

NEWSLETTER

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STOP VIOLENCE



JULY to SEPTEMBER

WOMEN'S LAW CENTRE

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The newsletter reflects the activity of the Women's Law Centre in preventing and responding to domestic violence and violence against women

WLC WELCOMES THE INTRODUCTION OF THE TERM 'FEMICIDE' IN MOLDOVAN LEGISLATION

On 31 July 2024, the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova adopted a draft law introducing the term 'femicide' into national legislation. Women's Law Centre welcomes the adoption of the draft law as a courageous and important step taken by the national authorities. This recognises the seriousness of violence against women and the commitment to investigate with due diligence all cases of violence against women and to hold perpetrators accountable.

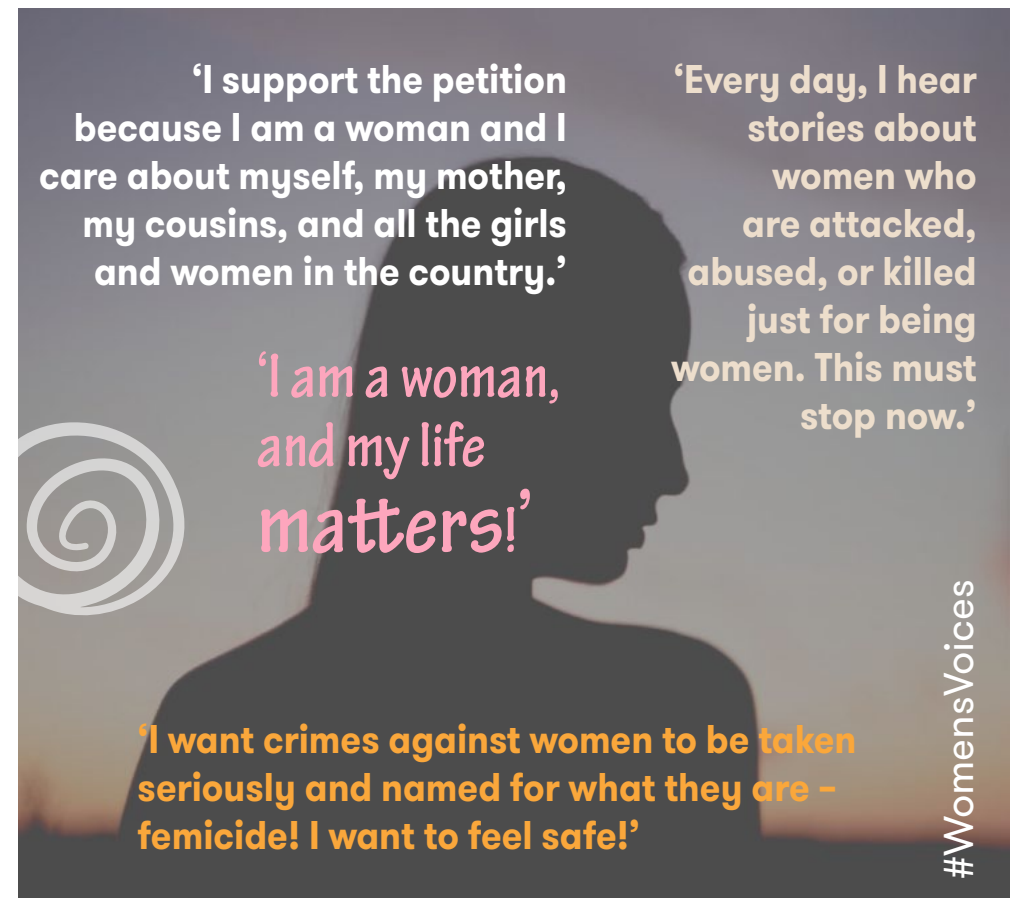
On 31 July 2024, the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova adopted a draft law introducing the term 'femicide' into national legislation. Women's Law Centre welcomes the adoption of the draft law as a courageous and important step taken by the national authorities. This recognises the seriousness of violence against women and the commitment to investigate with due diligence all cases of violence against women and to hold perpetrators accountable.

Under the new provisions, femicide is defined as 'an act of violence against women, including girls, or an act of domestic violence, resulting in the victim's death due to deliberate murder, intentional

serious bodily harm, or severe injury to health, or the victim's suicide, caused by inducing or facilitating their death as a result of gender-based violence.'

The draft law was initiated by the Deputy Speaker of Parliament, Mrs Doina Gherman, in response to the [public appeal](#) launched by the WLC on 29 April 2024, following the brutal murder of Ana Maria, a young pregnant woman from Orhei, in April 2024. The public appeal was signed by over 1,500 people and supported by 160 civil society organisations.

The WLC team continues to support the process of reforming national legislation to meet the standards of the Istanbul Convention, as well as the new EU



Directive of the European Parliament and the Council of the EU. In this context, the WLC will conduct a study analysing the criminalisation of femicide at the European level, alongside good law enforcement practices, and will provide support in drafting of the legislative amendments necessary for their implementation (Criminal Code, Criminal Procedure Code, etc.). This includes the extension of the mandate of the Commission for monitoring and analysing cases of domestic violence resulting in

death or serious bodily harm to victims, to encompass all cases of femicide, regardless of whether the victim and perpetrators are family members.

The WLC will also continue to support efforts to develop a plan of measures to prevent and combat femicide, aiming to reduce the number of serious cases of violence against women and femicide, thereby ensuring that the rights of women and girls to a safe and violence-free life are upheld.

THE CASE OF THE WOMAN WHO WAS ATTACKED WITH ACID BROUGHT TO COURT BY WLC.

PERPETRATOR SENTENCED TO 11 YEARS IN PRISON AND ORDERED TO PAY DAMAGES OF 1.6 MILLION MDL

Justice has been served in an extremely serious case of domestic violence. The man who attacked his wife and daughter with acid was sentenced to 11 years in prison and ordered to pay damages of 1.6 million MDL to the victim. A WLC lawyer represented the victim's interests in the court.

The shocking incident took place on 28 February 2024 in Chişinău. The woman and her daughter were lying on the bed when, without any prior conflict, the man burst into the room holding a bottle of acid. Without saying a word, he attacked the woman with the substance, which hit her face, neck, and back. In an attempt to protect her mother, their seven-year-old daughter suffered several burns on her face. The 37-year-old woman managed to escape the house and call the 112 emergency service. Following the attack, the victim suffered severe burns, which affected her long-term health and life, resulting in a medium degree of dis-

ability and temporary loss of working capacity.

After investigations conducted by prosecutors, the man was charged with attempted premeditated murder of a family member, with extreme cruelty or with sadistic motives, using means dangerous to the life or health of several people.

He admitted his guilt and expressed regret in the court. Because he pleaded guilty, he received a reduced sentence of 11 years and 3 months in prison.

The court fully upheld the civil action filed by the victim, ordering the perpetrator to pay moral damages of

500,000 MDL and biological damages of 1,100,000 MDL. He will also have to pay 25,884 MDL for court costs.

The WLC lawyer will continue to support the victim throughout the process of enforcing the judgment, ensuring that the damages awarded are successfully collected from the perpetrator.



The victim is currently undergoing a long rehabilitation process and has been included in the WLC's Economic Empowerment Program and is now attending a professional confectionery training course. The cost of the course, including supplies for the practical lessons, was covered by donations raised at the WLC's 'Transformation' fundraising event in April 2024. Additionally, she was provided with the necessary equipment and a public transport pass to facilitate her moving.

She is also participating in the WLC's Personal Development Program, which aims to support the process of personal growth and transformation, set personal and professional goals, acquire stress management skills, and establish clear objectives. The Program provides guidance on conflict resolution, as well as effective relationship and communication skills, to support development in a harmonious and balanced way.

Since the beginning of 2024, WLC attorneys have represented the interests of victims of violence in courts in **22 cases**. Of these, **15 dare criminal cases** (related to criminal offences), **3 are contravention cases** (related to minor violations of the law), and **4 are civil cases**, which include claims for compensation for moral damages, deprivation of parental rights, and divorce.



TRAINING PROGRAM ORGANISED BY THE WLC FOR JOURNALISTS:

BETWEEN TRUTH AND SENSATIONALISM. HOW DO WE REPORT ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN A PROFESSIONAL WAY?

Sixteen women journalists from various media outlets across the country, guided by national and international experts, learned how to address violence against women and domestic violence in a fair and responsible manner. Discussions also focused on how to report on these cases in ways that respect the dignity of the victims and their families, while avoiding sensationalism, which can exacerbate trauma.



Eleonora Grosu, program director at **WLC**, emphasized the important role of the media in curbing the phenomenon: 'For 15 years, we have been raising the voices of women who have experienced violence, who have been wronged and subjected to inhumane treatment. We help them to become more confident, financially independent, and provide them with legal and psychological counselling. Over the years, we have learned that it is not enough just to offer legal or psychological support. To move forward, we must give victims the opportunity to choose a life free from violence. The media plays an important role here by correctly informing the public about cases of violence, rejecting the acceptance of violence in society, and raising the alarm that violence is a violation of human rights and dignity.'

Expert **Alina Radu**, director of **Ziarul de Gardă**, spoke about stereotypes, inequality, and violence against women,

including digital violence targeting female journalists. 'I want us to discuss and debate these issues, and come away with a list of topics and actions that we need to address, either in our newsrooms or individually, to professionally tackle the problem and contribute to solving it', said Alina Radu.



TRAINING PROGRAM ORGANISED BY THE WLC FOR JOURNALISTS:

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Oana Sandu, an investigative journalist from Romania, made an online intervention where she shared her experience of over ten years documenting domestic violence cases: ‘These are difficult, sad subjects, where we talked about very difficult situations in people’s lives. I

believed that by reporting on these issues, we could help others or prompt state institutions to act. The journalism I do is about bringing change. The conclusion we’ve reached is that the issue of violence is far more complex than the authorities portray it.’



‘I understand that such a topic – a very sensitive one – in our society needs to be reported correctly, well documented and balanced. It’s time for journalists in Moldova to apply interviewing and reporting techniques that respect the dignity and rights of victims and their families. Well-documented journalistic materials contribute to raising awareness and changing social perceptions, giving a voice to those who do not have one’, says **Renata Lupăcescu from Studio-L in Căuşeni.**

Following the training, the journalists will have two months to document

and produce journalistic pieces on violence against women and/or domestic violence. The five best materials will be awarded 9,000 MDL each at an event organised by the WLC in November.

Training program ‘Between Truth and Sensationalism: How do We Report on Violence Against Women in a Professional Way?’ took place from 12-13 September 2024 and was organised by the WLC in collaboration with the Centre for Independent Journalism, with financial support of Sweden.

WLC SUPPORTS THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE REPORT ON CASES

OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE RESULTING IN VICTIMS' DEATH OR SEVERE HARM TO BODILY INTEGRITY IN 2023

In 2023, 69 cases of domestic violence resulted in the death or serious bodily injury of the victims were analysed by the Specialised Commission established by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, aimed at preventing such incidents and improving the system's response. In the context of the Commission's activity, a situation analysis report was made.



69 CRIMINAL DOMESTIC
violence cases that resulted in the death
or serious bodily injury of the victims

69
PERPETRATORS

71
VICTIMS

- In **34** cases, the violence resulted in the death of the victim (**21** women and **13** men);
- **37** cases – the victim survived;
- **21** women and girls were killed by intimate partners or other family members;
- **1** woman was killed despite having protective measures in place;
- The most common place where crimes are committed is the common residence of the victim and the perpetrator.
- In **39** cases, the perpetrator was male and the victim female (more than half of the cases);
- **39** cases – the victim and the perpetrator were a couple;
- In femicide cases, the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator lasted on average **12** years, with the shortest duration being **1** year and the longest **40** years;
- **6** out of **7** perpetrators had a middle or high school education, while some had no education or only primary education. **3** perpetrators have higher education;
- **40%** of domestic violence perpetrators had a criminal record, indicating a possible link between prior criminal behaviour and domestic violence;
- As many as **40** out of **69** perpetrators suffer from alcohol addiction;
- In **6** cases, the violence occurred in the presence of minor children, and in **4** of these cases, the child was also a victim;
- No victims were referred to specialised services;
- No perpetrators were referred to programs for reducing violent behaviour;
- **28** perpetrators were accused of domestic violence resulting in death or serious injury;
- **10** perpetrators were sentenced to **10** to **20** years in prison for attempted murder and the murder of a family member.

The report offers recommendations to enhance the national system's response, including proposals to amend legislation, promote cross-sector cooperation, improve prevention efforts, and increase access to support services for survivors of violence, among other measures.

The report was developed by the Ministry of Internal Affairs in collaboration with the Women's Law Centre, as part of the work of the Commission in charge of monitoring and analysing of domestic violence cases resulting in victim's death or serious bodily integrity. The report development was supported financially by UN Women and Sweden.



[VIEW REPORT](#)

WLC RESUMES SUPPORT ACTIVITIES FOR WOMEN IN DETENTION

Women prisoners are among the most neglected, misunderstood, and unseen by society. Every woman in detention has her own story. Some have grown up in families where violence was a daily reality, while others have endured years of abuse from their partners, believing there was no way out. The regret of having endured too much, of trusting in the myth of the ‘male master of the house’, or hoping for help from the authorities is overwhelming. Others were brave enough to go to the police, but there was little or no support. In their desperation to protect their own lives or the lives of their children, some were driven to actions that led to their imprisonment.

Since 2017, WLC, in partnership with the National Administration of Penitentiaries, with the support of the administration of Penitentiary No 7 Rusca and the Government of Sweden, has developed and implemented the first support program for women prisoners. As a result, a significant number of incarcerated women have received primary and qualified legal aid, individual psychological support, and counselling services, while also participating in art and reading therapy. Many of them were able to see their children again thanks to the WLC’s involvement.

On 19 September 2024, after a pause, the WLC team resumed its activities and organised an information session for the women at Penitentiary No 7 Rusca, with the participation of Mihaela Oleacu, an IFSI psychologist, and Violeta Andriuşă, a WLC lawyer.

The participants were able to ask questions and learned how they can defend their rights and receive better protection against discrimination. They were also informed about the legal and psychological counselling services avail-



able to them both during detention and after their release.

During the session, the women shared several challenges and barriers they face, including the stigma attached to convicted women, which hinders communication with their children. They were encouraged to bring their concerns to lawyers and psychologists during individual counselling sessions provided by WLC.

‘We want to give women easier access to justice and the support they need to regain their emotional balance and confidence. We will continue to support them so that every woman can rebuild her life beyond the bars that currently confine them’, said **Angelina Zaporojan-Pîrgari**, WLC Executive Director.

This initiative is possible to implement thanks to financial support from Sweden.



WLC SUPPORTS THE TRAINING OF SOCIAL SECTOR PROFESSIONALS IN ASSISTING SURVIVORS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Economic empowerment is an integral part of the process of assisting and supporting women affected by domestic violence towards a life free from violence.

As many as 85 social protection professionals, representatives of territorial employment subdivisions, public authorities, service providers, members of the associative sector, and local actors from various communities across the country were trained to provide comprehensive support services to survivors of gender-based violence, including economic empowerment programs.



Regional training workshops were held between 23-30 July 2024 in Hîncești, Bălți, Soroca, Telenești, and Ștefan Vodă. These workshops were part of the project 'Supporting multisectoral efforts to prevent violence against women by providing comprehensive support services to survivors, including through economic empowerment programs', implemented by WLC in partnership with the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, with support from UN Women Moldova and financial support of Sweden.

As a result, specialists gained the knowledge and skills necessary to offer support centred on the rights and needs of victims and survivors, as part of the collaboration between the authorities responsible for social assistance and professionals facilitating access to labour



market integration for women affected by gender-based violence.

The workshops helped strengthen cross-sector collaboration to effectively reach the most vulnerable and ensure access to essential services and economic empowerment.

Building on the results of the pilot phase, the project continues to support public

authorities and service providers, contributing to the implementation of the National Programme on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence for 2023-2027.

The project's activities are enhancing public policies, coordination mechanisms, and creating new economic empowerment programs and tools for victims and survivors of violence.



WE SUPPORT SURVIVORS OF VIOLENCE FROM TELENEȘTI AND ȘTEFAN VODĂ THROUGH ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMS

In five districts of Moldova (Soroca, Bălți, Hîncești, Telenești, and Ștefan Vodă), we support women and girls through economic empowerment programs aimed at helping them build a life free from violence. Survivors of violence have the opportunity to participate in personal development, employment guidance, and income-generating activities. These courses are an integral part of the economic empowerment programs, which also include individual mentoring sessions and financial support vouchers to help women develop business ideas within their communities

■ In Ștefan Vodă, 20 women participated during 5 days in the Vocational guidance and personal development course held between 22-29 July 2024.

During the course, the women worked on developing their communication skills, strengthening their ability to manage personal and professional resources effectively, and building self-esteem and resilience to stress.

This course serves as a true catalyst for change, and the positive feedback from participants speaks for itself.

- 'I'm going home a better person, having discovered more about myself here.'
- 'I understand for myself that in the next conflict at home, I'll be mindful of the words you've called "communication killers" and which I use often: "You always!" or "You never!". It's hard for me to say "excuse me", but I'm just now learning how to do it.'



- 'Now I understand that who I am today stems from my childhood. But I'm taking steps, towards me, millimetre steps, but I do. I am here for myself'
- 'I've reminded myself once again that almost everything is in my hands: how I shape my life, the importance I give to certain things, and the way I choose to solve a problem.'
- 'I believe that no matter what kind of family we come from, today I have to believe in myself! I can! I want to change! I can make a difference!'

■ In Telenești, 23 women participated during 5 days in the Vocational guidance and personal development course held between 1-9 August 2024.

This course provided them with the opportunity to rediscover their potential and build self-confidence.

The participants' feedback is a real balm for the soul, showing how valuable this experience is for them.



- 'This activity felt like group therapy, a time for myself, where I could reflect. In everyday life, I don't have time for such moments of reflection. Here, I turned to myself, I found peace, and I'm going home feeling calmer.'
- 'My courage to act and speak in public has increased. Two years ago, I would have avoided going on stage, but now I would go out without fear!'





- 'I take with me truths I've discovered about myself. This test opened some books for me and confirmed certain truths.'
- 'I never thought about what kind of personality I have. Here, I discovered new things about myself. I'm amazed that I don't want to go home.'
- 'I take with me the confidence that I can make the change if I want to.'



- The pyramid of needs has helped me prioritise and realise that I can move forward to achieve my dreams.'
- 'I take with me the lesson to think, to use reason, not to judge or label others, and to be at peace with myself.'
- 'I realised that I am neither worse nor better than others; I am me, just the way I am. We've solved the equation!'



■ In **Telenești**, 20 women participated in a three-day **Course on developing income-generating activities**, held between 5-7 September 2024.

The course agenda included topics designed to provide an in-depth understanding of business planning. The course covered topics designed to provide an in-depth understanding of business planning, including the structure of a business plan, idea and product descriptions, operational plan details, marketing strategies, business staffing, and financial budget management.

Participants shared their impressions after the course:

- 'This program gave me the courage to dream again. I have a small business based on a patent, and I hope to grow it. I need more practice to fully understand how to develop my business.'
- 'At first, my business idea seemed vague, but with the help of the exercises, I realised that I need to promote myself more. I now have a clear vision of the next steps.'
- 'I didn't realise how important it is to price my services correctly. It's not just about covering the cost of utilities, it is about my time, including about preparing materials.'
- 'Not only did I learn a lot, but I felt supported and understood. The atmosphere was very motivating.'



- 'I didn't know where to start, but after working on my business plan and understanding how financing works, I feel much more prepared to open my little vacation home.'



The activities were organised as part of the project 'Supporting multisectoral efforts to prevent violence against women by providing comprehensive support services to survivors, including through economic empowerment programs', implemented by WLC in partnership with the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, with support from UN Women Moldova and financial support of Sweden.

FORENSIC DOCTORS TRAINED TO RESPOND EFFECTIVELY TO CASES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Victims of domestic violence – often women in extremely vulnerable situations – require specialised support to overcome trauma. In this context, training forensic doctors is crucial to improving the quality of interventions and ensuring the use of assertive communication techniques.

On 12-13 September 2024, 30 forensic doctors participated in the training session ‘Good Practices of Forensic Doctors in Responding to Cases of Domestic Violence. Assertive Communication Techniques and Victim-Centered Intervention’, organised by WLC as part of the ‘Strengthening Efficiency and Access to Justice in Moldova’ project,

implemented by UNDP Moldova with financial support from Sweden.

During the training, participants learned about the correct identification and documentation of the signs of domestic violence, with a focus on respecting victims’ rights and sensitivity towards them.

Experts also highlighted the importance of collaboration between the medical and legal systems to ensure effective protection for women and families affected by violence.

This session is the first in a series of three similar sessions, which will train a total of 90 forensic doctors from across the country.

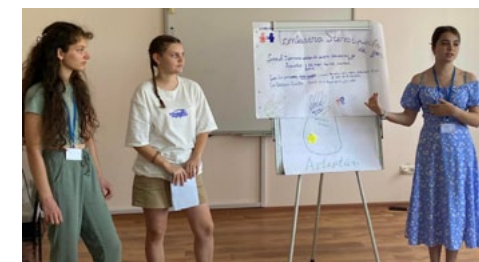


WLC SUPPORTS 10 INITIATIVES IMPLEMENTED BY AGENTS OF CHANGE IN 10 DISTRICTS OF THE COUNTRY

Local leaders, from 10 districts of Moldova, selected as part of the project 'Empowering Women, Local Communities, and Refugees in Moldova', have developed project proposals that address issues related to gender equality, discrimination, or domestic violence identified in their districts.

Ten local initiative teams have been awarded grants of 10,000 USD each to implement their own projects, aimed at bringing positive change and development to their communities.

The teams from Cimișlia, Căușeni, Florești, Ștefan Vodă, Ialoveni and Orhei are in full swing, having already started to implement the first project activities.



Agents of change from Cimișlia began implementing activities under the project 'CIMIȘ și LIA - Egalitate prin responsabilitate' [CIMIȘ and LIA - Equality through accountability]. The local team organised a summer camp for young men and women from the Cimișlia and Basarabeasca districts.

During three days, participants participated in educational activities aimed at promoting gender equality, combating stereotypes, and encouraging young people to become active promoters of gender equality in their communities.

An ingenious group activity was planning an online awareness-raising campaign to promote gender equality. The

journalist and content creator Doina Danelean gave the young people valuable tips about the impact of social networking on the community.



The team from Căușeni organised the summer school ‘How to be Better Parents for Girls and Boys’, a three-day event for parents from the district, focusing on gender education approaches.

Participants explored how to become better role models for their children and advocates for equality in their community, reflecting on questions such as: ‘What adult model do I follow?’, ‘What gender model do I follow?’, ‘How do I choose to solve conflicts?’ and ‘How do I communicate?’.

Discussions and practical exercises centred on self-awareness, recognising gender stereotypes and prejudices, and the importance of effective communication. Parents had the opportunity to reflect on their own attitudes and behaviours, learn conflict and stress management techniques, and turn mistakes into opportunities for growth.

The event is part of the ‘Out Loud about Gender Equality’ project, implemented by the local team.



The project ‘Partnership for Equal Opportunities and Non-Discrimination’, implemented by the local team from Florești, is in full swing.

The team aims to increase awareness and involvement of police officers in promoting gender equality and combating discrimination, as well as to raise awareness among the citizens of Florești district about the need for tolerant, inclusive, and non-discriminatory behaviour.

The first activity of the project was a round table discussion with local public authorities and employees of the Police Inspectorate from Florești, where issues of equality and non-discrimination were addressed. The participation of local authorities helped to identify and mobilise the necessary resources for implementing the project.

The team has launched an intensive training program on gender equality and non-discrimination, specifically for police officers in Florești district.



Over five days, participants will learn effective communication and interpersonal skills development techniques, preparing them to become trainers and promoters of change in the community. Through this training and the dissemination of information at the local level, the team aims to raise awareness and encourage community engagement in promoting equal opportunities and combating discrimination.





The team from **Ștefan Vodă** started the activities under the professional counselling project 'Alege informat cariera!' [Make an Informed Career Choice!].

This project is aimed at supporting graduates, young women, and refugee women from Palanca and the surrounding area who, for various reasons, have been unable to find a job or acquire a profession. It also targets young people who are undecided about their careers, giving them the opportunity to discover their passions and build a promising professional future.

The first training sessions for local trainers from Palanca Secondary School took place between 12 and 19 August 2024. Under the guidance of trainer Elena Bordinu, three trainers were trained in professional guidance to pro-



vide essential information about professions to the project beneficiaries.

The team has also launched an information campaign, distributing leaflets detailing the opportunities under the project.

On 25 September 2024, the team organised an information workshop for a group of parents from Palanca on professional guidance for their children. Under the guidance of local trainers, parents explored key topics such as the role of parents in the vocational guidance process, methods for assessing interests and aptitudes, the consequences of poor professional choices, and practical tips for supporting their children in their careers.

The Ialoveni and Orhei team, as part of the project 'Equality through Involvement and Empowerment', has signed the first partnership agreements with local actors and community activists to promote gender equality and eliminate stereotypes in society.

Partners include: the School of Fine Arts from Orhei, Vishcăuți Secondary School, the Youth-Friendly Health Centre Youth Clinic 'Avante' from Ialoveni, the Community Mental Health Centre Orhei, and the Youth-Friendly Centre Orhei.

As part of the project, the local team will organise a series of educational and interactive activities aimed at increasing men's involvement in family life and supporting female social entrepreneurship. Planned activities include: training courses for teachers and partners on gender equality; 10 training sessions with secondary school students on gender roles; a drawing contest entitled 'Roles of Parents in the Family'; an entrepreneurship empowerment course for 20 women from Ialoveni district; dissemination of information materials in community centres, and more.



The activities are carried out by the grantees of the project "Empowering Women, Local Communities, and Refugees in Moldova" implemented by the Women's Law Centre, with financial support from United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDEF).

THE NIGHTMARE OF THREE GIRLS SUBJECT TO SEXUAL VIOLENCE FOR 10 YEARS WAS ENDED THANKS TO WLC ASSISTANCE SERVICE INTERVENTION

Three minor girls were sexually abused for 10 years by their foster parent. The perpetrator was accused of rape and sexual abuse and did not admit his guilt.

In 2012, a 4-year-old girl was placed in a foster home after her mother was sentenced to 10 years in prison. The authorities placed the child with a foster family, husband and wife, who were already taking care of 6 other children, including two girls. The girl was calling her parents her *grandmother* and *grandfather*.

For 10 years, Nicoleta* was sexually abused by her foster parent. The abuse started about two weeks after Nicoleta was placed with the family and continued until the age of 14, when her mother, released from detention, came to take her home.

The ordeal started with intimate touching. The man would wake her up at night, not letting her sleep, repeatedly touch-

ing her in the same places. Every time she was in the bathroom, he walked in on her. The little girl would say 'go away grandpa' and threaten to complain to her *grandmother*, but he would reply 'what haven't I seen there before?'

One day, she told him he was going outside to play with the girls. He agreed, but told her 'when you come back, we'll have sex'. The little girl asked him if he was OK, and the *grandfather* replied 'I am OK and no one will know'. The girl locked herself in her room and did not go out to play.

The man was groping her every day. He threatened her not to speak to anyone. She told her no one would believe her, and if she told her *grandmother*, he was beating her.

Sometimes the girl confessed to her grandmother, but she never gave importance to her statements and replied, 'Don't take him serious, he is sick... he doesn't know what he is doing after drinking. Forgive him'. The girl tried to kill herself.

Once the man and the girl went to harvest grapes. When they were in a trailer, he started touching her intimate parts. She asked him to stop, but he replied 'stay here, I'm not going to hurt you... it won't hurt'. When he tried to undress her, she jumped out of the trailer and ran home alone.

Other children in the family witnessed the abuse of Nicoleta and Andreea* -

another foster child. 'One night I saw the grandfather taking off the duvet and climbing up the fireplace bed near Nicoleta, who said to him: "grandpa, leave me alone"', says one of the boys. When children were asking 'grandpa, what are you doing?', the man replied 'I came to cover Nicoleta'.

This story came to the WLC team's attention in 2022, when Nicoleta's mother approached them with a request for help because she suspected that her daughter had been sexually abused by the man who took care of her between 2012-2022. The WLC lawyer represented the victim's interests in court. Other complaints with the law enforcement authorities came from the other two girls in the family, who said they had been sexually molested and raped by the same perpetrator.

In September 2024, the lower court found him guilty of rape and harassment on three counts and sentenced the perpetrator to 15 years in prison, being obliged to pay moral damages of 100,000 MDL.

A durat doi ani până când copila a putut să înceapă liniștită o viață nouă și să se reabiliteze după un proces lung și chinuitor. Acum fetița locuiește cu mama ei și este în siguranță.



* The girls' first names have been changed to protect their identity.

STORIES OF COURAGE AND TRANSFORMATION OF WLC BENEFICIARIES

Economic empowerment is one of the most effective and sustainable ways to eliminate violence. It enables victims of domestic violence to gain financial independence and build self-confidence, helping them to break the cycle of abuse and choose a safer life for themselves and their children.

Beneficiaries of the **WLC's Economic Empowerment Program** discover their value and uniqueness, gain control over their lives, and acquire the skills to make informed choices for a better future.

Between March and September 2024, nine WLC beneficiaries participated in the Economic Empowerment Program.

Thanks to a partnership with the **International Women's Club of Moldova** and financial support of **200,000 MDL offered by Moldindconbank**, these women had the opportunity to attend vocation education training courses, secure university study contracts, purchase specialised equipment needed for their professions, or develop their own business ideas, launching income-generating activities.

Nine women had the courage to take a step forward and pursue their dreams. We are eager to share their stories of transformation with you.



[SEE THE STORIES HERE](#)

NEWS IN BRIEF

The international conference ‘Synergy for Change’, organised by the Council of Europe, took place in Budapest on 11-12 July 2024. Angelina Zaporojan-Pîrgari, WLC Executive Director, and Eleonora Grosu, WLC Program Coordinator, along with colleagues from the National Coalition ‘Life Without Violence’, attended the event.



The conference focused on the role of civil society organisations in raising awareness and providing support to end violence against women and domestic violence. It also addressed the role of these organisations in promoting gender equality in the face of new challenges such as digital violence, artificial intelligence, and other global issues.

At the conference, the WLC Director, speaking as a GREVIO member,

highlighted civil society’s efforts in monitoring the implementation of the Istanbul Convention. She shared best practices from Moldova on the continuous monitoring and improvement of legislation to better protect and support women victims of violence, stressing the importance of close collaboration between NGOs and public authorities.

Angelina Zaporojan-Pîrgari, WLC Executive Director, was a guest on the podcast ‘In Essence’ [În esență] on Radio Free Europe, where she discussed the importance of recognising and defining femicide in Moldovan legislation. She emphasised that this is a critical step towards combating this serious issue.

We invite you to listen to the podcast [here](#) to learn more about the connection between domestic violence and femicide, and why urgent action is needed.



NEWS IN BRIEF

Online gender-based violence is a growing problem in the Republic of Moldova, which mainly affects women and girls. Their testimonies reveal the seriousness of the issue and underline the urgent need for legislative changes and institutional support to ensure adequate protection for all victims.

On 16 July 2024, the first public consultation on aligning national legislation with the Istanbul Convention's provisions on online violence took place.

During the event, the general aspects, key findings, and proposals from the Report on the compatibility of Moldova national legal framework's compatibil-



ity with the provisions of the Istanbul Convention regarding gender-based violence in the digital dimension were presented. This report was prepared by the Women's Law Centre, with financial support from UNFPA Moldova, UNDP Moldova, and Sweden, at the request of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection.

During the event, Angelina Zaporozjan-Pîrgari, WLC Executive Director, presented legislative proposals, drawing on recommendations from the GREVIO Committee, to amend the legal and institutional framework to better prevent and combat violence against women in the digital environment. She also shared the WLC's experience in handling cases of digital violence, highlighting the specific challenges in addressing this growing issue.



Dear Supporters,

Thank you for your gesture of redirecting **2%** of your income tax to support victims of domestic violence. Your generosity and commitment continue to inspire and motivate us to fight for women to live a life free of violence and for their children to grow up safe.

In 2024, **MDL 8006.42** were redirected to the WLC. The money will be used to support victims of domestic violence in their efforts to overcome crisis situations and break the cycle of violence.

Gratefully,
WLC team



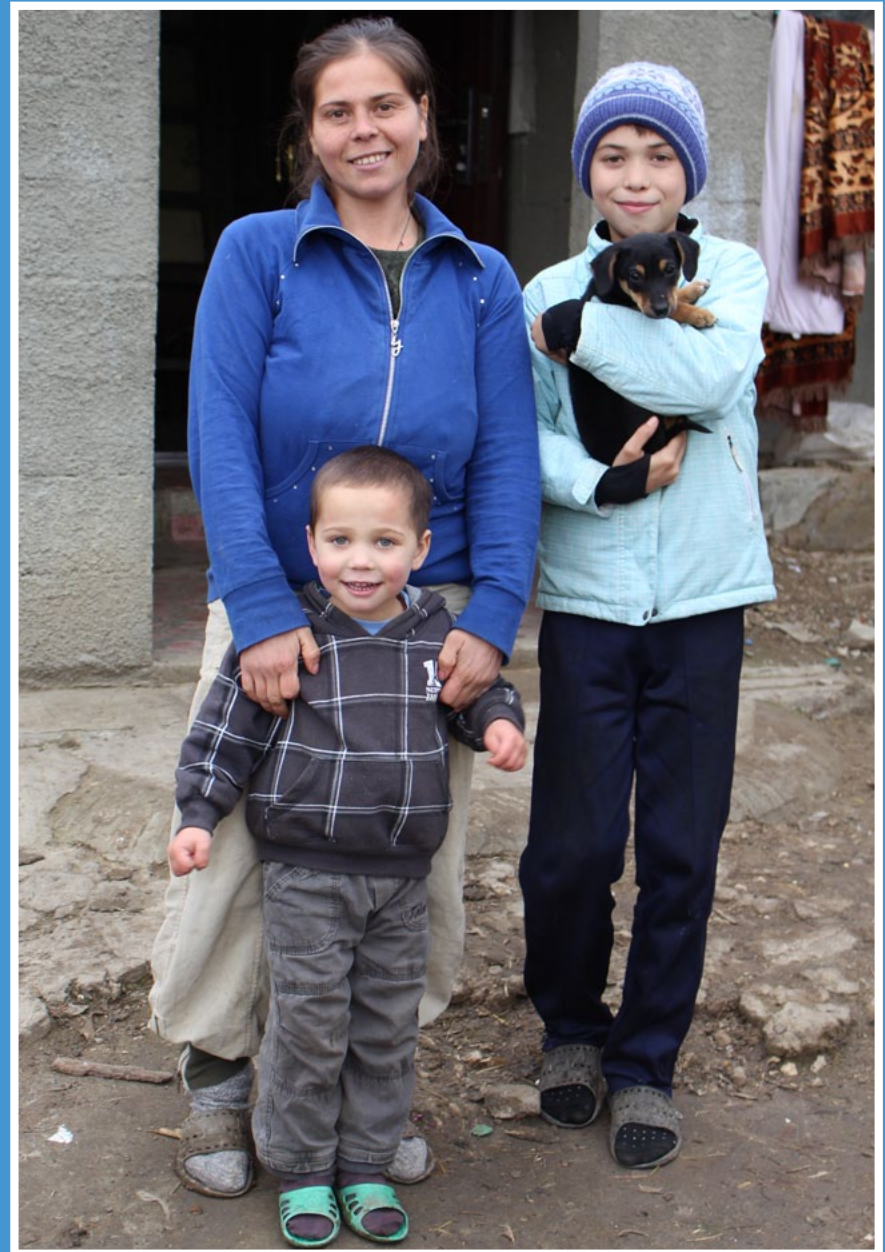
TOGETHER WE ARE CHANGING LIVES!

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.

The newsletter is issued with the financial support of Sweden and the OAK Foundation (via ARC).

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