WAVE Newsletter March-April 2020

WAVE News

Introducing the “What the WAVE?” podcast!

During the COVID-19 pandemic it’s been especially hard to find a feminist angle on the news. That’s why the WAVE Office has decided to launch a weekly news podcast to strengthen and further inform our community.

Each week, members from the WAVE Office will provide you with feminist news that has “pinged” our radars, as well as other positive and uplifting contributions.

Come with us on this journey and listen to our pilot episodes here.

Welcome new faces!

Please welcome our new intern, Fabiola Adamo, who has been able to join our office virtually from Italy and we are feeling very lucky that she is willing to work-from-home with us. Fabiola is most interested in intersectional feminism and feminist film theory with the concept of the “male gaze”. She finds this particularly insightful as she came to understand that violence towards women is not just physical. Discourses and media rarely offer diverse images of women and often promote a limited range of “desirable” lifestyle choices for women. Last but not least important, Fabiola’s favourite emoji is the rainbow emoji!

Covid-19 Resources for Women’s Specialist Support Services & Women’s Organisations

In light of the current Covid-19 pandemic, women’s specialist services find themselves in completely new territory. Therefore, WAVE has designated a page on our website that will be regularly updated with useful information and materials that WAVE members are sharing with the WAVE office. Find these useful resources here.

Upcoming Events

The Work with Perpetrators conference will now be held online

The 2020 WWP EN Annual Conference “Prison, Probation & Perpetrator Programmes – Collaboration for Change” from 2-4 September, 2020 will no longer take place in Dublin, but will be held online due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the foreseeable travel issues following the crisis. See here for more updates.
**International News**

**UN Women Headquarters: COVID-19 and ending violence against women and girls**

This brief from the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) highlights emerging evidence of the impact of the recent global pandemic of COVID-19 on violence against women and girls. It makes recommendations to be considered by all sectors of society, from governments to international organizations and to civil society organizations, in order to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls, at the onset, during, and after the public health crisis, with examples of actions already taken. It also considers the economic impact of the pandemic and its implications for violence against women and girls in the long term. It is a living document that draws upon the knowledge and experience of a wide range of experts who support solutions to end violence against women and girls, attentive to the country context in which the crisis is occurring.

You can find the publication in full [here](#).

**Slovakia rejects the Istanbul Convention**

Slovakia’s parliament decided to reject the international treaty on preventing and combating violence against women. In the 150-seat parliament, 96 of the 113 MPs present voted to reject ratification of the Istanbul Convention. Read more [here](#).

**Break the Silence: Conference Papers Collection**

ProFem would like to present a collection of selected papers from the “Break the Silence: Sexual Violence, Its Impacts, and Possible Solutions” conference which took place in Prague on the 22nd of October 2019.

The conference was organized by proFem – Center for Victims of Domestic and Sexual Violence (Czech Republic) with the kind support of the Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic, the U.S. Embassy in Prague, and the EEA and Norway Grants. The aim of the conference was to cover the topic of sexual violence from a broad interdisciplinary and international perspective with an emphasis on sharing experiences from direct work with victims of sexual violence. The conference was intended to be primarily for experts who come in contact with victims of sexual violence; both children and adults. The collection of papers can be found on the proFem website [here](#).

**You cannot wash trauma away with soap**

*Seemingly paradoxical and confusing behavior and emotions are normal reactions to a traumatic experience. Do not judge, rather listen. Your reaction is important.* This is the main message of a new video made by proFem – Centre for Victims of Domestic and Sexual Violence (Czech Republic) in cooperation with studio Eallin. The video depicts sexual violence and the common impacts it has on victims, as well as what are often the reactions of their close loved ones and surroundings. The goal is to bring attention to the appropriate reactions of family, friends, helping professionals or other surroundings when victims/survivors communicate with someone who has experienced sexual violence.

Video in Czech with English subtitles can be found [here](#).
Launch of the HUDOC-GREVIO database

The HUDOC-GREVIO database is now available online.

This database gives you access to all of the baseline evaluation reports, government comments and recommendations of the committee of the parties. This tool will allow you to search through filters to sort by document, language (French or English), date of adoption and publication of the documents, evaluation cycles, as well as by articles and keywords (forms of violence, target groups, etc.).

Further information on HUDOC is available on the HUDOC website of the European Court of Human Rights.

New Developments in Armenia

A second shelter was opened in Armenia and for the first time the government is (minimally) subsidising shelters. The government has acknowledged that it needs to work with the NGO sector and several NGOs in the region who have worked or are willing to work with DV cases, as well as have been trained by the Women's Support Center (WSC); now certified by the Ministry of Social Affairs, receiving minimal subsidy from the government.

In addition, a DV Council was established headed by the Ministry of Social Affairs; civil society as well as government counterparts are participating. For the first time at this meeting WSC was able to bring forth challenges they see in practice that need to be addressed by government agencies. New internal mechanisms prioritizing the victim needs to be established.

Presently, WSC prepares a package of amendments to the DV law and the criminal code to make it more compliant with the Istanbul Convention. They work in close connection with members of parliament, government and the Coalition to Stop Violence against Women who prepares the advocacy strategy and action for the passage of these amendments.

During COVID-19 WSC continues to offer assistance to survivors. Since many of the survivors were undeclared hourly employees they are now in dire need of financial assistance to pay rent, utilities and food. The government is offering some assistance, as does WSC, for the most vulnerable families that now live free from abuse.

ANAIS and Cheil Romania create campaign warning of domestic violence during lockdown

Romania has been under curfew to limit the spread of the coronavirus since March 16th and a general lockdown has been enforced since March 24th. Most city streets are empty, and while social distancing is massively helping the overburdened healthcare system, another dangerous virus is spreading in people's homes.

Domestic violence has registered a surge as those with an inclination towards abuse are spending more time in uninterrupted contact with their victims - sometimes in the same room - as over 55% of
Romanians live in overcrowded homes, according to Eurostat. The situation can quickly spin out of control with one million Romanians entering technical unemployment status because of the lockdown and the impending economical crisis across the European Union. Every 30 seconds a Romanian woman experiences violence, and 30% have declared to have been physically or verbally abused starting with the age of 15. In the current pandemic context, these numbers will severely worsen.

ANAIS Association created a public service announcement campaign to make the media and the people aware of the new deterioration in the new status quo. The new #IsolateViolence initiative has a dedicated website www.izoleazavioenta.ro and is communicated via an integrated campaign including visuals and films that add a dramatic twist to the COVID-19 imagery we have all been exposed to over the past weeks. Social distancing-related graphics and charts are creatively repurposed to explain the new spike in domestic violence and invite witnesses and victims to report any abuse to the Police.

Links to the videos here:  
#IsolateViolence - The Violence Curve  
#IsolateViolence - The Spread of Violence  
#IsolateViolence - The Cycle of Violence

The project #șieureușesc is being implemented in Moldova

Because we are stronger together, Romania and Moldova unite their efforts in implementing, for the first time in Republic of Moldova, the #șieureușesc project aimed at supporting the community of domestic abuse survivors.

Building the largest survivors’ network in Moldova, capable of saving other women’s lives, was possible thanks to the partnership between NGO A.L.E.G. from Romania, UN Women Moldova and the National Coalition "Life without violence".

The first National Mentoring Programme for Civil Society Organizations actively involved in fighting violence against women and empowering survivors took place on March 6-7, 2020, and was attended by 11 NGOs and 10 Moldovan women - survivors of domestic abuse. The meeting inspired and offered joy to participants who praised the idea of such an event.

The #șieureușesc project is implemented in Moldova with the support of A.L.E.G.

Declaration on the implementation of the Istanbul Convention during the COVID-19 pandemic

On April 20th the Committee of the Parties to the Istanbul Convention issued a declaration expressing the will and determination of the States parties to stand by the standards of the Istanbul Convention.
Convention as a source of guidance for governmental action during the outbreak of the current pandemic of COVID-19. Following the alarming increase in the number of recorded cases of violence against women and/or domestic violence provoked by the pandemic worldwide and in numerous Council of Europe member states, the declaration states the relevance of the principles and requirements of the Istanbul Convention in the areas of prevention, protection, prosecution and integrated policies under the current exceptional circumstances.

The Committee of the Parties adopted the declaration, in its role as the intergovernmental body mandated to uphold the standards of the Istanbul Convention, and to ensure their implementation by States parties at all times. Find out more [here](#).

**How the global pandemic strengthens the resistance of women coalitions. Experience of the National Coalition “Life without violence” from Republic of Moldova**

As the current COVID-19 pandemic spreads throughout the world, members of the National Coalition have faced serious challenges, such as the need for additional humanitarian and financial short term support for victims and survivors. Shelters haven’t been able to provide accommodation due to the lack of infection prevention conditions, insufficient response from the police, and an increasing number of cases of violence (the hot line of Center “La Strada” reported an increase of numbers 30 %), etc. After a quick evaluation, the Coalitions mobilized to adjust to the new reality. The existing funds from the OAK Foundation were reallocated towards the Urgent Fund within the organizations who applied for emergency grants (hygiene, childcare, eldercare, food, transportation, health, etc.). The services have been adjusted by being provided offline, in shifts, and online. New services have also been developed, such as apartments for urgent accommodation for victims and medical care through telemedicine. Several partnerships have been established, with networks of volunteers, to get to the most vulnerable women and with national donors such as UN Women for providing further basic humanitarian aid. Some organizations showed solidarity and supported each other through sharing organizational human and financial resources, demonstrating the power of networks.

**Organized responsible response and strong laws are needed to fight domestic abuse**

This is the fourth year that the Gender Alliance for Development Centre monitors the functioning of the referral mechanisms in 11 municipalities of Albania. This is done within the framework of the project “Building capacities of CSOs to monitor the implementation of activities related to reduction of gender-based violence and domestic violence of the National Strategy and Action Plan on Gender Equality 2016-2020 (NSGE 2016-2020)”, supported by UN Women Albania, under the Regional Program “Ending Violence against Women: Implementing Norms, Changing Minds”. The main focus is to hold the members of the referral mechanisms accountable and monitor the gaps in technical and financial resources of this group of professionals responsible for coordinated response against domestic abuse in Albania. This project is implemented in collaboration with 11 local women’s rights CSOs, some of them part of the Albanian Women’s Empowerment Network.

Annual monitoring reports have been prepared for each municipality and infographics which demonstrate the findings and recommendations. GADC is continuing the monitoring of referral mechanism response against domestic abuse during the outbreak of COVID-19, that trapped girls and women in their homes with their abusers, isolated from the people and the resources that could help them. In Albania the rate of women suffering from domestic abuse is relatively high with 1 out of 2 or 52.9% of women age 18-74 having ‘ever’ experienced one or more of the five different types of violence during their lifetime. In May 2020, GADC will produce a monitoring report of the coordinated response from the referral mechanisms about the domestic abuse situation during the mandatory lockdown of COVID-19. Please find the results of the three-year monitoring of the referral mechanism at the local level [here](#).
Denmark’s response to the global pandemic: support to women and children during the corona crisis lockdown

As Denmark also experiences the corona crisis, the government shut down the country on the 11th of March. All non-essential adult workers were expected to stay home and all schools were closed. During these weeks women’s shelters have not experienced the increased contact from women and children that was expected. LOKK thought that with increased conflict and violence with the additional stress upon families, there would be an immediate need for shelter capacity. There is no doubt that violence has increased, and there are indicators of this. However, LOKK fears that women cannot make contact with advisory support services, hotlines and shelters as their partner is also home. This was the experience in both Italy and Spain during the start of the lock down in those countries, and that these problems of access continue during the crisis. On the 14th of April some activities in the country will start again. Children will be allowed to go to school, and it is expected that this may change the amount of contacts received.

The Danish government has allocated 11 million kr. (about 1.474.238 €) to establish emergency shelter capacity in different parts of the country. This means that women’s shelters are well prepared when the need becomes apparent, due to a rise in violence against women caused by the corona crisis.

LOKK entered into a partnership with a private foundation, which has made it possible for all shelters to establish supplementary activities for children during this period. Though shelters are staffed with skeleton staff to ensure capacity for long term with minimal spread of infection, the children are very vulnerable in this crisis, as both they and their mothers are more isolated than usual. Many shelters have used these resources to ensure children are given some additional structure to their days in the shelter, are stimulated, taken care of, nurtured and amused. At the same time it gives the mothers a break to rest, and thereby is a great support for both women and children.

Domestic Violence Perpetrator Programmes in Russia: URU Connect UK & Eketerina Crisis Centre Russia

During 2019-2020 URU Connect (UK) and The Crisis Centre for Women and Children “Ekaterina” (Russia) delivered a training program for professionals on working with perpetrators of domestic violence as part of the “Developing Multi-Agency approach to Preventing Domestic Violence and Re-offending in Russia” project, funded by the CAF Foundation, Moscow.

The project goal was to improve safety for women and children victims of domestic violence (DV) in Ural, a Siberian Region of Russia, through working with perpetrators of DV to help them change their behavior and develop respectful, non-abusive relationships and reduce their re-offending, improving their families’ lives for the better.

Read more here.