

# NEWSLETTER

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# STOP VIOLENCE



JANUARY to MARCH

WOMEN'S LAW CENTRE

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# WOMEN'S PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM – A NEWLY CREATED SERVICE AT THE WOMEN'S LAW CENTRE

The Personal Development Program is a new component of WLC's services, which was designed by our organization in collaboration with psychotherapists and career guidance mentors and aims to provide beneficiaries with the skills and competencies needed to embark on the path to financial independence and self-sufficiency.



## What does this program provide for survivors of domestic and gender-based violence?

- the opportunity to pursue the profession they want
- the ability to negotiate a salary that they deserve
- the ability to manage, with more confidence, the money they earn
- self-confidence to rebuild their lives
- the opportunity to start income-generating activities
- stress management skills
- a network of support and encouragement from other women who have gone through similar experiences

In autumn 2023, a group of 15 women participated in the pilot version of the Program. During one month the participants were involved in exercises and activities on self-awareness and harmonious relationships, stress management and goal setting,

developing basic conflict resolution skills and assertive communication skills.

The long-term goal is to make the Program accessible to as many women as possible who want to make sustainable changes in their lives. In addition to training in basic skills essential for employment, women will have the opportunity to develop their own business ideas.



[Watch the video here](#)



# REAL STORIES OF WOMEN WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

## HOW THE FUNDS RAISED AT THE 2022 FUNDRAISING EVENT CHANGED THESE WOMEN'S DESTINIES\*

In 2022 we organised our first fundraising event. 'Together we change lives' was the motto of the event and together we succeeded. We then sold at an auction 5 quilling art paintings made by a group of 20 women who had been affected by domestic violence. It was the way these women chose to support other women. We managed to collect MDL 75 000 from the sale of paintings and donations made by people present at the event. This money has changed the lives of 5 of our beneficiaries. Next we tell you the story of these women and how the money was spent.



**Maria** first sought help from the Women's Law Centre in the autumn of 2023. She was left alone with three children after divorcing her abusive husband. These were 10 years of surviving, not living. The violence she had been subjected to in recent years had shattered her confidence that she could cope on her own.

At the WLC she was given legal advice on the procedure for increasing the amount of child support from her ex-husband and on the procedure for transferring the

allowance for the child under 3 years old from the father to the mother. The WLC social worker assessed the case and determined that Maria was finding it difficult to provide for her basic needs, including those of her children. We offered her immediate material support to improve her situation. We helped her buy seasonal footwear and school supplies for the children. After a series of psychotherapy sessions Maria understood that she was not alone and step by step she gained self-confidence. After the divorce, she moved in with her three children into her mother's apartment who needed care, having been bedridden after suffering a stroke.

Maria also received advice on achieving economic empowerment. She had studied to become a seamstress and owned a sewing machine, but she still needed a few more supplies to streamline her work and provide better services.

With the money raised at the fundraising event, a special ironing board and an overlock machine were purchased. Thanks to the people who donated, Maria earns her own money. She sews custom-made clothes, makes puppets for theatre plays and felt teaching materials for kindergarteners. She wants to continue her studies and get better in her chosen field.

\*The names were changed to protect the person's identity.

# Valentina

is a fighter in every sense of the word. Having been the victim of physical, economic and psychological violence at the hands of her father, her life has been strewn with hardships from an early age. The traumas she suffered as a child left deep scars on her soul, but failed to break her spirit.

At the Women's Law Centre, she received primary legal aid, material aid for her child, vocational counselling, and participated in occupational therapy workshops. She



also received psychological support for several months, which was very helpful in her healing process. In the autumn of 2023, Valentina successfully completed the pilot version of the Personal Development Program designed by our organisation in collaboration with psychotherapists and career guidance mentors. She is now much more self-confident, and she has acquired skills that help her in the transformation process.

Valentina has recently completed a short course in accounting. The money raised will be used to purchase a laptop and authorised access to an accounting program. She wants to take up this profession to ensure her financial independence. With every step she takes towards a better future, she proves that nothing is impossible when you have an iron will and the support of those around you.



**Ana** has a story of courage and determination. Her past is marked by a marriage that turned into a nightmare of domestic violence. She was forced to leave that hell and the divorce process was just the beginning of a fierce battle for freedom and safety.

She turned to the Women's Law Centre and received support from several professionals. She has been given legal advice

and has been informed about her rights and how to proceed in certain complicated situations. Ana received psychological support to overcome trauma and emotional bottlenecks. She has participated in several occupational therapy workshops organised by the WLC. The woman received the necessary counselling for achieving economic empowerment.

Ana is passionate about the field of social assistance. She enjoys getting involved in volunteering activities. Moreover, she was nominated as volunteer of the year. In 2021 she enrolled in a Master's program in social assistance. Being a good student with A grades in all subjects she applied to be transferred to Government-sponsored schooling, but her application was rejected. Material difficulties prevented her from pursuing her dream of continuing her education.

Donations raised at the 2022 fundraising event made it possible to pay for the final year's tuition fee for the Master's degree. The people who donated did not only give a sum of money, but offered hope and encouragement for the future of Ana and her child.

The woman was enrolled in the Personal Development Program, organised for the first time by WLC in the autumn of 2023. Ana had the opportunity to discover her true potential and increase her self-confidence. This program is like an oasis of resources and support. The program wasn't just about learning and personal development, it was also about building a strong community of women who support each other on their journey to success and independence.







**Svetlana** found the courage to ask for our help and make her voice heard. At the WLC she received primary legal aid, psychological, social and vocational support.

Svetlana is raising a child with special needs on her own. She is aware that with every step she takes she sets an example for her son and she wants to provide him with a safe future. The woman has a master's degree in music education and pedagogy.



With the money raised, several musical instruments were purchased to run music therapy sessions for children with speech impairment, autism-spectrum disorder and Down syndrome. She is confident that she can use her knowledge and experience to help children with special needs

develop harmoniously. The extra hours she works with children are an additional source of income and a way to use her skills and passion for music to secure a more stable future for herself and her son.

**Irina** has been through a nightmare that many could never imagine. The woman was subjected to physical, psychological and economic violence over several years. The episodes of violence became increasingly serious, escalating into life-threatening situations. After surgeries and complex treatments, Irina found the courage to leave that relationship, realizing that it was the only chance for her and her children to survive.

Irina turned to the Women's Law Centre and received support from several professionals. The woman received primary legal aid, material aid, psychological support and vocational counselling.

Irina is a trained sales clerk-cashier but has no work experience. She lives with her three children in a rental. In addition to financial difficulties, she is responsible for caring for her mother, who has cancer, and for

her child, who needs regular special treatment after a skull fracture. The vocational counsellor at the WLC helped Irina identify her interests and skills and explore training and employment opportunities that would ensure her future economic independence. She completed a confectionery course offered by the National Employment Agency. She was keen to start her own business, but needed the tools to do so.

The money raised at the fundraising event was used to purchase an electric oven, a food processor and a refrigerator. With the support of the people who donated, Irina has favourable conditions for personal and financial development. She is determined to build a career in baking and a dignified and safe life with her children.





# THE FUNDRAISING EVENT – TRANSFORMATION

250 people gathered on the evening of 4 April 2024 at the ‘TRANSFORMATION’ fundraising event to support women's courage to embark on the path of transformation. It is a unique event that aims to raise funds to support women affected by domestic violence on their path to financial autonomy. The event is an initiative of the Women's Law Centre and is at its second edition.



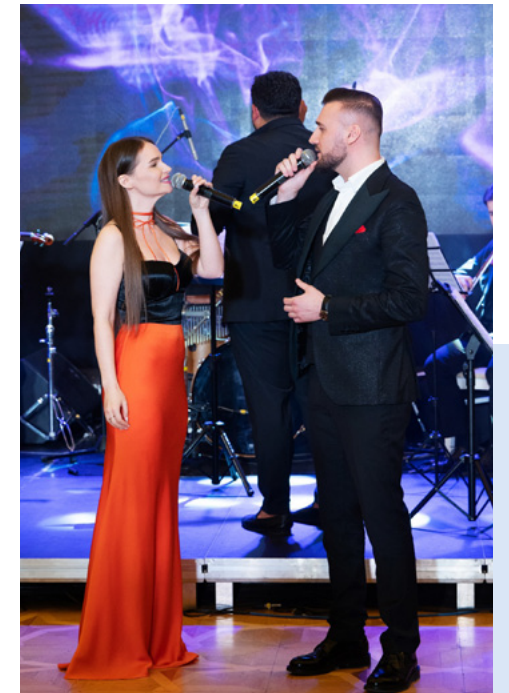
It was a magical, very emotional evening alongside supportive, empathetic, and like-minded people. The soprano Ana Cernicova presented her premiere song „Dar eu tac” (t/n: ‘But I’m Staying Silent’), providing the audience with a very special musical experience. With her deep lyrics and emotional melody, Ana shared her story that inspires courage in other women to end abusive relationships.

The concert performed by Ana Cernicova, Dumitru Mîțu, the Moldovan National Youth Orchestra, ‘Lia Ciocarlia’ children's choir under the direction of conductor Andriano Marian was a musical performance that brought tears of joy and hope. Thanks to them, the message of the event has entered people's hearts, giving way to solidarity, support and the joy of helping women who have experienced domestic violence.

Actress Olesea Sveclă's creative performance during the event's evening immersed the guests in a different reality, allowing them to experience the struggles faced by women who are victims of domestic violence and the importance of the society's support.



This was followed by a performance by Olga Goncear, a beneficiary of the Centre, a woman who had the courage and strength to share her life story. Olga's song was the perfect addition to the emotional and sensitive mood.





As a result of the event, **MDL 122.345** were collected from ticket sales, auction and donations. The financial sources will be directed towards the Women's Law Centre's Personal Development and Economic Empowerment Program, which will enable beneficiaries to step on the path to financial independence and self-sufficiency.

The evening continued with a charity auction of special items donated by supporters of the Women's Law Centre: Stela Moldovanu, Nicoleta Vacaru, Les Perles, Casa Cristea, Aurelia Bulat, Olga Gonciar, the International Women's Club and the President of the Republic of Moldova, Maia Sandu.

We express our gratitude to all partners, supporters and guests who have contributed, who believe in change and support transformations in the lives of women and children in Moldova.

The organisation of the event was made possible thanks to the support of the Swedish funders, OAK Foundation (through ARC Romania), the Sigrid Rausing Trust, the International Women's Club and the partners Asconi Winery and Cabina Foto Creciun. We also thank our media partners TVR Moldova, KissFM Chişinău and Newsmaker.md.

We thank the moderator Iurie Nistorică for once again choosing to support the cause of our organization this year. His involvement made the event a memorable one. We thank everyone involved in organising the TransFORMATION event.

We will continue to work with determination and passion to promote the rights of women in Moldova and to make victims of domestic and gender-based violence feel safe and protected. Every action counts and every step we take together brings us closer to this vision.



[Watch the video here](#)



## WLC BENEFICIARIES WILL BE ECONOMICALLY EMPOWERED THANKS TO A DONATION FROM MOLDINDCONBANK

The Women's Law Centre will support its beneficiaries on their path to economic empowerment thanks to a mini football tournament organised by Moldindconbank in partnership with the International Women's Club.



The donation of MDL 200 000 gives women who have been affected by domestic violence the opportunity to develop their business ideas or get an education to secure a decent future.

- **Tatiana** will start her own floriculture business. She will set up a flower greenhouse.
- **Ludmila** will take hairdressing courses to pursue a profession that will give her and the child she is raising a better future.
- **Diana** sews swimwear for women. She wants to expand her business by adding little black dress designs to her portfolio.

- **Natalia** is 17 years old. Currently, she lives in a shelter. She had to separate from her parents because of physical abuse and neglect. The young woman needs financial support to continue her education.

We thank the teams who dedicated their time to a charitable cause in support of women affected by violence. We are deeply grateful to the International Women's Club for their trust, together with whom we will organise other events relevant to women in Moldova. We thank Moldindconbank for their support!





# HOME REMAINS THE MOST DANGEROUS PLACE FOR WOMEN - LAUNCH OF THE 2023 LETHALITY REPORT

On 25 March 2024, on the platform of the Commission in charge of monitoring and analysing the cases of domestic violence resulting in victims' death or severe harm to bodily integrity, the Women's Law Centre in partnership with the Ministry of Internal Affairs presented the analysis of cases for the year 2023.



In most cases the victims died in their own homes. Home remains the most dangerous place for women to be, becoming victims and even losing their lives as a result of gender inequality and stereotypes.

According to data from the Global Study on Homicide (UNODC, 2020) the number of women killed by intimate partners or other family members is much higher, accounting for about 6 in 10 people. The killing of women and girls by intimate partners or other family members is one of the most extreme and serious manifestations of gender-based violence. Such killings are often the culmination of previous experiences of gender-based violence which can include psychological, sexual and physical violence.

It is important that these cases don't just end up as a grim statistic. Every case of femicide is a tragedy. It is our responsibility to ensure that these tragedies are not forgotten and that we take the necessary measures to prevent and eliminate gender-based violence.

In 2023, there was a decrease in the number of cases of domestic violence resulting in victims' death or severe harm to bodily integrity, from 86 to 75 registered cases.

The data presented by the commission shows that out of 69 cases analysed, **34 resulted in the victims' death** as a result of intimate partner violence, including **21 women and 13 men**, while 37 other victims survived. It is horrifying to note that in 6 of these cases, minors were present while the crimes were committed, and in 4 of them, the children themselves were the victims.

# LOCAL INITIATIVES TO PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY IN MOLDOVA

**Participants from the 10 selected districts in the project 'Empowering Women, Local Communities and Refugees in Moldova' organised a round table in each district to discuss the importance of gender equality and to consult the opinion of key community stakeholders in order to exchange ideas and prospects in this field, which will then be transposed by the participants into a project concept.**

The events were attended by representatives of local public authorities, professionals from the educational system, healthcare, social assistance, civil society, parents and students. Gender equality needs and issues in each district were discussed and an exchange of opinions was encouraged between the project participants, who spo-

ke about the issues they identified, and the community stakeholders, who shared their views on the topics discussed.

After conducting consultations with key community stakeholders, participants reviewed the findings and recommendations that came from the community and formulated concept notes in which they briefly presented the gender equality issue identified in their community, the group they propose to work with, the beneficiaries of the local initiative and listed the activities to be implemented.

Between 21-22 March 2024, local leaders from the 10 districts participated in a training on writing project proposals in the field



of gender equality and combating gender stereotypes. The aim of the training was to provide participants with the necessary skills and resources to develop project proposals.

10 projects will be selected and participants will receive grants of USD 10 000 each from the Women's Law Centre, with financial support from the United Nations Democracy Fund, to implement local initiatives in the districts: Orhei, Soroca, Glodeni, Căușeni, Ștefan Vodă, Ialoveni, Criuleni, Cimișlia, Dondușeni și Florești.

Through the training program and funding, we aim to encourage project participants

to act as agents of change and promoters of gender equality. The projects they implement will bring about change at local, regional or institutional level and will contribute to the active involvement of women, men and relevant authorities in combating gender stereotypes, shaping behaviour and redefining gender roles in order to identify viable solutions to local gender equality needs.

The second phase of the application procedure follows, namely the writing and submission of project proposals. At the end of the evaluation procedure, the WLC Commission will approve the 10 project proposals submitted by the grant applicants.





# SURVIVORS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE WILL HAVE ACCESS TO ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMS

On 16 February 2024, the Women's Law Centre in partnership with the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection (MLPS) and UN Women Moldova organised a round table dedicated to the launch of the project 'Supporting multi-sectoral efforts to prevent violence against women by providing comprehensive support services to survivors, including through economic empowerment programs', financially supported by Sweden.

Within the project, we aimed to enable more women to enjoy a life free of violence, the freedom to decide, access to resources and financial independence as a result of participation in 5 economic empowerment programs, established and implemented in Ștefan-Vodă, Bălți, Soroca, Hîncești and Telenești, in partnership with targeted stakeholders at community, district and national level.

More than 300 women and girls, especially from under-represented groups, will know their rights and access

essential services. There will be personal development and guidance in income-generating activities courses, individual mentoring sessions and vouchers worth up to MDL 50 000 will be awarded to support business ideas. Moreover, the project will contribute to a better implementation of the legislation in the field, by improving public policies, coordination mechanisms, and by creating new programs and tools for economic empowerment. Representatives of public authorities and service providers in the 5 districts will also be empowered to provide essential and economic empowerment services.



Between February and March **3 empowerment** workshops for women and girls were organized in **Soroca, Telenești** and **Hîncești**. In these activities, participants were encouraged to know their rights and recognise signs of abuse. Guided by professionals, they learned that they were not alone and that there are resources and organizations that can help them find their voice and claim their rights.



## LOCAL LIBRARIES – SAFE SPACES FOR REFUGEE WOMEN AND CHILDREN FROM UKRAINE



**It is with a heart full of gratitude that we announce the successful conclusion of the project 'Libraries bring community change during the refugee crisis'. This project was implemented by the Women's Law Centre in partnership with the Association of Librarians from the Republic of Moldova, with the financial support of the International Rescue Committee.**

After the beautiful results in 2023, when 10 libraries in the country became safe spaces for refugees from Ukraine, we decided to continue this project in 2024 to support local communities and refugee women who have settled in Moldova. With the same passion and dedication, between January and March 2024, various activities were carried out for the emotional well-being of children, teenagers, girls, women and refugees from Bălți, Orhei and Ungheni. We were happy to continue our partnership with the local libraries in the 3 communities, which proved to be ideal places for heartfelt meetings and exchange of experiences.

During 3 months, 80 activities were held, including: recreational activities; creative, handicraft, and cooking workshops; get-togethers; recitals; board game sessions; discussion clubs; Romanian, English and Italian classes. We also facilitated information sessions on gender-based violence and domestic violence. Teenage girls attended information sessions about gender equality, consent and harmonious relationships, learned about their bodies and their limits. Refugee women were informed about their rights. In total, 873 participants have benefited from recreation, connections and development.

We thank the whole team involved in this project, women librarians, beneficiaries, experts, volunteers and partners. Thanks to your involvement, beautiful things are being done for children, girls and women from Moldova and Ukraine.





# TRAINING OF PROFESSIONALS COMPETENT TO INTERVENE IN CASES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Strengthening the capacities of professionals competent to intervene in cases of domestic violence continues to be one of the main components of the WLC strategy. The intervention of criminal justice professionals is crucial to ensure effective prevention of domestic violence, accountability of perpetrators and protection of victims.



Since the beginning of 2024, we have organised **4 training** courses attended by:



**90** paralegals, court clerks,  
and prosecutor's advisers



**47** judges and prosecutors

Court employees have been trained on:

- **Access to justice for women** – the particularities of the applicability of the of the Istanbul Convention provisions
- **The particularities of the examination of cases** of domestic violence/violence against children
- **Investigation and examination** of domestic violence offences

The trainings were organised by the Women's Law Centre and the National Institute of Justice, with financial support from Sweden, the Sigrid Rausing Trust and the Oak Foundation (through ARC Romania).





**At the invitation of the National Probation Inspectorate (NPI), the Women's Law Centre with the financial support of Sweden, held a training for employees of the NPI, inspectors responsible for the electronic monitoring of domestic violence perpetrators.**

During the training, important topics were addressed, contributing to a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of domestic violence. Another important point of the training was the topic of ensuring a prompt and effective response to cases of violence and the implementation of victim protection measures. Inspectors shared stories from their day-to-day practice and talked about the challenges they face in monitoring perpetrators. The need to establish programs for perpetrators that would discourage aggressive and intentional behaviour towards victims has been highlighted.

We are pleased to collaborate with the NPI to combat and prevent domestic violence. We are committed to fighting for justice and equality, to building a society where women and children live without violence.





## NEWS IN BRIEF



**T**he Women's Law Centre and the National Agency for Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence have signed a partnership agreement that sets the framework for collaboration to prevent and intervene jointly against gender-based and domestic violence.

The general objective of this agreement is to support access to specialized services provided by the WLC to women and girls, mothers with children affected by domestic or gender-based violence; carry out activities to prevent gender discrimination, gender-based

violence including new trends of digital violence; organize and conduct research, analysis studies, develop continuous professional training curricula on a multidisciplinary platform; strengthen the intervention capacities of professionals in the field.

Through this collaboration we aim to advance the fight against gender-based violence and provide effective and coordinated support for victims of these serious acts. It is a clear demonstration of our shared commitment to advancing the rights of women and girls in Moldova.

**W**e got used to celebrating and honouring women in the month of March, but are we aware of their real problems?

The director of the Women's Law Centre, Angelina Zaporojan-Pîrgari, spoke about women's rights, their role in the family and society and about equality between men and women in AGORA's studio, on the show 'DESCIFRAT' (n/t: 'DECIPHERED').



**The show can be watched here**

**W**e had a wonderful teambuilding experience with the WLC team. This activity helped us to get to know each other better, tap into our collective potential and feel more connected. Our time together once again confirmed that we are a strong team.

**Watch the video here**





# NEWS IN BRIEF



We would like to share with you the wonders created by WLC beneficiaries at the last two spring-themed creative workshops. They might seem insignificant, but these activities bring a lot of joy, positive emotions and inspiration to our souls.

We organise monthly occupational therapy workshops for our beneficiaries. These activities are a perfect platform for socialising and mutual support. Women share their thoughts, forget everyday worries, learn new skills and create handmade objects.





# TOGETHER WE ARE CHANGING LIVES!

Every month, about **100 women** take an important step in their lives. Sometimes, this step is their last hope to be heard, understood and supported. Every month, about **100 women** choose not to tolerate domestic violence anymore and turn to WLC for specialist support.

We offer to these women **legal and psychological support, social assistance, and opportunities** for economic empowerment, so that they can step confidently into tomorrow. **Our support is free and confidential!**

You can also help women and children of Moldova. Visit the WLC website and make a donation to support victims of domestic violence. Every donation is a chance for these women to rebuild their lives. Every donation enhances the power of our community.

**DONATE** 



# 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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