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# STOP VIOLENCE

WOMEN'S LAW CENTER

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## Domestic violence training for WLC partners



Women communicators working in Police Inspectorates of Moldova participated in the workshop – Effective public communication in cases of domestic violence.

For two days, guided by the trainers, the participants discussed in detail the importance of proactive communication and the correct wording of messages when dealing with domestic violence.

The workshop highlighted the importance of observing ethical communication rules, how to avoid mistakes in public communication about domestic and gender-based violence and what stereotypes are contributing to a social tolerance of this phenomenon.

Through role-playing activities, the communicators were able to better understand the dynamics of the victim-perpetrator relationship, the difficulties the victim encounters when she finds herself in the circle of violence and what options she has to defend her rights.

We are glad to know that we have such partners. Together we can help prevent domestic violence.





## Domestic violence training for WLC partners



For the past seven years, the Moldovan librarian community has been an important resource for promoting domestic violence prevention activities. This autumn, 26 librarians were trained for this purpose.

Instructed by our trainers, Sergiu Toma (IFSI psychologist) and Arina Turcanu (WLC lawyer), they learned more about:

- principles of communication with the victim of domestic violence
- what options does the victim have? who can help?
- how to interact with the victim/potential victim of domestic violence
- the librarian's intervention plan depending on the seriousness of the case
- how librarians can help prevent and combat domestic violence

- access by beneficiaries to first aid information available in the library

Two days were devoted to interactive activities, discussions and analysis of the situations in the communities they come from and how they can get involved as librarians.

We thank the participants for their constant willingness to get involved. Our collaboration will continue

with 10 exciting projects to be implemented from October to December 2022.

The training 'Librarian – community resource for victims of domestic violence' was organised by the Women's Law Centre in partnership with the Association of Librarians of Moldova, with the financial support of The Sigrid Rausing Trust and Sweden.



# Social Hub 2022 – a platform for active young people promoting gender equality



They applied early, were selected and here they are from all over Moldova. They are curious, bold and motivated to learn about gender stereotypes and domestic violence.

- *'I'm glad to learn about the laws that protect victims and punish abusers, as well as the origins of certain gender stereotypes. I was able to outline a project together with colleagues and identified partners who can be helpful in implementing future projects.'*
- *'I learned new things about the early signs of an unhealthy relationship and where victims should turn for confidential help.'*

The young participants of Social Hub 2022 have completed the first stage of training in which they learned more about the extent of domestic violence

and the gender stereotypes that accompany this social problem. The trainers took care to involve them in thought-provoking activities and situations. The young people also went through an exercise to identify solutions and turn ideas into projects.

Between October and December, 10 of them will receive a USD 1,000 grant to implement projects to promote gender equality in their communities. This way, the messages of non-violence in the family will reach young people from different regions of Moldova.

This is the third year that WLC is organising the Social Hub and we can



assure you that each generation is to be admired for the depth of the ideas they bring to the table, and the most pleasing is the willingness to get involved.

The Social Hub is an initiative of the Women's Law Centre supported financially by Sweden, providing space for young people to discuss and take action to prevent domestic violence and gender stereotypes





# Projects supporting refugees

## The project 'Engaged People. Connected Communities' – the results of the first 6 months of activity

In the first five months of activity, 10 mobile teams travelled the length and breadth of Moldova to provide legal and psychological counselling and social assistance to refugees living in the country's communities. They heard thousands of stories, experienced the dramas of war with them, connected them to the community, sending them a simple message – You are not alone!



The members of the project's 10 mobile teams also participated in trainings provided and guided by the implementation team and Oxfam experts. The teams had the opportunity to share experiences, challenges and successes. They strengthened their communication skills and understanding of the rules of interaction with refugees.

Between May and September, 391 community visits were carried out and 3,683 refugees and 1,238 local people helped. At the same time, 22 social cohesion community initiatives have been selected for local implementation.



### Priority issues identified in discussions with refugees and host families:

- Emotional trauma related to war and separation from family members;
- Health problems, limited access to health services and medicines;
- Lack of housing, of the possibility to rent and maintain it;
- Difficulties in obtaining refugee status papers and other documents;
- Lack of stable employment and income;
- Isolation and lack of communication.

*The project 'Engaged People. Connected Communities' is implemented by the Women's Law Centre with support from Oxfam with the aim of preventing and responding to gender-based violence in the context of the refugee crisis between April 2022 and April 2023.*

### We constantly provide:

- Legal, social and psychological support to refugees and locals;
- Individual financial support to solve urgent refugee problems;
- Initiatives to respond to common needs in 22 refugee-hosting localities;
- Referral of difficult cases to the support system;
- Dissemination of information and prevention of gender-based violence and protection of marginalised people.



# Projects supporting refugees

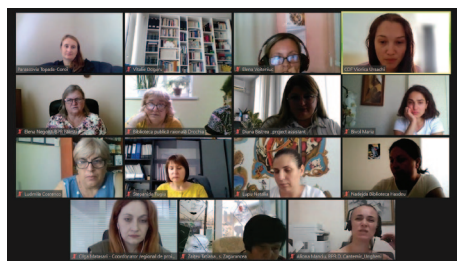
## Libraries turned into safe spaces for locals and refugees from Ukraine

The Women's Law Centre has trained 20 women librarians who are now ready to assist refugees from Ukraine.

Mariana BURUIANĂ, director of WLC: *'In the course of our collaboration with local libraries we have become convinced that these institutions are a valuable resource in addressing the social problems faced by communities, especially women and girls. In the context of the war in Ukraine and the presence of thousands of refugees in our country, we want to strengthen the capacities of libraries in order to create information opportunities, but also to transform them into safe spaces for refugee women and girls from the host communities.'*

Psychologist Sergiu Toma, President of IFSI, spoke about the needs of refugees and how to work with them, drawing on the stories they are ready to tell. He brought the librarians' attention to the rules for providing assistance and the principles of organising support for refugees.

Psychologist Parascovia Topada-Coroi, child protection trainer, National Center for Child Abuse Prevention, explained to the training participants how to create a safe environment for refugee children and what are the signs of reaction



Ludmila COSTENCO, librarian, Palanca, Ștefan Vodă:

”Currently there are 140 refugees in the village, of which 40 are children. In the library, we organise various activities for them and offer our help whenever needed. Now, with the support of the WLC, we will be able to make the library a safe space for both refugees and locals and diversify our assistance to beneficiaries.’

to stress and other traumatic events in children's lives and how an adult should react in such situations.

The librarians shared the stories of refugees living in Moldovan localities and how they react to the new realities. Based on these stories, the workshop participants identified possible intervention solutions for similar cases. They participated in various practical exercises to better understand the rules of psychological first aid.

Under the project, ten libraries across the country are to have safe, multi-purpose spaces where refugees will be able to communicate and find the services they need, with librarians mediating and facilitating access to them.

The project 'Libraries bring change to the community during the refugee crisis' is implemented by the Women's Law Centre in partnership with the Librarians Association of Moldova, with financial support from the International Rescue Committee.

Aliona MANCIU, librarian, Ungheni:

”Today we learned how to better acknowledge and understand the needs of the refugees who stay in our city in order to provide them with the assistance they need. We want to create friendly spaces where those in need can feel comfortable and we want to provide them with everything they need to feel at ease.’



## Projects supporting refugees

### The specifics of humanitarian aid explained to librarians from different regions

The Women's Law Centre organised a workshop on 'Strengthening the response to the refugee crisis in Moldova', within the framework of the project supported by Care International and SERA Romania, which took place on 26-27 September in Chişinău.

The event is part of the actions to transform libraries into safe and friendly spaces for people receiving humanitarian assistance.

The training sessions were attended by librarians from Soroca, Criuleni (Boşcana), Anenii Noi (Hîrbovăţ), Ialoveni and Hînceşti (Cărpineni), as well



as some representatives of the local public administration.

The librarians were trained on the role of humanitarian assistance in managing domestic violence crises, threats and challenges, case management, the minimum standards for safe and friendly spaces for girls and women, how to communicate effectively, and other aspects for the smooth implementation of the project.

The workshop aimed to enable librarians to provide an effective, efficient

and targeted response for people affected by the crisis.

The participants received guidance, orientation and support in carrying out the project activities.



## Projects supporting refugees

Over 500 refugee women and 400 children are integrated into local communities

Since the beginning of the humanitarian crisis, WLC has been working with refugees from Ukraine. Through the project *'Building Peace through the Resilience of Women, Organisations and Communities'*, 12 grantee organisations are implementing activities to integrate refugee women and their children into host communities.

ACenter and South regions and are oriented towards women's economic empowerment, personal development, community dialogues (with the involvement of local authorities) and social inclusion. So far, 20 activities with the participation of 500 refugee wom-



en and 400 children have taken place under the project, with further activities to take place in October-November. The refugees learned how to bake our traditional pie, cooked meals with the local community, participated in meditation and yoga sessions, learned all about how to start a business, visited scenic places across the country, had psychotherapy sessions, were encouraged to take up new professions to earn money here in our country, and much more. All these activities are tailored to the needs of the refugees assessed at the beginning of the project.

In August, 34 professionals from grantee organisations participated in a training on crisis management and



crisis communication, building responsive communities and community mobilisation, integration and intercultural programs for children, women and communities, addressing cultural differences. This session provided local professionals with new knowledge and encouraged them to adopt different approaches in their work.

To be more visible, grantee organisations are mentored weekly on communication and visibility where they learn

how to write copy for social media, how to grow their page's audience and how to partner with local media.

The project *'Building Peace through the Resilience of Women, Organisations and Communities'* will run until the end of this year and is implemented by the Women's Law Centre in partnership with the National Coalition 'Life without Violence', with the support of UN Women and funded by the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund.



# IMPULS project grantees promote change in their communities



**CRISTINA SCHIMBOV** continues the series of trainings on 'Preventing cases of gender discrimination in the workplace' for the colleagues working in GPI subdivisions and police inspectorates from the capital and the centre of the country.

The topics discussed included:

- gender discrimination;
- identification of cases of gender discrimination;
- gender discrimination in the Police and Equality Council decisions;
- the situation of women in the Police, perceptions and findings;
- the impact of gender discrimination on the police force and the institution;
- measures to prevent gender discrimination.

- The trainings are conducted by the Association of Women in Police, funded by the Impuls Grant Program implemented by the Women's Law Centre and supported by Sweden.



**INNA CHIRILIUC**, Senior Prosecution Officer in the General Prosecution Department of the GPI, organised training activities for prosecution officers with the aim of helping colleagues gain more knowledge in investigating cases of gender-based violence.

'Police officers have to struggle with common stereotypes about the underlying causes of various crimes and need ongoing information to overcome these prejudices. Trainings and exchange of experience are very important in the context of the ratification of the Istanbul Convention and of the changes made to the legislation on several gender-related issues, both for experienced and novice prosecution officers,' said Chiriliuc.

During the workshops, the prosecution officers discussed the enforcement of procedural safeguards for victims of gender-based violence and the importance of standardising the practice of documenting sexual and domestic violence cases.

'The practices of some colleagues show us that there are still divergences in the application of legislation at the level of the institutions. During these trainings we learned how important it



is to have unified law enforcement for crimes related to gender-based violence. We now have a better understanding of our actions on the ground, from the accumulation of evidence to the conclusion of the criminal case,' said Cătălina Oboroc, prosecution officer of the Central PI.



# IMPULS project grantees promote change in their communities



**VLAD BUSMACHIU** organised trainings on counselling for social integration of women serving their sentence for violence against their aggressors.

‘Every person is a separate story. Imprisonment, the type of crime committed or other similarity does not mean that all people are the same or have the same mindset,’ says psychologist Sergiu Toma. For two days he spoke to the professionals from the National Administration of Penitentiaries (NAP) who counsel women convicted of violence against their aggressors about the differentiated approach to beneficiaries.

These activities are part of a larger project that includes the creation and adoption of a strengthened program of assistance for women who have ended up in prison for a crime committed after being subjected to domestic violence. The program will also focus on helping these women develop the skills needed to reintegrate into society after release.

The NAP professionals welcomed the creation of a rehabilitation program for women sen-



tenced to prison for violence against their aggressors. ‘With the approval at institutional level of a rehabilitation program, we will be able to put into practice in an organised way all the available mechanisms to meet the needs of the prisoners and give them the opportunity to reintegrate into society better prepared psychologically and socially,’ said Ana Turuta, Senior Officer of the NAP social reintegration division.

The training ‘Independent living skills’ is part of the project ‘Rehabilitation program for women victims of GBV sentenced to deprivation of liberty for acts of violence against their aggressor’ developed by Vladislav Buşmachiou, Senior Officer of the Cooperation and External Programs Section of the General Division of Institutional Management of the NAP. The aim of the program is to put in place a mechanism at NAP level to develop the skills of women sentenced to prison for violence against their aggressors after release from prison.

**MARIA MURUIANU** – The victims of domestic violence and gender-based violence will be able to receive free legal advice at the Legal Clinic from students of the Law Faculty of the State University of Moldova. The trainings are part of the project ‘Legal Clinic team in the fight against gender-based violence against women and children’ launched under the IMPULS program.

‘The issue of gender-based violence is particularly pressing for the Republic of Moldova, both legally and socially. I very much appreciate that the training focused primarily on prevention as a solution to reduce the number of cases of violence. As future professionals and members of society, we will have a better understanding of how to respond to such cases,’ said Nicoleta Budurin, 4th year student, Faculty of Law, MSU.

During the project implemented by Maria Muruianu, a beneficiary of the Impuls Grant Program, 30 students will be trained to recognize and iden-



tify different types of domestic violence, to learn more about documenting and reporting cases. They will also take on the role of informing people about domestic violence and its consequences so as to prevent such cases.



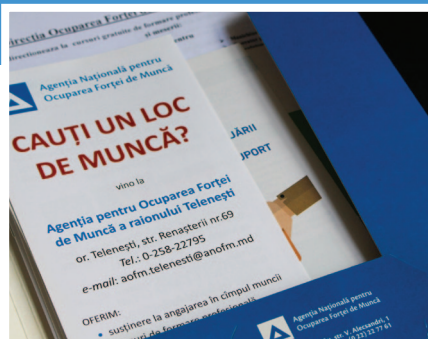
The projects implemented by IMPULS Small Grants Program grantees are financially supported by Sweden through the Women's Law Centre.



# Girls and women from rural areas participate in economic empowerment programs

Welcome to Telenești, where we have also visited with an economic empowerment program for women in the community.

For several days the beneficiaries had the opportunity to identify their personal and professional resources, acquire new knowledge, skills and outline a personal plan of action.



The trainers created an atmosphere of trust in which to practice effective communication and identify methods of managing stress and conflict.

The colleagues from the National Employment Agency presented to the participants the services they can benefit from and the local economic operators gave details about the opportunities and difficulties in the labour market.

We were impressed by the diversity of services provided by the 'Vasile Alecsandri' Public Library of Telenești. It is

a place where both children and the elderly spend time – an example of community involvement and civic attitude.

Telenești is one of the 5 districts where the program 'Economic empowerment of survivors of gender-based violence' will be piloted, together with Bălți, Soroca, Ștefan Vodă and Hîncești districts.

The project 'Support for the joint creation of economic empowerment programs for women survivors of gender-based violence' is implemented by the Women's Law Centre in partnership with the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Republic of Moldova, with the support of UN Women Moldova and the financial support of Sweden.



## NEWS IN BRIEF ■ NEWS IN BRIEF ■ NEWS IN BRIEF



The second meeting of the Commission for monitoring and analysis of cases of domestic violence resulting in victims' death or serious bodily harm presented the cases to be examined during the year.

The committee members will come up with solutions and recommendations to improve the intervention mechanisms. The ultimate goal is to significantly reduce cases of femicide in Moldova.

WLC, as a member of this commission, supports the authorities' efforts with relevant expertise and the involvement of its staff so that efforts are coordinated and impactful. The Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Moldova chairs and provides the secretariat of the Commission. The commission will analyse cases of femicide, in partnership with several NGOs specialised in the prevention of domestic violence in our country.



'Law enforcement response to violence against women and girls: challenges and opportunities' is the topic of an international conference organised in September by the OSCE Mission to Warsaw.

Mariana Buruiană, Executive Director of the Women's Law Centre also attended the meeting to exchange best practices and identify innovative approaches in the region and was one of the speakers in the panel discussion that brought together law enforcement representatives, experts in preventing and combating



GBV and civil society representatives.

The issues analysed included:

- the tools that can be used by the police to ensure a woman-centred approach to women experiencing domestic violence?
- how can the police fight institutional misogyny and enable institutional changes that will have a positive impact on GBV responses?
- how can we increase trust between police and communities when it comes to GBV?





The Government of the Republic of Moldova has approved a draft law that aligns the national legislative framework in the field of preventing and combating domestic violence with the provisions of the Istanbul Convention. The amendments involve tougher punishments for perpetrators and increased safety for victims. The perpetrators will be required to attend programs aimed at increasing responsibility and changing violent behaviour. Forced medical treatment will be applied to the accused in case of alcohol/drug addiction, confirmed by medical opinion. Domestic violence committed more than once over a period of time will be punishable by 4 to 6 years.

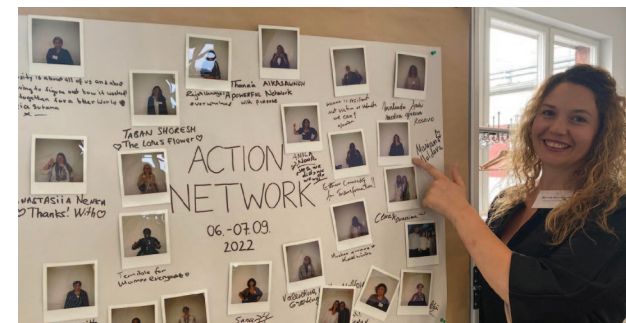
The victim of domestic violence will additionally have the following rights:

- to be referred, in the course of criminal proceedings and judicial examination, to medical, legal, psychological and counselling services and, if necessary, to shelter services;
- to be assisted, under the law, by a lawyer providing state-guaranteed legal aid;
- to refuse, in accordance with the law, to confront the accused face to face;
- the judge should explain to the victim how to access the services and provide contact details;

- the police body should ensure that the victim is personally informed, in confidence, of the date of the sentenced person's release and should provide advice on how to obtain protection, if necessary.

The need to adjust the national regulatory framework to the provisions of the Istanbul Convention was identified following the preparation of the Second Report on the analysis of the compatibility of national legislation with the provisions of the Convention (2018).

The successful approval of the draft law is the result of the joint efforts between state institutions, civil society, including the Women's Law Centre, with the support of the Swedish Embassy and UN Women.



On 6-7 September, Mariana Buruiană, WLC Director, attended the annual meeting of the *Action Network on Forced Displacement: Women as Agents of Change* in Berlin.

The large-scale event brought together speakers from different countries – strong women with extensive expertise in several fields – to discuss the importance of recognising the expertise of refugees and ensuring their meaningful participation in decision-making. The role of displaced people in unequal and patriarchal societies was also discussed, as well as how it relates to the challenges of the current crises.

Launched in October 2020, the *Action Network on Forced Displacement: Women as Agents of Change* aims to strengthen the political and economic participation of women affected by forced displacement, while serving as a revolutionary global advocacy platform to increase their visibility, knowledge sharing, networking opportunities and resource mobilization efforts.



The first Alliance for Women's Economic Empowerment in Moldova was formed by 11 civil society organisations and businesswomen's associations. The members of the alliance will promote the alleviation of gender inequalities in entrepreneurship and the labour market, and its mission is to help reduce barriers to women's economic empowerment.

The Alliance was launched as part of the 'Reducing Barriers to Women's Economic Empowerment' program of the Women and Girls Empowered Consortium (WAGE), implemented by ABA ROLI Moldova and the Center for International Private Enterprise and local implementing partners: the Women's Law Centre and the Center for Entrepreneurship and Economic Policy.



A cooperation agreement with the Chişinău Police Department of the GPI of the MIA was signed by the Women's Law Centre and the institution in charge of prevention and intervention in cases of domestic violence and gender-based violence. The agreement provides for cooperation on cases of domestic violence, referral of victims to WLC services, participation in training programs and joint organisation of information sessions on the prevention of domestic violence.



Congratulations to the authors of the course material 'Domestic and gender-based violence', Mr. Andrei Pădure and Ms. Turcan Arina for the silver medal received at the European Exhibition of Creativity and Innovation 2022.

Starting with the academic year 2018-2019, at the Department of Forensic Medicine of the State University of Medicine and Pharmacy 'Nicolae Testemiţanu', the course

'Domestic and Gender-Based Violence' was introduced. Naturally, in order to carry out training, teaching tools are needed. The 'Domestic and Gender-Based Violence' course material is one of these, providing health professionals with all the theoretical information they need to ensure an appropriate response.

The course material is a national first, so it was registered by SUMP 'Nicolae Testemiţanu' as an innovation. As a result, it received an award in this category this year.

It was developed with the support of the Women's Law Centre in the framework of the project 'Strengthening efficiency and access to justice in Moldova' implemented by UNDP Moldova and financially supported by Sweden.







About 140 police employees participated in information sessions on how to fill in a data collection form in cases of domestic violence resulting in death or serious bodily harm to victims.

The information sessions were attended by heads of territorial subdivisions subordinated to the GPI, Chiefs of Police Inspectorates, Heads of Public Security Sections and Prosecution Sections from the 36 districts of the country.

The information activities were organised in the context of the establishment in May 2022 of the Commission

for Monitoring and Analysis of Femicide Cases. According to the WLC's 2020 femicide report, around 40 women die every year in Moldova due to lack of a coordinated response and lack of access to specialised services for women with multiple vulnerabilities. In order to prevent such cases, the newly created Commission aims to analyse these cases with a view to identifying gaps in the case handling process in order to strengthen the system's response to cases of domestic violence.

The information workshops were organised by the Women's Law Centre

in partnership with the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Moldova and the General Police Inspectorate of the Republic of Moldova, under the sub-component aiming to support the work of the Commission for monitoring and analysis of cases of domestic violence resulting in victims' death or serious bodily harm. This activity is organised as part of the Project 'Creating a Family Justice Center in Moldova', funded by the United States Department of State, Criminal Justice and Law Enforcement Section.



# You have the right to live safely!



## 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.

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## PARTNERS:

