of France in Moldova.



## NIJ TRAINEES TRAINED IN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Prosecutors and judges from over 23 districts of the country participated in December in the '*Judicial Practice of Examining Domestic Violence Cases*' workshop. The trainers tackled the phenomenon from the perspective of psychology, the relevant law, the way of investigating the cases, the ECHR case-law on domestic violence, and last but not least, issues arising in the trial of domestic violence offenses were analyzed. The participants presented situations and views from their own experience, and new perspectives and ways of solving the cases of domestic violence were discussed.

The workshop was organised by the WLC in collaboration with the National Institute of Justice, with the support of the Embassy of Sweden.



## SOCIALHUB – A PLATFORM FOR INVOLVED YOUNG PEOPLE

The first edition of the SocialHub platform for young people who discuss, change views and take action in their communities to prevent domestic violence and gender stereotypes was launched in November. We set out with 10 enthusiastic young men and women keen to change things by setting an example.

During the three meetings conducted, we looked into the causes of domestic violence phenomenon and gender stereotypes. We talked about hard situations, the forms of domestic violence, the institutions and professionals that must respond to such cases, and about the role of the society in preventing domestic violence. The young people were challenged to participate in role-playing, to do some research and find out more about the topic. At the last SocialHub 2020 meeting, the young people presented their project ideas, which included awareness-raising, workshops and trainings for adolescents and which could be implemented in 2021. This is the first SocialHub generation. It will support changing attitudes and perceptions around domestic violence and gender stereotypes among the young. Anna Lyberg, Ambassador of Sweden in Chisinau, was there with us and urged the young people to get involved in prevention activities. She shared with us good practices and the experience of Sweden in this area.

We are grateful to the trainers Sergiu Toma and Arina Turcan-Dontu for organising interactive meetings and for the useful information shared with the young people.

The SocialHub was organised by the Women's Law Centre, in partnership with the Youth Media Centre, and with support from Sweden.



## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE – A SUBJECT TACKLED ON THE NATIONAL RADIO STATION

The Women's Law Centre, in partnership with 'Radio Moldova', talked about a range of aspects of domestic violence in a series of radio programs – '**Loc de dialog**' [lit. 'Room for dialogue']. Each of the eight episodes hosted special guests – experts in this area – a lawyer, a psychologist, victim support professionals, artists who have been dedicated to this subject for years.

The goal behind these radio programs was to inform listeners about the society-wide impact of domestic violence, the economic costs of domestic violence, what a safety plan is and why women stuck in abusive relationships should be aware of it, and about overcoming the stereotypes around this subject.



The guests of a few special editions were our peers from 'Stimul' Centre based in Ocnita District, from the 'Interaction' NGO based in the Transnistrian region, from Pro-Femina Maternal Centre based in Hincesti and from the Drochia District Maternal Centre. They talked about how they managed to support domestic violence victims in their regions, how they were affected by the pandemic, what solutions they found to crises.

We are happy that these programs were broadcast online and, therefore, the information is out there, available at any time.

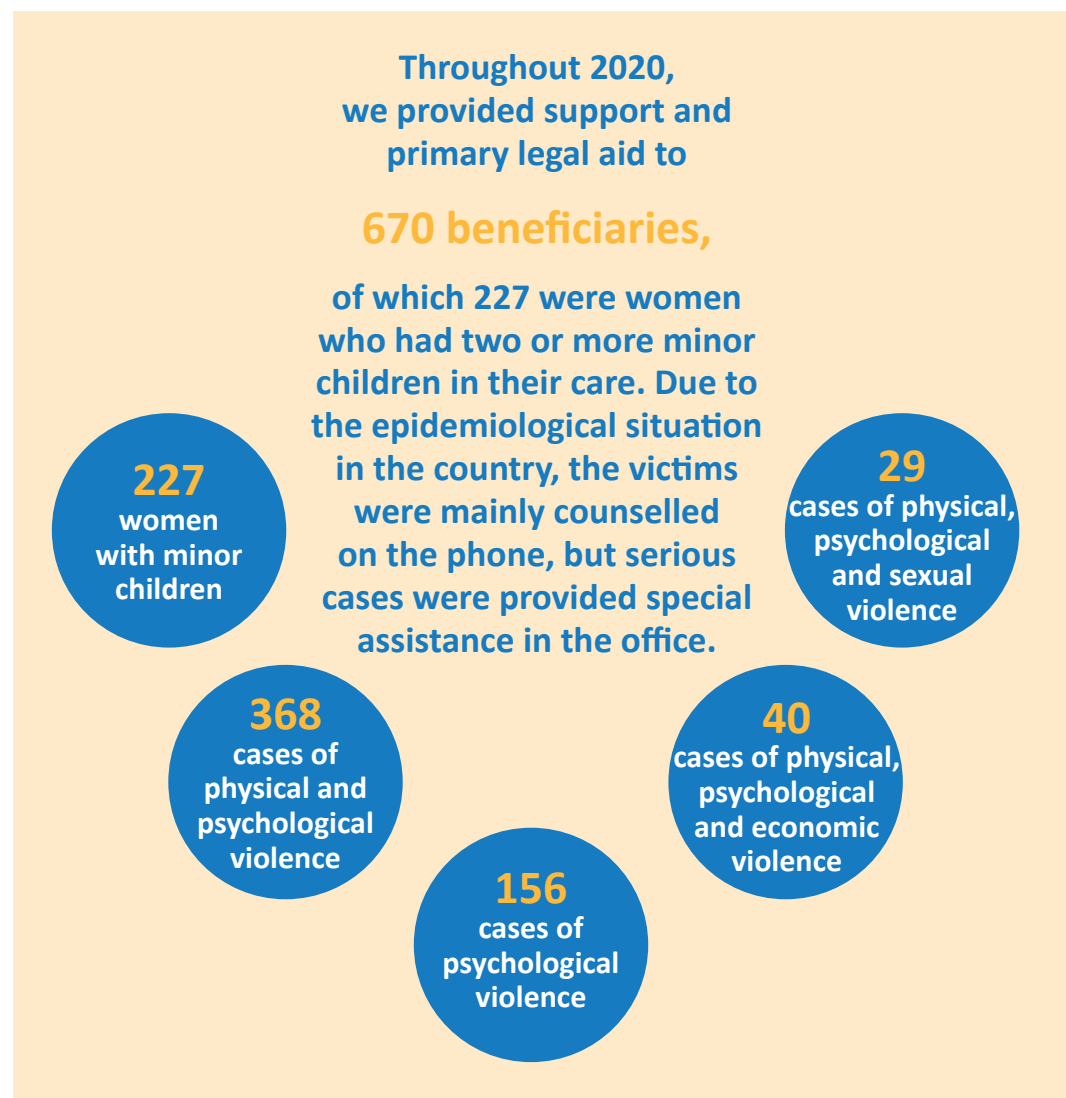
The radio programs were produced thanks to the financial support provided by Sweden.



**Cum explică psihologii violența în familie?**



## SUMMARY OF THE YEAR. THE WLC ACTIVITY IN FIGURES



According to statistics, **376 victims** live in the urban area, while 294 – in the rural one. Women aged between **35** and **44 sought our** services most often, followed by the 25-34 age group and then by the older women **aged 65+**. Most of them have secondary, post-secondary non-tertiary education or incomplete secondary education, while in about **74%** of cases the victims are abused by their intimate partners (husbands, former husbands or former cohabitants).

The WLC facilitated the issuance of 123 Protection Orders. In 54 cases, lawyers were appointed, who represented and continue to represent the victims' interests in court. A share of **75%** of total cases are criminal cases, **15%** – contravention cases and **10%** – civil cases.

While representing the interests of domestic violence victims, the lawyers filed civil claims for pecuniary, non-pecuniary and biological damages in criminal cases. According to court judgements in cases represented by WLC lawyers, the total amount obtained for non-pecuniary damages was **MDL 1,513,427**.

Throughout the year, **133 domestic violence** victims were provided psychological assistance, while social advice on issues around benefits, pensions, allowances or state aid was needed in **110 cases**. Also, six women were granted economic empowerment support, while **17 participated** in 2 master classes organised during August – September 2020.

## ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIMS – INSPIRATIONAL STORIES

The economic empowerment of domestic violence victims is a very important stage in the rehabilitation and reintegration of beneficiaries in social life. Financial independence helps women break out of the violence circle and choose a safe life for themselves and for their children. This year, the Women's Law Centre selected six beneficiaries for the economic empowerment program supported by Sweden. Six women have had the possibility to receive vocational education, re-specialise or develop a business idea. Six women mustered the courage to set out on their journey anew in pursuit of their dreams.

**IOANA** lives in a village in the north of Moldova. She is mother to two little children, and at 26 she is resetting her life. She can't escape the sad memories about her own family. She remembers her parents working the land for a living. She remembers the days when drinking alcohol was their favourite pastime. Until one day, Ioana – who was still very young at that time – found her mother lifeless, beaten to bruises. She realised that something terrible had happened. She took her sister along and they fled to their relatives in another village. There, she continued her education in a college. She met Victor later, who she hoped to be able to rely on in joy and in sorrow. Their marriage appeared beautiful in the beginning, or so Ioana believed. Victor

prohibited her from going out to work because 'he was a man and he was going to provide for the family'. There were no family friends because 'there are no good people in the village, and friends from the past should stay there – in the past' – he used to tell her. The first child of the couple was born before long. Family disputes increased in frequency. Victor started to abuse alcohol and return home drunk. The quarrels were riddled with insults, then with beatings, which caused the preterm birth of the second child. Victor knew that Ioana had no one to go to, that she depended on him financially and that she, he thought, would therefore endure it. But it wasn't the case. Courage sprouted in that heart overflowing with fear and frailness, and Ioana sought help. Ioana and her children were placed in a specialised centre located in the north of the country. The WLC provided her the necessary legal advice and she managed to obtain a protection order. In addition, the economic empowerment project coordinator guided Ioana into finding the area in which she would like to work. After a number of meetings, discussion and analyses, Ioana shed light on one detail. She had decorated the walls of her





room in the placement centre with educational things for children that she had created by herself. That's how she started to believe, to dream, to plan. She wanted to open her own manufacturing studio for producing accessories, education toys, early learning books for children older than 5 months.

Under the economic empowerment program, Ioana was bought a sewing machine, the raw materials and accessories she needed for producing felt activity books and education toys. This will allow Ioana to cover the financial needs of her family and stay with her children.

**CRISTINA** and Ion had a relationship for a while. They had lived together, but because of the quarrels, pressure and psychological violence inflicted onto her and their minor children, Cristina decided to end the relationship. It seemed like something easy to do, but it was only then that the nightmare started. Her partner decided to lock her in her own home and isolate her. Realising that her life and the life of her children was in danger, Cristina sought the services of the WLC. With support from the lawyer, she managed to obtain a protection order. In parallel, she was provided psychological assistance, to help her deal with the difficult situation she was in. Her former partner was stalking Cristina everywhere. He made countless attempts to start discussions, humiliate and offend her in public places. He would call at night and threaten her. Cristina was so scared that she chose to go to work on foot, she would rarely leave home and she would change her phone number often. The pandemic brought along new complications. Besides having lost her job, she was also afraid to leave her minor children home alone. All this time, Cristina was being supported by the lawyer and also given advice on professional matters. She wanted to move to a different line of work, stay with her children and provide for them. The WLC economic empowerment program meant, for Cristina, a chance for a fresh start. She took free manicure and hairstyle courses, and she had the tools she needed to work bought under the economic empowerment program. Cristina is optimistic about succeeding. The first clients didn't take long to appear.

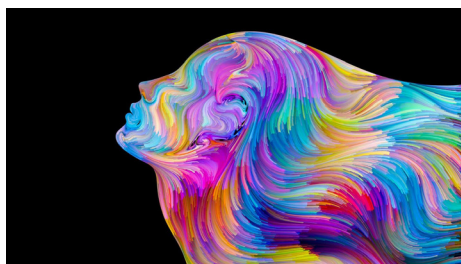




**INGA** sought legal and social aid from the WLC when her family situation became unbearable as the psychological and economic violence inflicted by her husband seemed never-ending. She was studying at the university, but when her daughter was diagnosed with autism, this further limited her chances to find a job. The treatment was expensive, but her husband provided no support at all. So she decided to divorce him and to try to make things work on her own, to establish a calm environment in which both children could feel safe, which was especially crucial for her younger daughter who required a lot of attention and care.

Her passion for speech therapy and her love for children helped her cope in this difficult life period. Under the WLC economic empowerment program, Inga was supported to obtain her degree so as to be able to work as speech therapist. Inga was bought the literature she needed, teaching games and supplies required for speech therapy sessions.

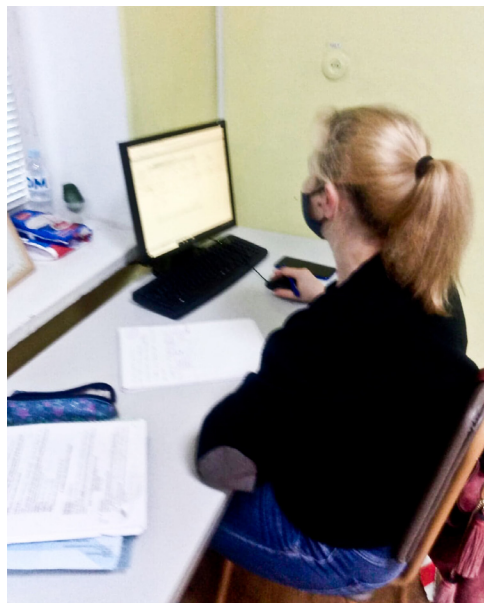
At present she is supporting her autistic daughter with social adaptation. She works, in parallel, with a few children individually, whom she helps overcome their speech issues. She'd like to open, at some point in time, a speech therapy office to be there for children who need her services.



**IRINA** married Mihai after a few years of a beautiful relationship. After their child was born, the relationship between the spouses became more tense: fights, disputes, nights out with friends, uncontrolled aggressiveness. The first time he hit her, she no longer felt safe living under the same roof with him. She was trying to talk to her husband and restrain his aggressive behaviour, especially when he dared start conflicts in front of their child. Then one day, Irina noticed that her husband was spending money for nothing in particular, he wouldn't be at home at night, and when he returned, she would notice some changes in his behaviour and look. Irina realised that Mihai started taking drugs, so she left to her parents. She divorced him. Before long, Mihai caused a car accident on purpose by colliding with the car in which Irina and their child was. She spent a long time in hospital and still requires rehabilitation.

The WLC provided Irina with legal and psychological aid. She was included in the economic empowerment program. Although she has a university degree, she can't be employed yet. The consequences of the accident limit her possibility to move around. It was clear, out of the discussions around career orientation, that she needed to re-specialise. IT seemed an optimal alternative. She tried it and she liked it. With support from the WLC, Irina took a few online courses to learn using Adobe Illustrator and UI/UX Design. She was also bought a laptop to make work easier. Irina is about to enter a new stage of her life, with a new job and new prospects.

**NINA** is mother to three children and lives in a district located in the centre of Moldova. Her husband had been violent during their entire relationship. She was often abused physically, but she never called the police out of embarrassment and out of the fear that she wouldn't be able to manage things alone. After their last quarrel though, when he struck her badly numerous times in the head, she reported the case to the police. The WLC provided Nina the necessary legal aid for her to obtain a protection order. Although her husband had left, he wouldn't stop tormenting her telling her that she had no way of surviving without his salary. He used to be the only bread earner in their family. Nina has lower secondary education only, and no vocational education or work experience. During her marriage she committed herself to her family, to raising the children and to housework. Planning her economic empowerment represented an important stage of the support she was provided. She passed several career tests and participated in a number of interviews focused on identifying what professions fit her. Nina agreed that attending some initial professional training was necessary. She chose accounting because she said she felt more comfortable with exact sciences and because she would be able to work from home. The end of the year was full of excitement and hope for Nina. The accounting training course was paid for by the economic empowerment project and Nina was also bought a laptop to be able to perform her work more efficiently. Nina is an inspiring figure thanks to her courage and desire to change her life. This is not an easy task to accomplish, but with due support and encouragement, difficulties are easier to overcome.



**ANA** used to live in Chisinau with her partner and three children. After one of the last instances of domestic violence, she called the police. The police urged her to also seek the services of the Women's Law Centre.

Ana was provided primary legal aid and counselling psychology. What she wanted the most was for that nightmare she was going through to end. Her world was falling down to pieces. The hits she had received to her head affected her memory. She was no longer able to remember many details that happened in her life. The pandemic-induced quarantine left her jobless and without the income she used to support herself and the children with.



Ana and her children spent a few months in a placement shelter in Chisinau, but they moved to the north of the country in autumn. The children went to school. Ana found a seamstress job. She was initially an intern in the factory, but was then promoted.

In the meantime, Ana was also included in the WLC economic empowerment project. She had her needs assessed and was encouraged to think about what she'd like to achieve in the future. Her experience at the factory helped her realise that it was what she wanted to do. What is more, she has been upgrading her skills by doing clothing repairs at home. The sewing machine, the overcasting machine and other tools she needed for her work were purchased under the economic empowerment project. She would like to expand the range of services in time, to continue working at the factory in hope of a more financially predictable and stable future.

The economic empowerment program is implemented with financial support from Sweden.



## WHO ARE WE?

**WOMEN'S LAW CENTRE (WLC)** is a non-governmental organisation founded by a group of women-lawyers from Moldova. WLC advocates for equality between women and men in the public and family life and helps prevent and combat domestic violence and gender-based violence against women.

This newsletter is Founded by Sweden and OAK Foundation



## CONTACT INFO:

M. Kogalniceanu street, nr. 87  
MD 2009, Chişinău,  
Republic of Moldova  
Tel/fax (+373) 22 811 999  
Mobile: (+373) 68 855 050



Legal counselling – **080080000** (free call)

## PARTNERS:

