

# **Action against Human Trafficking and Domestic Violence in Moldova**

**Good Practices and Human Touch Stories  
in the Project “Protection and Empowerment  
of Victims of Human Trafficking  
and Domestic Violence in Moldova”**

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# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

<b>CAP</b>	Centre for Assistance and Protection of Victims and Potential Victims of Trafficking
<b>CSO</b>	Civil Society Organization
<b>IOM</b>	International Organization for Migration
<b>LPA</b>	Local Public Administration
<b>MDG</b>	Millennium Development Goals
<b>MDT</b>	Multidisciplinary Team
<b>MLSPF</b>	Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family
<b>MH</b>	Ministry of Health
<b>Mol</b>	Ministry of Interior
<b>MoU</b>	Memorandum of Understanding
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organization
<b>NRS</b>	National Referral System for Protection and Assistance of Victims and Potential Victims of Trafficking
<b>OSCE</b>	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
<b>Sida</b>	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNFPA</b>	United Nations Population Fund
<b>UNTFHS</b>	United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security



# section I

## INTRODUCTION

### Purpose of the Report

Domestic violence and human trafficking are serious threats to human security.<sup>1</sup> The Moldovan Government has committed to fight against human trafficking and domestic violence by ratifying relevant international treaties and by harmonizing national laws and policies with international standards. Although Moldova has made important progress in this, there are still many problems.

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), International Organization for Migration (IOM), and Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to Moldova have been jointly implementing the three-year project 'Protection and Empowerment of Victims of Human Trafficking and Domestic Violence in Moldova' (the Project) since October 2008. The Project, designed to support the Government's efforts to meet the human security needs of critically vulnerable persons in Moldova, is built upon a wide range of coordinated activities and initiatives.

This report is a result of joint efforts among the Project's implementing agencies to document in a structured and easy-to-read way the types of interventions, lessons learned and good practices that proved to be feasible,

effective and sustainable in increasing protection and empowering victims of human trafficking and domestic violence.

For the purpose of this Report, a 'good practice' is a practice that meets at least two of the following criteria: 1) it leads to an actual change, 2) has an impact on the policy environment, 3) demonstrates an innovative or replicable approach, or 4) demonstrates sustainability, as per the definition adopted by the UN Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality (IACWGE).

Similarly, a 'human touch story' is a story about different situations and sequences of events relating to people who received qualitative protection and assistance services of good quality and/or were empowered to address human trafficking and domestic violence as a result of Project interventions.

This Report is designed for wider, public use and contains two sections:

**Section I** discusses human trafficking and domestic violence in Moldova and sets the background of the Project 'Protection and Empowerment of Victims of Human Trafficking and Domestic Violence'.

**Section II** presents ten good practices and eight human touch stories that reflect the impact of Project activities and demonstrate an innovative approach in facilitating sustainable protection and empowerment of victims of human trafficking and domestic violence under the Protection and Empowerment Project Components.

There is widespread consensus that domestic violence and human trafficking not only represent funda-

1 Human security is defined as "the security of people – their physical safety, their economic and social well-being, respect for their dignity and worth as human beings, and the protection of their human rights and fundamental freedoms" (see 2.21, *The Responsibility to Protect*, International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, 2001).

## Human Trafficking and Domestic Violence in Moldova

mental violations of human rights, but also contribute to individual and global security risks. Domestic violence and human trafficking are cause and consequence of insecurity suffered most often by women and children. Domestic violence usually occurs at home, the place that ideally should be a safe haven, while human trafficking infects the world at large, feeding crime and corruption, taking advantage of human and territorial vulnerabilities, and undermining efforts to achieve peace and democracy. Human trafficking is one of the fastest-growing criminal industries in the world today.

According to the latest studies, one in four women aged 15 to 49 in Moldova has been a victim of domestic violence. Respondents say that cultural, economic and social factors determine the perpetuation of domestic violence. One in every three victims blames herself for 'provoking the violence'. Most of them do not report abuse and do not seek help because they feel ashamed of what people might think or say and because they do not trust the police and other authorities.<sup>2</sup>

Domestic violence, poverty, underdeveloped social assistance services, unemployment, gender discrimination and inadequate parental support have fuelled human trafficking. Moldova continues to be a source and, to a lesser extent, a transit and destination country for women, girls, men, and boys trafficked for sexual

exploitation, forced labour, and begging. From 2000 to 2010, 2,741 victims of trafficking, 1,226 children of victims of trafficking, the IOM Mission to Moldova has assisted over 2,575 potential victims, 95 stranded migrants, 371 victims of domestic violence, 103 unaccompanied minors, and 23 children left behind. Seven in ten assisted victims of trafficking had experienced domestic violence prior to being trafficked.

Most victims are women and girls trafficked for sexual exploitation, primarily to Turkey, Russia, Cyprus, the United Arab Emirates, and other countries in the Middle East and Western Europe. Men are trafficked to work in the construction, agriculture, and service sectors of Russia and other countries. There have been some cases of children trafficked for begging to neighbouring countries. Girls and young women are also trafficked within the country from rural areas to Chisinau. Men victims of internal trafficking are exploited mostly in agriculture. There is evi-



2 Women At-Risk in the Republic of Moldova, Winrock International, 2005 [http://www.atnet.md/public/46/en/Women%20At%20Risk\\_eng.pdf](http://www.atnet.md/public/46/en/Women%20At%20Risk_eng.pdf)

dence that men from neighbouring countries are trafficked to Moldova for forced labour. The breakaway region of Transnistria remains a source of trafficking victims.

Studies have shown that only a small number of cases of domestic violence and human trafficking are officially registered and assisted. The real number of victims is unknown. In this respect, the Government is in the process of setting up a national data-collection system on social assistance and of improving victim protection.

New cases of domestic violence

and human trafficking continue to emerge. At the same time, the fragile economic situation in Moldova, coupled with the global economic crisis, maintains a deficit in financing the social sector in Moldova, which degrades services for victims and potential victims. Thus, Moldova's anti-trafficking and anti-domestic violence activities remain dependent on international donor funding and support from international organizations and NGOs.

Four agencies jointly implement the three-year project 'Protection and Empowerment of Victims of Human

## Project Background

Trafficking and Domestic Violence in Moldova' ('the Project'), which was launched in October 2008: the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Mission to Moldova. The Project is the result of an intensive collaboration among these participating agencies, key public institutions and other relevant partners in the anti-trafficking and gender domains in Moldova.

The overall goal of this Project is to improve: 1) the ability of the Government of Moldova, in partnership with civil society, local communities, and other service providers, to provide its vulnerable citizens with a life free from the threat or experience of domestic violence and human trafficking and 2) the access of vulnerable citizens to quality, comprehensive and necessary medical, psychological, social, legal, employment

and housing services necessary to achieve and sustain such a life.

The Project addresses the pressing security needs in Moldova in two ways that are interlinked and build upon each other, but that conceptually approach domestic violence and human trafficking differently:

- 1) By enhancing **Protection** to victims and potential victims of human trafficking and domestic violence through a strengthened system (a top-down approach in partnership with appropriate governmental institutions)
- 2) By encouraging **Empowerment** of local communities and individuals to prevent and address the problems at their roots through a bottom-up approach in partnership with local officials, civil society, and the media.

The implementing agencies have specific roles: UNFPA and IOM are responsible for the protection component of the Project, while UNDP

and OSCE Mission to Moldova are responsible for the empowerment component.

IOM has played the leading role in implementing the protection component, as this part of the Project complements anti-trafficking activities (namely development and implementation of the National Referral System) that IOM has been supporting in Moldova. Since 2000, IOM has been the key player in providing protection, assistance, repatriation, and rehabilitation to victims of trafficking in Moldova (see [www.iom.md](http://www.iom.md)).

UNFPA has offered its expertise and experience in all activities related to expanding the National Referral System thematically to meet the needs of victims of domestic violence, with a focus on community multidisciplinary professionals (see [www.unfpa.org](http://www.unfpa.org)).

UNDP has been the leader in implementing the empowerment component of this Project, as UNDP has extensive experience in developing the capacities of community actors and authorities in Moldova to prevent trafficking in human beings as well as to promote gender equality (see [www.undp.md](http://www.undp.md)).

OSCE Mission has offered its support to the Project, especially through working with civil society and local authorities in the unstable areas neighbouring the region of Transnistria and the autonomous territorial unit of Gagauzia to promote security and human rights (see [www.osce.org/moldova/](http://www.osce.org/moldova/)). In this way, efficiency and multiplier principles are ensured throughout Project duration.

All Project activities are carried out in close coordination with the rele-

vant central public authorities – the Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family being the main national coordinating institution – and with the Local Public Administrations in target communities.

The Project is implemented in 31 target communities of five target districts (Anenii Noi, Soldanesti, Rezina, Vulcănești and Grigoriopol). The target districts and communities were identified based on the Small Area Deprivation Indicator. The main selection criteria included: 1) poorly developed civil society and 2) high numbers of known victims of human trafficking and domestic violence. Based on all partners' experience and knowledge of specific needs in these areas, special attention was paid to the regions of Transnistria and Gagauzia, as well as neighbouring areas in eastern and southern Moldova, respectively.

Through the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security, the Government of Japan allocated US\$3.35 million for the implementation of the Project.





## section II

# GOOD PRACTICES AND HUMAN TOUCH STORIES

This section describes 10 good practices and eight human touch stories documented under the Project's protection and empowerment components.

The good practices contain a note on the conditions under which they emerged, the main strengths (elements of the good practice), and the weaknesses (constraints). Before initiating the replication of a good practice, however, an assessment of

the existing conditions and resources should be undertaken and appropriate adjustments made.

Every human touch story recounts a real story of an individual or a group of beneficiaries who received good protection and assistance services and/or were empowered to address human trafficking and domestic violence by providing basic services to at-risk people.



## IMPROVED LEGISLATION AND POLICIES

### Good Practice: Making Policies and Laws Practical in Style and Content

*Favourable policies and laws 'at the top' and an aware and concerned public 'at the bottom' are important conditions that render actions against human trafficking and domestic violence more effective.*

Moldovan legislative framework and policies for preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and domestic violence are at European standards. Thus, the main focus for the future is full implementation of the legislation and of international human rights standards so that victims of trafficking and domestic violence can in fact receive the protection and assistance they sorely need to lead safe and dignified lives.

Throughout Project implementation, the Government has had assistance in leading the development, review and consultation of important mechanisms to protect the rights of actual and potential victims of human trafficking and domestic violence. The most prominent results of these joint efforts are:

- Amendments to legislation aiming at ensuring proper implementation of Law No. 45 (on domestic violence). The new legislation criminalizes domestic violence (Article 201<sup>1</sup> of the Criminal Code) and sets out the civil and penal procedures for implementation of Law No. 45.
- Council of Europe Convention to prevent and combat domestic vio-

lence and violence against women, developed with the participation of the Moldovan Government delegation.

- Analytical papers: 1) the Report on discrimination of women in legislation and practice in Moldova, 2) the Gender Assessment of the Reproductive Health Strategy, and 3) the Report on the implementation of the internationally agreed goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

- Approved National Plan for Prevention and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings (2010-2011).
- Approved National Strategy for Protection and Assistance of Victims and Potential Victims of Trafficking (2009-2016) and Action Plan (2009-2011).

The Project has also contributed to the on-going creation of a consolidated information system for the social protection sector that will 1) cover all types of vulnerability, 2) provide good data for implementation of efficient evidence-based policies, and 3) be a useful working instrument for specialists at all levels in the social protection field.

### Lesson learned

*Extensive consultative process among project partners at the national and local levels contributes to technically sound and contextually relevant legislation, better awareness of the legislation among different professionals, and greater public support for its enforcement.*

## Lesson learned

*Establishment of a single Automated Information System covering the entire social protection field is an efficient and sustainable solution to data collection needs.*

## Elements of this Good Practice

*The Project partners have engaged skilled legislative, policy and curricula drafters to develop new laws and policies and/or upgrade existing ones for preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and domestic violence. This may be a model for similar projects and further contribute to improvements in policy.*

*Participating in monitoring of the implementation of international standards and/or in their design is an innovative way to promote legal and policy changes.*

## Constraints

There is still not enough state financing for the implementation of the legislative framework for preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and domestic violence.

Professionals often lack the knowledge, will and capacity to enforce existing legislation.

The justice system faces inefficiency and corruption and intimidation of judges, prosecutors, police and witnesses is commonplace.

## INCREASED ADVOCACY AND AWARENESS-RAISING

### Good Practice: Using Awareness-Raising Campaigns and Research to Halt Domestic Violence and Human Trafficking

*Public awareness is critical to changing how society operates and governs itself, particularly when it comes to domestic violence, a long-standing discriminatory practice that has strong traditional and cultural roots.*

One of the main obstacles to combating human trafficking and domestic violence in Moldova is the absence of awareness about these issues. Another is the failure of victims to report crimes because they are ashamed, fear more violent reprisals by their abusers, and cannot count on effective police response and protection.

The Project has successfully bolstered the Government's advocacy and awareness-raising work against domestic violence by conducting a national awareness-raising campaign on domestic violence.

The campaign was organized from October 2009 to December 2010 in two phases.

The first phase of the nationwide campaign, launched in October 2009, enabled more identification of the victims of domestic violence (including through self-identification) by calls to the Trust Line for women, which the International Center 'La Strada' has managed since October 2009. The Trust Line operates daily from 8 AM until 8 PM, including Saturdays and Sundays.

"The number of calls received at the Trust Line and the content of these calls shows that people started to change their views about domestic violence", says Daniela Misail-Nichitin, 'La Strada' Deputy Chairperson.

"The fact that the community members have started to denounce the cases of violence is an indicator that society no longer tolerates such cases. However, time is still needed to have at least half of the population aware of and sensitive to this problem."

The second phase of the campaign, launched in November 2010, helped 1) to change existing stereotypes of all forms of domestic violence and 2) to bring to the attention of the general public the importance of involving men in the fight against domestic violence.

By 1 April 2011, the 08008 8008 Trust Line had received 1,968 calls.

A similar Trust Line, operated by the NGO 'Interaction', is functioning in Transnistria. Since 2006, 'Interaction' has received over 5,000 calls from residents on the left bank of the Nistru river.

### Lesson learned

*The Project's different communication materials and channels made efforts to raise awareness of human trafficking and violence more meaningful and increasingly successful.*



Additionally, the Project covers the following important events to raise awareness and to advocate for its cause: 1) the Family Festival, organized in 10 districts to promote equal opportunities for women and men, zero tolerance towards violence, etc.; 2) the fourth National Prayer Day, organized by the Bessarabia Metropolitan Church in Orhei and Chisinau; 3) the second National Youth Video Contest 'PLURAL+Moldova', which addresses the social consequences of migration on children and families and is organized within the framework of the International Year of Youth. The 'PLURAL+Moldova' contest was launched with the premiere of the Romanian film "Eu cand vreau sa fluier, fluier" ("When I want to whistle, I whistle").

Also, the Project contributed to the organization of the '16 Days Against Gender-based Violence' national

campaign by holding contests for children, presenting the theatre play *Casa M* in Soroca, and engaging in other activities.

Project partners have been distributing several information materials centrally and locally.

To complement these activities and to respond to the lack of recent data, the Project contributed to nationwide research on violence against women in the family, which the National Bureau of Statistics, with support from UN Women, UNDP and Sida, carried out in 2010.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> As part of the Joint UN Project on Strengthening the National Statistical System

## Elements of this Good Practice

The services of the Trust Lines operated by 'La Strada' and 'Interaction' are free of charge.

Involvement of the church (a less traditional partner) in advocacy and raising awareness is an innovative approach to tackling human trafficking and domestic violence.

Increased self-identification and identification of victims of domestic violence and human trafficking is an indicator that Project interventions are having a real impact at the individual level and in society as a whole.

## Constraint

Organization of nationwide awareness-raising campaigns and research on domestic violence and human trafficking currently depends on donor funding.

## Human Touch Story:

### A Powerful Message Can Put an End to Domestic Violence

*Anyone can be the victim of domestic violence, regardless of age, gender, or status, yet the problem is often overlooked, excused, or denied. This is especially true when the abuse is psychological rather than physical. Emotional abuse is often minimized, yet it can leave deep and lasting scars. Acknowledging the warning signs and symptoms of domestic violence is the first step to ending it. No one should live in fear.*

The International Center 'La Strada' has great experience in assisting cases of domestic violence identified through the Trust Line for women, which 'La Strada' has operated since 2009 with support from the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Mrs. Daniela Misail-Nichitin, Deputy Chairperson of 'La Strada', recalls a recent case in which a woman said, "What shall I do? My husband is terrorizing me with a gun, he points it at my head or puts it in my mouth [...] and he keeps me like this for a couple of hours. I would go to the police, but they would laugh at me. My husband is the chief of police, and the prosecutor is our relative." Misail-Nichitin continues, "This woman really needs counseling so as to make up her mind, especially taking into account that she has two divorce applications, but both of them were settled through reconciliation. If the victim comes and says that she has decided to choose reconciliation, the judge must be very cautious, because her decision might be the result of some pressure."

Some women who call the Trust Line are afraid to disclose that they themselves need help. "Hello. Can you suggest how I can help my friend? She is beaten and humiliated by her husband continuously. She cannot ask for help because she is a public person and her husband is well-

known in the locality," continues Misail-Nichitin, referring to another case. This is how the timid confessions of women with a certain status in society most frequently begin.

These usually are teachers, social assistants, and wives of local leaders such as mayors, policemen, and judges. During the first call, they do not admit that they are talking about themselves. If they call back, they start to disclose they are the ones who need help", says Misail-Nichitin.

'La Strada' Trust Line operators offer primary psychological counseling to victims of domestic violence, advise them how to build a non-violent relationship, refer them to specialized services, and inform them about the law on preventing and combating domestic violence.

"Young women between 18 and 26 years old may be easier to help take a decision if the couple has no children", says Misail-Nichitin. "Stereotypes like 'the child should have a father' or 'it is difficult to bring up a child alone' leave their marks. Nevertheless, when you ask them what they want for their child: a calm, stress-free and peaceful childhood, or a situation when the child has nightmares, health problems and school failures? At that moment, women start to perceive their situation differently. Women between 26 and 35 years old represent the most

confident category. Usually, they do not perceive the importance of psychological counseling, and they request legal assistance from the outset. Women over thirty-five years old especially need psychological counseling, and in many cases there is a need for services for perpetrators, such as centres for psychological counseling, or centres for alcohol and drug rehabilitation.”

‘La Strada’ periodically analyses the calls to formulate simple and clear messages focused on specific problems and needs of different categories of women calling the Trust Line.

The best message about violence is the one that responds to what the audience wants to hear about violence and does not know.

A good example of this is the video spot produced within the Project on the basis of the principle ‘Different people in different places’. It contains 22 messages presented by women and men of different ages and social groups who come from urban and rural areas. These messages provide different tips on how to recognize early signs of violence, promote zero tolerance towards violence and advise women affected by domestic violence to ask for help from ‘La Strada’ Trust Line.

Project experience shows that a powerful message that is tailored to the intended target group and presented by services providers, actors and ordinary people, can help victims put an end to domestic violence.



## CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

### Good Practice: Capacity-Building for Professionals to Tackle Trafficking and Domestic Violence

*Short- and long-term services (medical, psychological, social, legal, employment and housing) have been provided to victims and potential victims of human trafficking since 2006 through the National Referral System (NRS), which was initially launched in five areas of Moldova.*

Through the Project, the NRS has been expanded 1) thematically, to identify and assist victims of domestic violence in a targeted manner; and 2) geographically, with the NRS now operational in 31 territorial units, including 28 districts, two municipalities and one town.

Furthermore, the Project strengthened the capacity of state institutions and professionals responsible for the identification, short-term assistance (shelter and repatriation), and long-term assistance (rehabilitation) of victims. For this, the Project gave advice on the development of important rules and policies targeting different professional groups. These include: 1) Standard Regulations for Rehabilitation Centres for Victims of Domestic Violence (Government Decision No. 129 of 22 February 2010); 2) Quality Standards in Delivering Assistance for Victims of Domestic Violence (Government Decision No. 1200 of 23 December 2010); 3) draft guidelines on implementation of domestic violence legislation for social assistants, medical staff and police officers;

4) Identification Regulations for Victims and Potential Victims of trafficking, including Standard forms; and 5) the first draft of the Regulations of the Multidisciplinary Teams within the NRS.

To improve collaboration and referral from the community level to the

district level, the Project supported initial and follow-up training for hundreds of multidisciplinary community specialists involved in the NRS.

In addition, Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) were signed with the Local Public Administration in all communities that the Project targeted. These MoUs had three main goals: 1) to build the capacity of Multidisciplinary Teams; 2) to raise awareness within the general public; and 3) to support the provision of primary counseling services for the victims and perpetrators of human trafficking and domestic violence.

The National Committee for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and the Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family Board approved the NRS Strategy report on the first year of implementation.<sup>4</sup>

### Lesson learned

*The monitoring and evaluation of the first pilot steps in implementing the NRS Strategy were essential to strengthening and expanding the National Referral System.*

<sup>4</sup> <http://mmps.gov.md/file/rapoarte/Raport%20Strategia%20SNR.pdf>



## Elements of this Good Practice

Project partners used Memoranda of Understanding to ensure that everyone was working within the same framework and had the same understanding of deliverables and timelines. This is an effective coordination tool in strengthening and scaling-up the NRS.

The development of rules and policies and the training of relevant professionals are a prerequisite for enforcing victims' rights to protection and high-quality services.

The experience and lessons learned by the Multidisciplinary Teams within the NRS operations help improve institutional capacities and legislative frameworks.

## Constraint

Insufficient funding in local budgets to strengthen the capacity of administrative structures and professionals working to protect and assist victims.

## Human Touch Story:

### Addressing Cases of Domestic Violence Jointly Brings Better Results

It was the first time that Nicolae M., a police inspector from Soldanesti district, northern Moldova, knew how to respond when a woman who had just been the victim of domestic violence came to him. During his previous eight years of work as a policeman, he had received many similar claims, which he usually treated superficially, looking only at the procedural aspects and neglecting the human sides of the situation. When women did not want to file claims against the perpetrators or did not want to take the perpetrators to court, he usually acquiesced and did not bother trying to convince them otherwise.

"Such situations are widespread in Moldova," explains Valentina Bodrug-Lungu, a national expert in gender problems. "One in three physi-

cally abused women considers that it was her to provoke the conflict, so the community does not pay much attention to this phenomenon, and the professionals are unmotivated to tackle the issue in a comprehensive manner."

In March 2009, Nicolae M. participated in a training organized within the Project. This training helped him realize that his approach was wrong. Only by working together with a Multidisciplinary Team (family physicians, social assistants and psychologists) are police officers able to understand the complexity of the phenomenon and the most appropriate intervention for such situations.

Nicolae M. subsequently dealt with the case of Maria, a 32-year-old woman with two small children and

a violent husband. Maria was afraid of being left on the street with no source of income, but the day came when she finally decided to take her children and go to the Soldanesti Police Office. This time, Nicolae M. registered the domestic violence case and called the social assistant, the physician, and the psychologist from the locality to a meeting to solve the case together.

“Maria will benefit from psychological counseling so as to overcome the physical and psychological abuse she has been through. The woman and the children will undergo medical tests and benefit from social assistance,” said the police inspector, describing all measures in detail and pointing out that he was “very pleased to work with other members of the local Multidisciplinary Team and to see the resulting benefits for the victims.”

Larisa T., a psychologist from Soldanesti, says that the biggest advantage in her work with victims of violence is in the complex approach used to treat victims: from psychological and moral rehabilitation to finding a place to live and getting a job. “This way we break the cliché that violence has to be a taboo subject, that is to be absorbed within the family, and that no one should

find out about it,” says the psychologist.

Since early 2009, about 200 professionals (family physicians, social assistants, and police officers) from the Soldanesti, Vulcanesti, Rezina, Anenii-Noi and Grigoriopol districts have been trained in preventing and combating domestic violence, setting up Multidisciplinary Teams, and reacting in every individual case to protect victims from violence and to prevent new cases and recidivism. By the end of 2011, another 200 professionals will have benefited from the same training.

Coming back to Maria’s case: She and her children were temporarily placed in the local maternal centre while they waited to move to her parents’ house. Maria cannot believe that she finally got away from her violent husband and that she can now live in peace with her children.

“I really do not know what I would have done by myself. Maybe I would have had to leave my children for a while in a boarding school and go abroad to earn money. Now, with the help of the Multidisciplinary Team, I hope to find a job in Moldova,” the woman told us with hope in her eyes and heart.

## MULTIDISCIPLINARY APPROACH

### Good Practice: Multidisciplinary Approach in Achieving and Sustaining a Life Free of Violence

*In the social protection of vulnerable persons, multiple stakeholders who have incomplete capacities and coordination mechanisms across various sectors and between government and civil society are one of the main risks to the success of any initiative.*

#### Lesson learned

*The participation of representatives of the Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family and Ministry of Interior as well as of district-level MDTs in the monitoring of community teams reflects positively on the quality of feedback and corrective measures and promotes further bottom-up and top-down communication and case referral.*

The creation of community Multidisciplinary Teams (MDTs) made up of social assistants, police officers, family physicians, mayors/deputy mayors, and psychologists/ pedagogues in all Project target areas and joint efforts of the implementing agencies made it possible, for the first time in Moldova, to combine protective measures at the individual level systematically and sustainably with community empowerment.

The Project is instrumental in building the capacity of public services and staff of non-governmental organizations to provide assistance based on a multidisciplinary approach.

Activities to build the capacities of institutions, multidisciplinary professionals and civil society in order to prevent trafficking and domestic violence and to identify and support victims and perpetrators have been implemented at all stages of the Project.

Along with training for the members of MDTs, the Project supported supervisory missions, which focused specifically on solving concrete cases, thus increasing local capacities and responsiveness.

Systematic monitoring of the MDTs' activity also helps to identify the

best practices used by different teams and to promote them within the system.

On the other hand, monitoring visits point out the gaps in the operation of MDTs and help to assess their training needs. In the latter case, follow-up training considerably improves the activity of the MDTs and compensates for the negative effects of staff turnover within the Local Public Administration at the district and community levels.

Approval of the Regulations for the Multidisciplinary Teams within the National Referral System, developed under the Project, will 1) facilitate creation of MDTs in all communities of Moldova, 2) provide a common operational concept for all MDTs, and 3) strengthen collaboration among professionals from diverse disciplines and institutions who, as part of the National Referral System, comprehensively assist and protect victims and potential victims of trafficking and domestic violence.

Twenty-two community Multidisciplinary Teams were established through decisions of Community Councils and over one-hundred members of Multidisciplinary Teams have been trained.

## Elements of this Good Practice

The multidisciplinary approach has been effective in cases with numerous problems that exceed the capacity and responsibility of a single institution at the Central and Local Public Administration.

The periodic monitoring missions helped to assess the quality of MDTs' services and to identify solutions to emerging problems. They also provided for continuous professional development through on-the-job training and/or mentoring.

The Project facilitated the sharing of experiences and good practices in providing assistance among different MDTs at the district and community levels.

## Constraints

High staff turnover within the Local Public Administration at the district and community levels.

Insufficient funding in local budgets for follow-up training of MDTs working to protect and assist victims.

## Human Touch Story:

### Working Together to Protect Victims of Violence"

*The implementing agencies, in partnership with central government officials, pay regular visits to the Project sites to evaluate progress toward improving local capacities for addressing cases of domestic violence and human trafficking. The first monitoring visits have shown that local multidisciplinary specialists (social assistants, medical workers/physicians, and police officers) are essential to protect and assist victims.*

There is at least one feature common to all villages in Moldova: They all have many migrant parents who have left their children behind and migrant youth who do not intend to return. "Since the beginning of the year nine persons have died, and no babies have been born. I am scared when I think of the way the village ages," says a woman from a target community. She recalls, that 20 years ago, her village had 3,500 inhabitants. Today, it has only 2,500. Another woman sadly states that, "new houses are not being built. Given the

lack of jobs, people start abusing alcohol. This results in many conflicts and cases of domestic violence."

Discussions are harsh when they turn to a recent case of violence in the community. The case concerns a family of hard-working people. Nobody talked poorly about them. Ana is a teacher and Ion is a construction worker in Russia. Together, they are raising a 14-year-old son. In January 2011, excessive alcohol consumption led to a fight in which Ion got angry and stabbed Ana with a knife.

This was not a new occurrence. Ana had been facing such situations for years.

"It is a shame in the village to be a teacher and be beaten by the husband," says the social assistant from the community, explaining the woman's silence.

But it is a story common among families in Moldova, where "each fourth woman is subject to physical and psychological violence and only a small part request help because of the fear and shame."<sup>5</sup>

Rather than be just another case in which a woman simply accepts violent attacks from her husband, Ana decided to file for divorce, convinced that she could no longer live in such a situation. As a result of the intervention of specialists, Ion was hospitalized for 40 days in the district hospital for treatment of alcohol addiction. Meanwhile, Ana received counseling and information that helped her make the right decision. Currently, as the documents for divorce are being examined, Ana and her son live separately from Ion. The policeman and the social assistant are closely observing the family.

The policeman has registered about three perpetrators of domestic violence in this community, but their real number is much higher. "I have worked as a policeman for 20 years in this community. In all these years there have been only a few cases of domestic violence, denounced by women victims. They do not go to the police because of fear and shame. Women prefer to talk with the social assistant. But we communicate regularly and work together in all cases. It is easier and more efficient to work within the Multidisciplinary Team. If one specialist doesn't succeed, the second gets involved. This is the role of a team work," concludes the policeman.

The joint work and referral of cases of violence to relevant specialists is the main task of the Multidisciplinary Teams created in 31 communities and trained as part of the Project for the prevention of domestic violence and assistance for victims of domestic violence.

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5 Women At-Risk in the Republic of Moldova, Winrock International, 2005 [http://www.atnet.md/public/46/en/Women%20At%20Risk\\_eng.pdf](http://www.atnet.md/public/46/en/Women%20At%20Risk_eng.pdf)

## CENTRE FOR ASSISTANCE AND PROTECTION

### Good Practice: The Centre for Assistance and Protection Provides Successful Rehabilitation and Reintegration Services to Victims and At-risk Cases

*The Centre for Assistance and Protection of Victims and Potential Victims of Trafficking (the Centre) has been operating with the support of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) for the last 10 years. In 2008, the Centre became a public institution subordinate to the Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family. Since then, it has been funded and administered by the Government jointly with IOM.*

To date, IOM and the staff of the Centre have assisted 2,109 victims and 786 potential victims of human trafficking.

Since the beginning of the Project, the Centre has provided crisis intervention assistance to 816 beneficiaries through different project funds: 247 victims of trafficking (VoTs), 202 children of VoTs, 30 stranded migrants, 227 at-risk cases, 78 victims of domestic violence, 25 repatriated children, and seven unaccompanied minors (UAMs). Through these project funds and since the beginning of the Project, 209 beneficiaries have received assistance at the Centre.

Every year, about 300 people benefit from the services provided in the Centre, of whom 200 receive temporary safe accommodation. "Lately, we have been observing an increase in referrals of victims of domestic violence for assistance to the Centre. After the Law No. 45 on preventing and combating domestic violence entered into force in 2008, more cases have been identified and reported," says Viorel Gorceag, the director of the Centre.

At the Centre, women, men, girls and boys benefit from temporary shelter and psychological counseling to overcome post-traumatic stress. Additionally, each person is assisted in

obtaining identification documents (as many returned victims have no such documents). Documenting repatriated minors is more difficult and time-consuming.

Beneficiaries also receive medical assistance and legal counseling, including court representation in civil

#### Lesson learned

*To avoid delays in the reintegration of the child into the family, cooperation with child protection authorities is essential.*



and penal cases. Together with the beneficiary, the Centre's social assistant/case manager develops an individual assistance plan, respecting confidentiality and including an estimated budget. The plan is drawn up in close consultation with the Multi-disciplinary Team (MDT) coordinator from the victim's place of origin. The beneficiary voluntarily participates in the programme and signs a consent form for assistance.

The individual assistance plan ranges from procurement of food and clothes for children, school/education support, renovation and refurbishment of the house to which the beneficiary returns upon leaving the Centre, professional orientation and vocational training courses, job mediation and employment, etc. The Project pays part of the assistance costs through IOM ensuring gradual increase of contribution from the Central/Local Public Authorities alongside with the civil society organizations active in the field.

Initially, the Centre opened its doors primarily to women and girl victims

of trafficking. As the nature of trafficking changes, though, the Centre's services have been adapted and expanded over the years to include female (70 per cent) and male (30 per cent) victims of trafficking and their family members, as well as victims of domestic violence, unaccompanied minors, and stranded migrants, including people with special needs.

Drawing upon their professionalism and long-term experience of work with highly traumatized cases, the Centre's staff proved able to efficiently cope with the diverse beneficiaries' profiles.

With the thematic expansion and further development of the National Referral System through this Project, the Centre continues to be one of the key elements and is recognized as a highly specialized service within integrated social services.

Cases identified by MDT members are referred to the Centre through the NRS National Coordination Unit within the Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family.

## Elements of This Good Practice:

The Centre's staff interventions are complex and based on the individual needs of the beneficiaries. This approach produces immediate change in victims' lives.

Cost-sharing of Centre services between the Project and public funds makes it possible to sustain the rehabilitation and reintegration of victims.

The Project helps the Centre's staff to identify and monitor cases with MDT members, including emergency response upon request by any NRS partner. This approach strengthens the NRS and thereby improves the policy environment.

## Constraint:

Because the Centre is located in Chisinau, victims from outside the city do not have easy access to its services.



## Human Touch Story:

### Lilia Begins Life Anew

Lilia, a 21 year-old woman, never got to know her parents. She grew up in an orphanage. The staff and the children from that institution were her only friends and acquaintances. She did not know life outside the orphanage. She wanted to go to university, have a nice house and get a good job.

Graduates of orphanages have little chance of pursuing higher education. Most of them enter vocational schools; some go to colleges; but only a few of them succeed in enrolling in universities. Lilia attended tailoring training courses and found employment, but her salary was hardly covering the cost of meals and other needs. She had no house. Continuous failure to find a well-paid job in Moldova pushed Lilia into the traffickers' trap.

For a while, Lilia was an agricultural worker in Moldova. Later, her employer offered her a similar, better-paid job in Ukraine. The positive experience of returned migrants pushed her to go abroad. When she arrived in Ukraine, she was forced to provide sexual services to clients.

"I was destroyed gradually. They were taking me apart piece by piece. I and other girls were treated like goods. They took our documents away and locked us up, so we had no chances of escaping. I asked some clients to help me run away, but no one did," tells Lilia.

After five months of slavery in Ukraine, Lilia was brought to Moldova and forced to be a domestic worker in her trafficker's house.





When she became pregnant, the trafficker insisted that she get an abortion. This was the last straw. Lilia got over her fear and decided to run away.

When she arrived in another city, far from the trafficker, Lilia met a young woman with a similar story who encouraged her to seek help from the International Organization for Migration (IOM). "She told me that the specialists from this organization helped her rebuild her life. She has the same story – graduated from a boarding school, got trafficked for sexual exploitation in Russia, and now she is raising a child all by herself," Lilia tells us.

So Lilia came to the Centre for Assistance and Protection (the Centre) of victims and potential victims of

trafficking in human beings with IOM support, where she benefited from social, medical, psychological and legal assistance. Later, she was referred to a maternity centre where she and her child stayed after the baby was born. IOM, together with the Centre, helped Lilia buy a house outside Chisinau. The Project covered part of the costs of the house and other primary needs for Lilia and her baby.

Specialists continue to monitor the case. Although she is safe now, she again and again relives the nightmare that she has been through.

All victims of human trafficking need much time, sometimes a lifetime, to heal from the unseen wounds of the trafficking experience.

## LEGAL ASSISTANCE AND PROTECTION ORDERS

### Good Practice: Ensuring Victims Access to Legal Assistance and Protection Services

*The few available studies carried out in Moldova indicate that most victims of domestic violence do not report abuse and do not seek help because they feel ashamed of what people might think or say and because they do not trust the authorities. According to statistics, legal services are the most needed service, after psychological counseling.*

Law No. 45 on preventing and combating domestic violence entered into force in September 2008 and represents a shift in perception of domestic violence: whereas it had been viewed as a private issue, it is now seen as a public problem. The Law stipulates the roles and responsibilities of individuals involved and envisages the right of victims to protection through issuance of Protection Orders. The Court issues a Protection Order within 24 hours of a victim's request. The provisions of the Order may be in effect for up to three months and obligate the defendant to vacate the common premises, not to approach and contact the victim and the children (if there are any), to pay damages caused by the violence, to follow a relevant counseling and/or treatment course, etc. At the same time, the Protection Order allows for the initiation of a divorce process. Police and social assistance representatives are responsible for monitoring the enforcement of Protection Orders.

To facilitate implementation of Law No. 45, including the enforcement of Protection Orders, the Project supported 1) advocacy and awareness-raising activities, 2) training of legal assistants, lawyers, prosecutors, judges and Multidisciplinary Teams (MDTs), 3) design of a Guide

on implementation of Law No. 45 for judges, and 4) development of amendments for an implementation mechanism of the Law.

The approved amendments refer to the Criminal and Criminal Procedure Codes and other legislative and normative acts and make possible the proper enforcement of Law No. 45. They also criminalize sexual harassment (Article 173 Criminal Code) and domestic violence (Article 201 of the Criminal Code).

The Project also supported the creation of a network of legal assistants in 4 target districts (Anenii Noi, Rezi-na, Soldanesti and Vulcanesti).

Following training in enforcement of Law No. 45 for 200 judges, prosecutors and lawyers, hundreds of victims of violence benefited from legal services and more than 40 Protection Orders have been issued since September 2009.

There has not yet been more generalized application of Protection Orders for a number of reasons, which include, but are not limited to, lacking knowledge among specialists about the provisions of the domestic violence law and tolerance of the phenomenon among specialists and the general public.

### Lesson learned

*More attention should be paid to the role of Multi-disciplinary Teams in monitoring the enforcement of Protection Orders and in ensuring the provision of necessary services.*

## Elements of this Good Practice

The Project has successfully combined different interventions (awareness-raising, legislative change, capacity-building), thereby giving victims access to legal services and helping to enforce Protection Orders.

Institutionalization and training of MDTs in implementing the domestic violence law are prerequisites for sustainability.

## Constraint

Effective protection and assistance in cases of domestic violence, including implementation of Protection Orders, also requires development of local services for perpetrators along with services for victims. Otherwise, there is no guarantee that domestic violence will not recur.



## Human Touch Story:

### Rescuing Victims of Domestic Violence and Helping them Build a Better Future

Raisa, a 48-year-old educated woman from a community helped many women fight domestic violence, but did not have the courage to stop violence in her own home. Raisa's first husband was jealous of her successes and left her with two children, without any support.

Two years later, she divorced her husband and decided to rebuild her life. She met Vasile, "a handsome prince with a rotten soul", as she was to find out later. A nice and gallant man, he soon won Raisa's trust. After a while, she started to discover his real nature. "He was very jealous, used to come to my home late at night, knock on my windows, and intrude upon my children. He never moved in to live with me. Although he proposed to me, I could not make up my mind to marry him."

When Raisa tried to end the relationship, Vasile repeatedly became violent.

"Once, after hitting me very cruelly and leaving, my godmother, who came in by chance, took me to the hospital," Raisa says with tears in her eyes. Later, she found out that Vasile had lied to her: he was married and did not even intend to get divorced. His wife was crying desperately at home with two children.

Vasile was abusing Raisa not only physically, but psychologically as well.

Raisa turned to the police several times, but they did not want to get involved since Vasile was telling them a different story. They kept telling Raisa, "Today you beat each other. Tomorrow you love each other."

Fortunately, after one year, Raisa met Ion Oboroceanu, a Project legal consultant. "I found the courage to tell my story and ask for help, and this changed my life."

Raisa received legal, psychological, and informational assistance from members of the Multidisciplinary Team and filed a complaint against the perpetrator. "Vasile tried to threaten me, but I resisted, as I was assisted by professionals who were previously trained and knew how to intervene in such cases."

"I met the professionals who helped me when I really needed it. Such an intervention means a rescue and a path to the future for women who suffer from spousal and partner abuse," explains Raisa with confidence.

### Lesson learned

*Violence can be stopped if there are willingness to change things for the better, the necessary skills, and access to protection and assistance services.*

## WORK WITH PERPETRATORS

### Good Practice: Services for Perpetrators for a Non-violent Lifestyle

*Most often, neither the victims nor the perpetrators are aware of the legal provisions concerning domestic violence. Furthermore, specialists, who are legally required to deal with cases of domestic violence, also suffer from a lack of pertinent information. The lack of services for perpetrators is yet another major problem that renders assistance to victims inefficient and perpetuates domestic violence.*

The Project, in partnership with the Local Public Administration in Drochia, supported the creation of the first service in Drochia for perpetrators of domestic violence. The local NGO 'Artemida' will operate the Centre. Draft regulations for the services for perpetrators are currently being developed.

#### Lesson learned

*Study visits to countries with experience in working with victims and perpetrators ultimately contribute to identifying good practices and their replication in Moldova.*

According to specialists in the field, the main problems faced by perpetrators are: 1) aggressiveness and the lack of skills to manage it and 2) alcohol addiction. Services for the treatment of alcohol addiction are lagging, though, because of a lack of specialists at the local level.

The crux of services for perpetrators consists in protecting women from domestic violence by changing partners' violent behaviour, with the focus on giving perpetrators a new social understanding based on equality and mutual respect.

To support the development of the first comprehensive set of services in Drochia for male perpetrators of domestic violence, the Project helped design a system of services for perpetrators of domestic violence.

The system includes a desk review of the relevant national legislative,

policy and institutional frameworks, an analysis of international services, good practices and their compatibility with the Moldovan context, and recommendations to strengthen the national response system through the creation and development of services for perpetrators.

Additionally, the Project contributed to the organization of a study visit to Vienna in October 2010. Austria has 30 years of experience and widely recognized good practices in working with victims and perpetrators. The visit increased understanding of ways to develop services to respond to domestic violence as a part of victim assistance strategy, in particular, services for perpetrators, a working methodology, and multidisciplinary collaboration mechanisms.

In December 2010, the Drochia Council approved the cost-free allocation of premises for the Centre for perpetrators. The launch of the Centre, however, will be possible after reconstruction and refurbishment of the premises.

## Elements of This Good Practice

The Project has successfully combined institutional development and capacity-building to strengthen impact on individuals and the policy environment.

Project interventions stimulated allocation of premises for a Centre for perpetrators in Drochia, thereby facilitating sustainability at the local level.

By conveying to perpetrators a new social understanding based on equality and mutual respect, Project interventions help stop partners' violent behaviour.

## Constraints

Most often, neither victims nor the perpetrators are aware of the legal provisions concerning domestic violence.

Many professionals still lack the knowledge, will and capacity to enforce provisions that exist on paper.

There is also a scarcity of funding in local budgets for the creation and maintenance of services for perpetrators.



## COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION: CENTERS FOR YOUTH

### Good Practice: A Centre for Children and Youth – An Investment in the Future

*To fill in the gap of community services in remote areas of the country, the Project provided financial support for the creation community centers for youth in 26 villages and five towns in the Anenii Noi, Rezina, Soldanesti, Vulcanesti and Grigoriopol districts.*

#### Lesson learned

*Coupled with many awareness-raising events concerning violence, sports activities help to prevent violence. Safe recreation activities burn energy and negative emotions while developing a culture of non-violent behaviour. Furthermore, now the local youth have something enjoyable to occupy their time with - this will make them less likely to want to leave the village and potentially fall prey to human trafficking.*

The inhabitants of the village of Cobalea in Soldanesti district believe that children sometimes succeed in situations with which adults cannot cope easily. "It is very difficult to change the mentality and the life-style of an adult. It is more efficient to invest in children and youth, in activities that help them network, cope with risky situations, develop life skills and share their experience with peers, and with adults as well," says Ana Cuceinic, Mayor of Cobalea.

Today, villagers in Cobalea prevent domestic violence and human trafficking by investing in youth.

The Centre for Children and Youth in Cobalea was opened in 2009. About 20 villagers were involved in refurbishing the premises of the Centre.

There are various activities in the Centre, such as dance, sports, photography, journalism, hairdressing and make-up sessions. The community social assistant counsels children in the Centre according to an established schedule. All activities are free. About 220 children, youth and adults, including members of vulnerable families, are benefiting from the Centre's activities.

Until now, children and youth from the village had no alternatives to spending all of their spare time watching TV, hanging around on the street, or going to the bar or the disco club.

"We were so bored and we really envied the young people from cities. We wanted to graduate from school as soon as possible and leave the village. I used to go to Soldanesti to play football with the team from the town. But I was not always able to cover the transportation costs," tells Andrei, a 14-year-old boy from Cobalea.

The Centre's newspaper, published twice a month, provides the villagers with local news, job vacancies and consultation from different specialists to prevent illegal migration and trafficking.

The 'Stejarel' Association of Parents and Teachers is very active in mobilizing the community to create better conditions for the Centre's activities and to ensure the transparent use of resources.

Creation of this Centre is just one of the initiatives promoted by the Cobalea Organizational Committee to implement the Village Strategic Development Plan. For this purpose, UNDP and UNFPA offered 132,960 MDL (US\$12,000), of which 39,960 MDL were invested in creating and equipping an office for the social assistant within the local mayoralty.

The local public administration of the village of Cobalea contributed 122,720 MDL (48 percent of the total costs) to support the creation and operation of the Centre.

## Elements of this Good Practice

The Centre's interventions empowered school communities, parents, professional groups and local authorities and mobilized their commitment to sustain the Centre's work after the completion of the Project.

Close monitoring of at-risk families by the community social assistant immediately affects beneficiaries.

## Constraint

Scarcity of funding in local budgets for the creation of similar services in all remote areas of Moldova.

## Human Touch Story:

### Villagers of Poiana Learned to Live without Violence and to Protect Themselves against Trafficking

The village of Poiana in Soldanesti district was one of many rural areas in Moldova with many problems and few solutions. Creation of a Community Information Centre within the local gymnasium prompted positive changes in the community in general and helped the villagers perceive domestic violence and human trafficking differently.

Although initially skeptical about the Project's idea and rather tolerant of domestic violence, the residents of Poiana participated in many training and information activities. It took them some time to understand that physical and emotional abuse is very bad practice in normal family life and that perpetrators must be punished according to the law.

"Now our villagers do not show indifference when they see a case of violence or abuse. They know also that in such cases they should ask for help from the policeman, the mayor, the social assistant or the health worker. All these specialists are members of the local Multidis-

ciplinary Team who already solved many cases of domestic violence," says Liliana Stefarta, director of the gymnasium and Community Information Centre.

The Centre's activities are very popular among the residents of Poiana. At the Centre, men, boys, women and girls learn how to protect themselves against human trafficking and how to tackle domestic violence. Local community leaders support the Centre's activities and provide all possible support. The priest Alin Rotaru, whose opinion enjoys the respect of Poiana's residents, supports the Centre's initiatives as well. "A message against domestic violence and human trafficking coming from a priest is ten times more powerful," say the residents of Poiana.

Another important achievement of the Centre is the mobilization of different community members in actions against human trafficking and domestic violence. The Centre's staff solved many cases of violence and abuse against women and children



and made sure that perpetrators were punished. Recently, the members of the Multidisciplinary Team identified several children who were at risk of dropping out as a result of domestic violence and facilitated their reintegration into school. A minor was prevented from being trafficked to Turkey following the prompt interventions of the multidisciplinary specialists.

Teachers are also helping to reintegrate child victims of trafficking and/or domestic violence and to monitor previous cases. Teachers successfully apply the knowledge and skills they gained during the training facilitated by professional trainers.

Another new and positive initiative is the creation of the Council of Poiana Grandparents, which is comprised of grandparents who have different problems in raising their grandchildren who have been left

behind by migrant parents. In Poiana, there are 25 children who have one or both parents living abroad. During seminars and other activities that the grandparents attend, the participants learn how to overcome different communication problems with their grandchildren, how to gain the trust of their grandchildren, and how to bring up children without old and often violent methods of 'education'.

The Centre benefits the children of Poiana. They all fully enjoy the variety of activities available at the Centre through the support of the Project. There is a wide variety of extracurricular activities organized at the Center that the community children can choose from. The children are proud of their school newsletter, which gives important information about school and community life.



## SMALL GRANTS PROGRAMME

### Good Practice: First Aid for Victims of Trafficking and Domestic Violence

In 2009, Vulcanesti became one of the five target districts of the Project. The staff of the Psycho-Social Centre (a psychologist, a social assistant and a legal advisor) and other members of the local Multidisciplinary Team were trained within the Project and, as a result, are better equipped with knowledge and skills to identify and assist people in need. As a follow-up, the Centre has organized dozens of seminars for parents and professional groups to inform local people about the Centre's activity and to distribute anti-violence information in Vulcanesti.

The Centre's beneficiaries are female victims of domestic violence, children neglected and abused by parents and grandparents, and people who have returned from trafficking with severe psychological, medical and financial problems and who are often hopeless and frightened. All beneficiaries are treated with respect and good care. To date, the Centre in Vulcanesti has provided psychological and legal assistance to over 600 victims of domestic violence and their families.

Children left behind by migrant parents are a special category of beneficiaries.

Recently, the staff of the Centre, in partnership with the local Multidisciplinary Team, prevented suicide attempts by two children of migrant workers. These children have been fully integrated into the school community through rehabilitative psychological services.

In the past, most children of migrant workers said that they would follow their parents' example when they grew up. Now, though, more and more children encourage their parents to come back and work at home.

The Psycho-Social Centre in Vulcanesti was created as part of the Small Grants Programme for NGOs and mass media, launched by the Project in July 2009.

The Small Grants Programme selected and supported twenty-eight civil society initiatives (originally, only 25 grants were to be offered) aiming to address human security issues of human trafficking and domestic violence: 22 projects were implemented by NGOs and 6 by mass media organizations in 2010. In 2010, the Project's Board approved a second stage of the Small Grants Programme and selected four projects that community-based NGOs are currently implementing.

The Small Grants Programme contributed to the development of three new services: 1) the Centre for Psychological Assistance on the premises of the District Polyclinic in Grigoriopol (Transnistrian region); 2) psychological-social services for victims and potential victims of domestic violence and human trafficking (in Vulcanesti district); and 3) the establishment of the first Centre for family perpetrators in Moldova (in Drochia district).

As part of the Project, all organizations participating in implementation of the Small Grants Programme

### Lesson learned

*Children of migrant workers changed their attitude towards migration after attending the seminars organized by the Centre. Now they know that illegal migration is not a solution to financial problems.*

benefited from training in fund-raising, grant writing, management, monitoring and evaluation. For some of these NGOs, it was the first project experience and, following their participation in the Small

Grants Programme, they designed other projects and raised funds from other donors (e.g., USAID/IREX, private funds and private individuals from other countries).

## Elements of this Good Practice

Local authorities committed to facilitate replication of the Centre's experience, thus providing access to services for victims from other areas.

Civil society organizations previously trained as part of the Project, receive funds from other donors to sustain and replicate the experience gained from the Project.

The cumulative effect of community commitment and support from the Project has made the Centre's work a striking success.

## Constraint

Requires allocation of considerable funding and initial training for potential grantees.



## Human Touch Story:

### A Child Saved from Trafficking

*Poor families are often easily misled into believing that traffickers are taking their children to a place of employment when, in fact, these children are pushed into prostitution and forced labour.*

The local Multidisciplinary Teams (MDTs) within the NRS are the key actors that afford people access to high-quality protection and rehabilitation services. The National Coordination Unit, established within the Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family as part of the NRS, guides the work of the MDTs.

Maria was the mother of seven children from Vulcanesti. Her first husband passed away, leaving her with four children. Her second husband, with whom she had three more children, turned out to be an alcoholic and a violent husband and father. Pressed by financial constraints, she was one step away from sending her 14-year-old son Pavel to work in Russia at construction sites.

The Psycho-Social Centre in Vulcanesti had known about this dysfunctional family for a long time.

Through prompt interventions, the staff of the Centre (a psychologist, asocial assistant and a legal advisor) prevented Pavel from being trafficked. Now, Pavel goes to a vocational school and, in the afternoons, works at jobs appropriate for his age and under proper work conditions to help support his large family.

The Centre's staff also intervened in the case of another child from the

same family, a girl who got married when she turned 14 and dropped out of school. Following the Centre's interventions, the girl successfully graduated from the ninth grade.

In both cases, the Centre's interventions were tailored to the very special needs of the children and support was provided on-site. The Centre's specialists told Maria and her children how they could protect themselves against trafficking and domestic violence. Now, Maria and her children benefit from needed assistance from the local authorities and the Psycho-Social Centre.

To date, the Psycho-Social Centre in Vulcanesti has granted psychological assistance to over 500 victims of domestic violence and their families and legal assistance to about 100 victims.

All of this is the result of the commitment of the Centre's staff and local authorities and of support from the Project.

Such successes have been encouraging, so the Project's partners in Vulcanesti are planning to open a regional shelter for victims of domestic violence to cover three districts in the south of the country.

## THE ROLE OF MEDIA

### Good Practice: Media Stop Modern-Day Slavery by Telling the Truth about It

*Human trafficking is a modern-day form of slavery. Victims are young children, teenagers, men and women. People, including specialists, do not always know how to prevent trafficking, how to identify victims of trafficking, or how to help them. All of these factors contribute to this growing problem. Domestic violence occurs in families with different economic and social backgrounds. It is perpetuated from one generation to another. Sometimes, children, especially boys, imitate the violent behaviour of their fathers and later on can themselves become abusive husbands and parents.*

The media are important partners in educating and raising awareness about human trafficking and domestic violence in order to help victims and people at risk to become aware of their rights and the services available to them.

To make their work with mass media, professional groups and the general public more effective, the Project's implementing partners developed a joint communication strategy. Different materials (Project information sheets, Q&As on human trafficking and domestic violence, a DVD for journalists with guidelines on ethical principles of reporting on human trafficking and domestic violence, the TV series 'Destinies and Destinations', video and radio spots, posters, flyers, billboards, etc.) have been developed and distributed.

Various media events (press conferences, press clubs) were organized. They heightened the Moldovan mass media's and general public's interest in human trafficking and domestic violence.

Of 28 projects supported by the Small Grants Programme in 2009-2010, six were media projects implemented by local and national radio stations, TV channels, newspapers, and media NGOs. Within these small

projects, media organizations developed different media products on human trafficking and domestic violence: about 50 radio and 50 TV programmes (including 15 live-broadcast public debates), several video and audio spots, 50 newspaper articles (many of which were republished by other publications), 12 journalistic investigations, 40 blog materials, and other products. These materials about human trafficking and domestic violence have reached an estimated 700,000 people.

Journalists have benefited from consultations with and technical support from the Project's staff. Various press clubs were organized at which journalists were able to talk to experts.

In 2011, the Project organized training for local mass media institutions to help media groups to produce accurate and ethical media materials on human trafficking and domestic violence. The media training needs were identified through a participatory process and carefully analyzed.

## Elements of this Good Practice

The Project's implementing agencies developed a joint communication strategy and annual communication plans to ensure synergy and maximum impact through an optimization of resources.

Production of many communication materials and use of different communication channels helped the Project achieve a much broader impact than would have otherwise been possible.

Media training needs were analyzed and considered. Organizations working with civil society organizations, including media, can replicate this experience.

## Constraints

Due to geographical and financial restraints, the Project covered a relatively small number of media outlets. Consequently, inaccurate materials and messages (in particular, media products) on human trafficking and domestic violence may still appear and adversely affect public opinion.

Inhabitants of rural areas still have inadequate access to information and hold traditional beliefs that often disregard human rights.

Local NGOs and media groups have poor access to resources for awareness-raising campaigns against human trafficking and domestic violence.



## Human Touch Story:

### Mass Media – An Important Partner in Protection and Empowerment of Victims of Trafficking and Domestic Violence

During the last few years, Maria Parfionova, director of the GRT public radio station in Gagauzia, has been inviting different decision makers, relevant experts and representatives of civil society organizations every week to inform listeners of the radio programme 'Round Table' about how to prevent and combat human trafficking and domestic violence and how to help victims obtain the services and protection they need.

"At the beginning it was hard to talk about cases of violence and trafficking only by disseminating relevant information to prevent other tragedies, without being able to help the victims. After a short period of time more and more specialized services were created throughout the region as part of different projects interested in collaborating with mass media. This gave us the possibility to participate in prevention campaigns and help women in difficult situations," says Parfionova.

Almost every other week, Parfionova presents a new case of trafficking or violence, which guest speakers later discuss in order to assure women in similar situations that they are not alone and that they can and should ask for help. "The discussed cases are reported by police or friends and relatives. Usually people try to avoid discussing their problems because they are afraid or feel ashamed. There are also people who contact the journalists for information or help. Many people, especially women who intend to leave the country for work abroad,

call us to find out how to protect their children from trafficking. The number of such calls is increasing since many people found solutions to their problems with our support," says Parfionova.

Take, for example, the case of Elena, a student at the Comrat University. While she was looking for a job, one of her colleagues offered her work abroad for several months. She put Elena in contact with a person who could facilitate her departure for a reasonable fee. Close to the departure date, Elena told her parents about her decision to work during the summer in Turkey. Her parents did not hear from Elena for a week after she had left. So they contacted the company that facilitated their daughter's departure and found out that "the contact person" did not work there.

Elena's mother reported the case to the police and called the radio programme after hearing a discussion about a case of human trafficking.

The police from Ankara found Elena in the basement of a restaurant. She was badly bruised and drugged. Upon her return home, Elena was afraid of possible revenge by the traffickers and felt ashamed of what she had gone through and what people might think. Following the recommendations of the GRT journalists, Elena's mother called the Centre for Assistance and Protection of Victims of Trafficking in Chisinau (the Centre). At the Centre, Elena received rehabilitation support and found a job in Comrat.



"I had lost any hope of recovering and getting back to a normal life. It is very fortunate that there are organizations that help build confidence, give hope, and provide

support to recover and overcome critical situations. Without the support of the Centre I could hardly have come back to a normal life," says Elena.





## CONCLUSIONS

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The partnership and interagency collaboration established under this Project between the implementing agencies, government institutions and civil society organizations provide for the smooth implementation of activities.

All activities at the national, regional and local levels are coordinated and, if and when possible, organized jointly. This makes activities more effective, significant and cost-efficient. It also helps avoid overlapping.

Direct participation of the line ministries in project management (as Board members) increases the government involvement. Consequently, the government is not a passive recipient of support and assistance from international organizations and donors, but is closely involved in addressing human trafficking and domestic violence.

Cooperation with local authorities at the district and community levels, as well as with civil society, different community actors and media, ensures that the support that this Project provides to communities within this Project responds to their real needs.

## ANNEX Map with project target districts and communities

