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INFORMATION PACK IRELAND

IMPRINT

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Daphne Project JUST/2009/DAP3/AG/1235
Project workstream 2



SUNIA GEEL – Prevent and combat violence
against children, young people and women and to
protect victims and groups at risk

For further informations please visit:
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Best Practice in working with Ethnic Minority Groups experiencing Domestic Violence

[**Information Pack**]



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Objective of Information Pack

This information pack may have a variety of functions, as appropriate:

- ◆ Preparation before you commence training
- ◆ Further resources for you or your participants
- ◆ Additional handout for participants

Information will be need to be included that will meet the needs of specific regions as appropriate.

Specifically, regional information on:

Legislation

Bibliography / Further Reading

Local Resources / Organisations



Research

Sunia Geel

Sunia Geel derives from the Irish Traveller language, Cant. It translates "take care of yourself", and is viewed as an appropriate name for what the project aims to achieve - families being valued and supported.

The goal of the “**Sunia Geel Domestic Violence Project**” is to prevent and reduce the extent and impact of domestic violence within marginalized communities by generating education, community awareness and providing support to Women, Children and Young People. This will promote positive attitudes, and behavioural changes within disadvantaged Communities. It will also expand knowledge of effective domestic violence interventions with these minority groups amongst service providers. This knowledge will be disseminated to other service providers through training and resource materials provided by **The Sunia Geel Domestic Violence Project**. The partners of Sunia Geel have identified specific target groups. These include; Irish Travellers, Sinti and Roma families, and Muslim migrants in Europe. The objectives of the project are:

1. To increase the knowledge base and skills of service providers in addressing the needs of marginalized, minority groups experiencing domestic violence. This objective acknowledges that Domestic Violence has not been effectively addressed by service providers in the past
2. To generate domestic violence community awareness and address domestic violence from within these communities
3. To support the victims of domestic violence from disadvantaged and marginalized communities through the use of therapeutic interventions. The project aims to empower women, children and young people to make informed decisions
4. To develop knowledge and a set of generalizable insights for use in addressing domestic violence within marginalized communities. The strategic approach developed will be of assistance in other cultural contexts.

The following information is derived from WorkStream 1 of the Daphne III Project “Sunia Geel”, in which a cross-cultural analysis was carried out by Prolepsis (Greece)

Cross-cultural Analysis

Similarities: all countries - Ireland, Germany, Austria, Romania, Greece – **are similar in:**

Definition of Domestic Violence:

“Domestic Violence represents every physical or verbal action made with intention by a member of family against another member of the same family, who develops a physical, psychological, sexual sufferance or material prejudice.”

Types of Domestic Violence:

“Physical, psychological, sexual, economic and social abuse”

Working structure of Domestic Violence field:

Types of professionals involved, places where field work is done, cooperation among official institutions & NGOs



Research

Differences are present:

Certain kind of law arrangements in partner countries

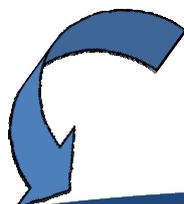
Political aspects of Domestic Violence that indicate the development of the issue in each country

- ◆ Germany & Austria: well-established state mechanisms and existing structures and services dealing with Domestic Violence
- ◆ Ireland & Greece: have established specific state mechanisms aiming to coordinate a cross-government perspective of Domestic Violence (COSC-Ireland, GSGE-Greece)
- ◆ Romania: attempts to develop a system in order to prevent and combat domestic violence (supporting the victims, cooperating with NGOs etc.).

Although there are many differences among the partner countries there are essential similarities :

- ◆ Common identification of Domestic Violence
- ◆ Political initiatives on Domestic Violence
- ◆ Common working structure in Domestic Violence field
- ◆ Main marginalized groups are minority and immigrant populations

	GREECE	AUSTRIA	IRELAND	GERMANY	ROMANIA
MARGINALIZED GROUPS	Albanian-Muslim Immigrant Women	Immigrant populations	Travelers (minority group)	Muslim Immigrants (men)	Roma populations (minority group)



Although there are differences

Marginalized groups in all partner countries
reference to
Immigrant populations and Minority groups



Research

Reasons Domestic Violence victims do not seek out services:

In **Greece**, the lack of knowledge about available services, the strong dependency between the Domestic Violence victim and the perpetrator and the fear of deportation are the most important reasons why some Domestic Violence victim do not seek out services.

In **Austria**, the most important reasons why some Domestic Violence victims do not seek out services are the feelings of shame or embarrassment, the strong dependency to the perpetrator and the fear of retaliation to self and/or family.

In **Ireland** the phenomenon occurs mainly due to the fear of retaliation to self and/or family, due to the lack of social support. And due to the lack of trust of the system.

In **Germany**, participants believe that Domestic Violence victims do not seek out services due to the fear of retaliation to self and/or family, due to feelings of shame or embarrassment and due to the strong dependency with the perpetrator.

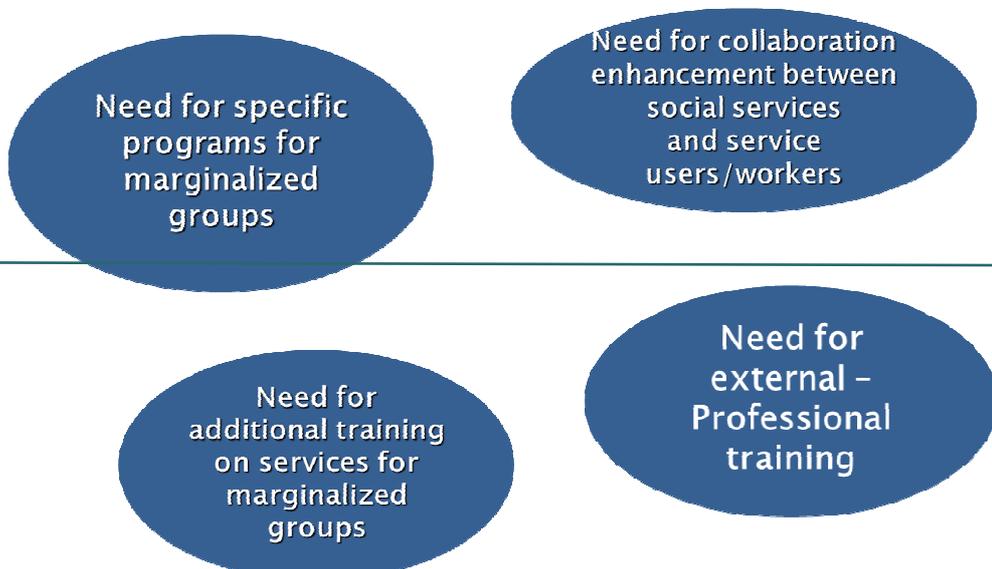
Finally, in **Romania** Domestic Violence victims mostly fear of retaliation to self and/or family, of lack of social support, of feelings of shame or embarrassment, of lack of knowledge about available services and of the strong dependency to the perpetrator.

Working Structures:

Social workers collaborate with different institutions:

- ◆ Police are the primary one in most partner countries
- ◆ Health services come second while
- ◆ Family services & women shelters are also essential

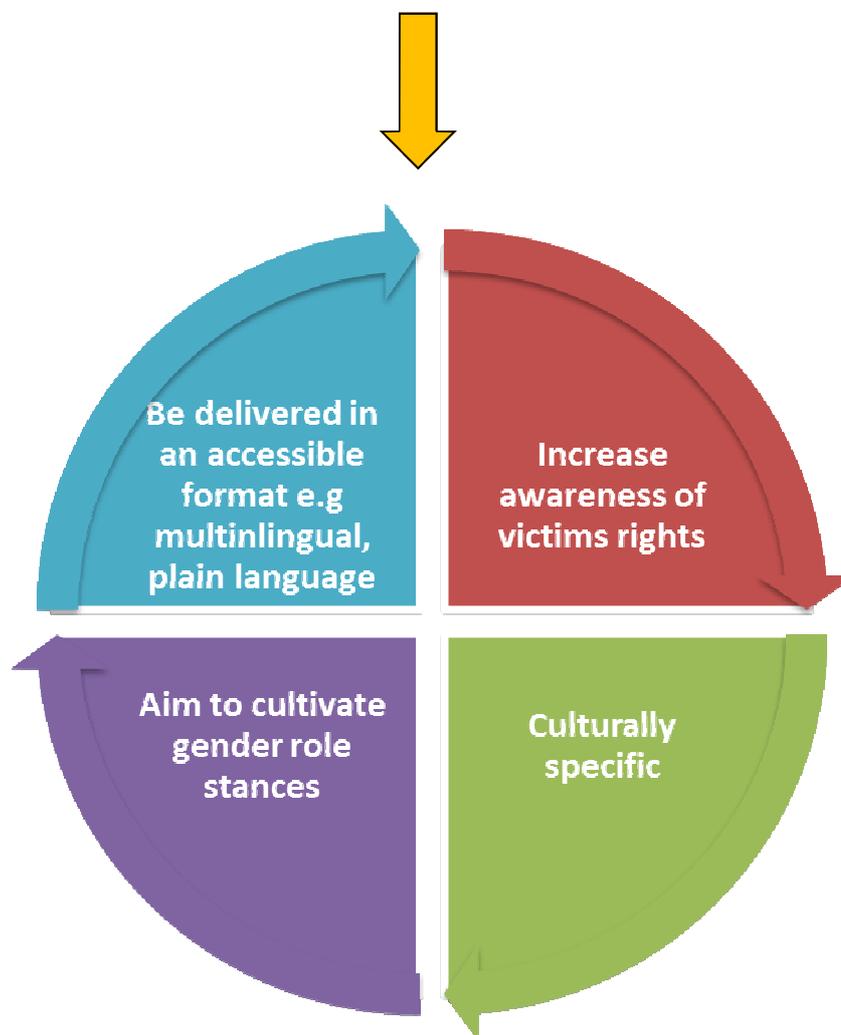
What is the perceived need in order to develop work on Domestic Violence victims from marginalized groups?





Research

The interventions that will be developed and adopted by partner countries for Domestic Violence victims from marginalized groups should be:





Legislation

Country– specific pages

Include main legislation Acts

Court procedures

Limitations to legislation



Crisis Intervention

Crisis Intervention

Crisis intervention is essential in working with domestic violence clients. When a victim first comes to see you, she almost always needs information. It is important to discuss with the victims what their options are and help them to find a way to be safe. The safety of the woman and her children should always be the first priority. Developing a safety plan with a client can mean the difference between her getting out of a dangerous situation and her being abused again. Additionally, domestic violence sessions should focus on educating the client on the dynamics of abuse. Teaching clients the dynamics of abuse helps minimize the client's feelings of isolation and helps them to start to look at the abuse in the relationship as something that is not their fault.

Crisis Intervention Tasks:

- 1. Provide for Emotional Safety**
Ensure your service provides a confidential means of seeking emotional safety and support. Discuss and acknowledge feelings, and when she is ready, her options
- 1. Plans for Physical Safety**
Complete a safety plan with the woman. Ensure she has important documents, medication for herself and her children, contact details of refuges, local Garda station, etc
- 1. Provides Appropriate Referrals for Specific Support Services**
This includes: refuges, secure transitional housing, court services for Protection order if required, counselling services, Child Protection services if required
- 1. Risk Assessment**
Is there a serious risk that the perpetrator could kill her? Check records on abuse to date.



Crisis Intervention

Crisis, Coping and Change - Working From Where the Woman is at
(Kelly, L. 1999):

In order to manage the situation a woman will try to find and accept an explanation for the incident; only then is a future possible. When violence occurs the woman will experience shock or disbelief; some women will end the relationship but the majority don't.

Perspective is distorted: the normal routines and thought processes are affected by constantly having to manage and cope with the abuse – it becomes the woman's focus and her responsibility. She continually attempts to anticipate, prevent or minimise the violence.

It is important to define that what is happening is abuse: for the woman this means locating herself as someone who is being victimised and her partner as the abuser and perpetrator.

The relationship is re-evaluated and coping strategies take on a new meaning; leaving the relationship whether temporarily or permanently becomes possible to contemplate.

The ending of the relationship is a process not a once off event and is often complicated by a lack of resources, custody of the children, racism and the risk of further violence

Addressing the violence may require legal intervention. Ending a relationship does not guarantee that violence will end; in fact 70 per cent of most serious violence occurs post separation.



Crisis Intervention

Safety planning in a domestic violence situation

When living in an abusive situation, a woman's and her children's safety is the number one priority. The time when a woman leaves an abusive relationship is the most dangerous time for her. The abuser is enraged and may carry out the threat to kill the woman, himself, their children and/or family members.

It is vital that a woman in an abusive situation plans for her safety and that of her children in advance on how she might respond in different situations. Therefore it is extremely important to think ahead and have a safety plan before acting. A well thought out safety plan will enable a woman to think clearly and move quickly.

Safety during a violent incident

A woman can not always avoid violent incidents. In order to increase safety, the following strategies can be used:

- Plan how to get out safely. What doors, windows, elevators, stairwells or fire escapes would you use?
- When you believe that an argument or violence is about to happen, you can minimize the risk of physical injury (by trying to get to a room that has access to an outside door, by avoiding rooms that provide easy weapons for the abuser such as knives in the kitchen or rooms where you might get trapped such as the bathroom)
- Keep purse and car keys ready. If possible leave a set of keys with a trusted friend or a relative. Make sure they know why so they don't accidentally let it slip if your partner talks with them.
- Inform certain neighbors about the situation and request they call the police if they hear suspicious noises coming from the house.
- Teach children how to use the telephone to contact Police and medical help by using 999/112.
- Devise a code for the children so they can call for help.
- Use your judgment and if the situation is very serious, agree with your partner or give him what he wants to calm him down. Protect yourself until you are out of danger.

Safety when preparing to leave

If you are preparing to leave your partner plan this carefully as this can be a particularly dangerous time for you. It is important to remember that ending the relationship will not necessarily end the abuse.

- You may have to confide in your children that it may be necessary to leave home at some point in the future. Make sure they are old enough to understand that this must be kept secret and reassure them that you have plans for how to protect them but that you need their co-operation.
- Rehearse an escape plan (and teach it to your children) so that in an emergency you and your children can get away safely
- Agree on a code word to signal to your children that it's time to leave now.
- If you can, open a savings account in your own name to establish and increase your financial independence.



Crisis Intervention

- Identify who will let you and your children stay with them or lend you some money.
- Leave an 'emergency bag' containing money, extra keys, and copies of important documents and clothes with someone you trust.
- Keep change for phone calls or public transport on you at all times.

What to take

- Money, ATM, credit, debit card
- Address book
- Keys – house / car / office
- Clothing and toiletries
- Children's favorite toys and or blanket
- Identification (driver's license, passport, birth certificates for yourself and your children)
- Medical records / medication
- Lease / rental agreement, deeds, mortgage payment statements
- Important numbers
- Health insurance information
- Social welfare documentation
- School records
- Housing documents such as a lease, deed, or mortgage payment statements
- Financial records
- Marriage / divorce certificate
- Protective orders
- Custody papers
- Items of special sentimental value

Safety after you have left

It might increase your safety to inform some people that you have left your partner so that they do not unintentionally give out any information to your ex-partner. They will be better able to help you in an emergency. You might do any or all of the following to increase your safety:

- Consider informing your boss, secretary, the security and the Police near your office of your situation if you think he might try to contact you there.
- Ask co-workers to help screen your telephone calls at work.
- When leaving work try to leave with other people or have someone pick you up.
- If problems occur when driving around, flag down a law enforcement officer or other public safety official, drive to a local hospital or get to some other public place where your safety will be ensured.
- If you use public transport, get off at a different stop than your abuser might expect, inform the driver that someone might be stalking you, or wait to exit until you see that other people will be exiting also.
- Try to alter your routine as much as possible
- Go to different stores to conduct your business and shop at hours that are different than those when residing with your abuser.



Crisis Intervention

- Keeping copies of all court orders together with dates and times of previous incidents and call-outs for reference if you need to call the police again.

Safety and your children

Personal safety and safety planning are extremely important and necessary for children whose families are experiencing violence. Ensure that the children learn ways to protect themselves.

- Teach your children how to use the telephone to call for help and who to call. Rehearse this with the child in advance.
- Ensure the children know their full name and address.
- Talk to your children about the need to keep your address, phone numbers and location confidential.
- Inform people who take care of your children what has happened and give the names of the persons who have permission to pick them up.
- Stress the importance of being safe, and that it is not the child's responsibility to make sure that his/her mother is safe.

Financial safety and independence

It is important to realize that financial control is one of the biggest factors that could keep a woman tied to an abusive relationship. Not only does lack of a woman's own personal money cause stress and reduce the options for her and the children, but also the lack of privacy around her money can be another way that the abuser monitors her or tries to control her. He might be able to monitor the woman's spending and gain information about her activities and location. A woman can protect her privacy by:

- Using cash and limiting the use of credit cards since he might be able to see your transactions online or might have enough information to access your account by phone.
- Changing any account passwords or restricting online access.
- Stashing enough cash just in case you need it.
- To increase your independence, you can open a savings account in your name only. If you are concerned that he will find out, use an alternative address to keep this account private.

Emotional Safety Plan

Being in an abusive relationship is usually emotionally exhausting. To conserve your emotional energy, and to support yourself in hard emotional times, there are a number of things you can do:

- Become involved in community activities to reduce feeling isolated.
- Take a part-time job/course to reduce isolation
- Join support groups of other women to gain support and to strengthen your relationships with other people.
- Spend time with people who make you feel good and provide support.
- Take part in social activities, e.g. movie, dinner, exercise.
- Take time to prepare yourself emotionally before entering stressful situations like talking with your partner, meeting with lawyers, or attending court.
- Be creative and do whatever makes you feel good. Take care of yourself



Bibliography / Further Reading

Country– specific pages

Books:

Research Articles:

Useful Websites:

Local Resources / Organisations

Country– specific pages



List of Useful Services

Domestic Violence Services:

Refuges:

Rape Crisis Centres:

Perpetrators Services

Ethnic Minority Organisations

State Services (Police)

Legal Aid Centres:

Mental Health Services:



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