

NATIONAL REPORT CZECH REPUBLIC 2016

DETAILS REPORT WRITING ORGANISATION

Country: Czech Republic

Organisation writing report: Diaconia of the ECCB – The Centre of Christian Help in Prague

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Representing any other organisations? Yes

Name of the organisation: League of Open Men (LOM)

1. ORGANISATIONS/PROGRAMMES

WHAT TYPE OF ACTIVITIES RELATED TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PREVENTION HAS YOUR ORGANISATION CARRIED OUT DURING THE LAST THREE YEARS?

“Stop violence in relationships” offers a comprehensive programme for those who have problems managing aggression in relationships. We provide individual, couple, multi-couple and group therapy.

In the years 2014, 2015 and 2016 we have cooperated with Charles University’s Department of Psychology to research and assess the effectiveness of our programme. The research has also focused on **analysing** characteristics and personal features of perpetrators who participate in our programme.

In the past two years, we have also provided some preventative programmes in secondary schools, introducing students to various concepts and theories of aggression. We discuss the dangers of aggressive partners, and explain clues and signs to the students that will help them identify unhealthy partnerships.

LOM focuses on issues currently faced by men both in the Czech Republic and abroad, including violence in close relationships. They analyse the needs of individuals, and study men's roles. LOM is especially active in the field of primary and secondary prevention of violence in families. LOM gained expertise for developing their anger management course from the Norwegian organisation REFORM. They have subsequently rolled out this anger management course in various organisations in the Czech Republic.

In the field of primary prevention, LOM continues their ongoing campaign aimed at men's violence against women and children. The organisation is also engaged in the working group Men and Gender Equality, part of the Government Council for Gender Equality. In 2015, they participated in the creation of the report entitled "Men and Violence in the Czech Republic".

LOM benefits from its image as a man's organisation and successfully engages men unable to manage their aggression. LOM provides an individual internet counselling service for men, focused on conflict and aggression in relationships.

WHAT WOULD YOU DEFINE AS THE BIGGEST OBSTACLES/CHALLENGES REGARDING VIOLENCE PREVENTION TO YOUR ORGANISATION/S? PLEASE FOCUS ON THE LAST THREE YEARS.

It is important that we continue to coordinate our activities with other organisations, through sharing information, cooperating with other specialists, and **engaging in** professional training. We are still working on overcoming misunderstandings and distrust among those involved in organisations working with victims. Most have been sceptical about the possibility for perpetrators to change their **behaviour**, and believe that the only solution to domestic violence **is** for victims **to** completely sever their relationship **and have the perpetrator** leave the family.

A big challenge for us is the issue of how to motivate people who come to us "involuntarily" from the court system.

Another obstacle for our organisation, and for LOM, is **the** lack of systematic and, most importantly, financial support. In the past three years we had some support from the Ministry of Interior as well as from Iceland, Lichtenstein and Norway. However, that support ended this year. Now we are facing significant problems finding other sources of funding for our programmes.

2. COUNTRY

PLEASE GIVE AN OVERVIEW OF GENERAL SITUATION IN YOUR COUNTRY REGARDING WORK WITH PERPETRATORS.

In recent years there have been positive changes regarding working with perpetrators. The government supports a number of changes to the current system to combat domestic and gender-based violence. Domestic and gender-based violence is considered a serious social problem and a violation of fundamental human rights. Great emphasis is placed on primary prevention and education on mutual respect and gender equality. Another important task is the implementation of programmes for working with perpetrators. The government publicly voices **support for** this approach, but in practice there is little evidence of it, particularly in light of the lack of financial support for these activities.

PLEASE GIVE AN OVERVIEW OF YOUR COUNTRY'S CRIMINAL AND CIVIL RESPONSE TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, ESPECIALLY ANY CHANGES WITHIN THE LAST 3 YEARS? (I.E. WHAT ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT LEGAL AND POLICY MEASURES AND HOW HAVE THEY BEEN IMPLEMENTED?)

In 2015, the government approved the Action Plan for the Prevention of Domestic and Gender- based Violence for the years 2015 – 2018. The action plan is a strategic government document aimed at preventing and combatting domestic and gender-

based violence. Implementation of the measures set out in the action plan should improve the current level of protection for persons endangered by domestic violence (including children living in families with incidences of domestic and gender-based violence). The plan should lead to more effective prevention of violence and the development of training for competent professionals in the field of domestic and gender- based violence.

The implementation of the legal Institute of Expulsion by the Police of the Czech Republic is contributing to the improvement of assistance to victims of domestic violence. It allows victims to stay at home while the perpetrator is compelled to leave. Over the period during which it has been possible to use this institute, police work has improved, because they are usually the first to be notified of these incidents.

PLEASE TELL US ABOUT THE PROGRESS YOUR COUNTRY HAS MADE IN RELATION TO ISTANBUL CONVENTION.

In May 2016, the Czech Republic signed the Istanbul Convention. Before this point, the Czech Republic was one of the last eight countries of the Council of Europe that had not signed the convention. This is an important step for the Czech Republic. The convention should contribute to the improvement of standards for the protection of victims of violence. Ratification of the convention should take place in 2018.

DO YOU KNOW ANY OTHER ORGANISATIONS/PROGRAMMES IN YOUR COUNTRY THAT CARRY OUR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PERPETRATOR WORK? IF YES, PLEASE, LIST THEM.

LOM - Praha

VIOLA -

Praha

Persefona -

Brno

THEIA crisis centre - České Budějovice

ADRA (a psychotherapeutic centre) - Hradec Králové

Centrum J. J. Pestalozziho, o.p.s. (a crisis centre) - Chrudim

Centrum nové naděje "Prevention of Partnership Violence " - Frýdek-Místek

Social Services Centre Ostrava (a crisis centre for children and families) - Ostrava

3. BEST PRACTICES

TELL US ABOUT BEST PRACTICES IN WORK WITH PERPETRATORS IN YOUR COUNTRY.

Best practice in work with perpetrators in our country is a comprehensive programme in cooperation with the social services system, the police, lawyers, child care, and probation and mediation services. This comprehensive programme includes all types of therapy for perpetrators (individual, couple and group therapy) together with support for the victim, the victim's relatives, and children. However, this programme is only operational in the capital and in some major regional cities.

In programmes for perpetrators, different types of psychosocial intervention are used, in particular CBT, a systematic approach involving dynamic elements, anger management, counselling, and education.

Mandatory participation in therapy is part of probation, in cooperation with probation services and the judicial system. There is also voluntary participation in counselling due to the low-threshold profile of the services.

4. NEEDS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

WHAT HAS TO BE DONE TO PREVENT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN YOUR COUNTRY (REGARDING WORK WITH PERPETRATORS)?

The Czech Republic is currently implementing the Action Plan for the Prevention of Domestic and Gender-based Violence for the years 2015 – 2018. One of the most emphasised recommendations is the prioritisation of programmes for perpetrators of domestic violence within the complex measures aimed at domestic violence prevention.

Primary prevention, which aims to reduce the risk of violent behaviour in the general population, is extremely important. There must be a shift in public attitudes, and in criminal justice procedures, to demonstrate an intolerance of violence done by men against women.

At the level of secondary prevention there are important statutory sanctions that can both discourage offenders from recidivism, and also serve as a warning to potential offenders. At the same time, the system must provide support for all who are directly affected by domestic violence.

WHAT ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT TASKS AND STEPS THAT YOU FEEL SHOULD BE FOCUSED ON IN YOUR COUNTRY IN ORDER TO TACKLE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ON A GENERAL LEVEL?

In the Czech Republic it is time to create a compact, systemic solution to domestic violence, **in order** to integrate work with victims and work with perpetrators, and to standardise and optimise national conceptions of preventions and solutions addressing domestic violence.

From a practical perspective, an evaluation of current methods, followed by recommendations for standardising work with perpetrators, are crucial.

An association of organisations involved in the issue of domestic violence is to be established in the Czech Republic. We consider this to be an appropriate measure.

Allotment of sufficient and systematic funding for therapeutic work with perpetrators and for primary prevention (education, awareness raising etc.) is also necessary.

Written by Mgr. Vera Vichova, Diaconia of the ECCB – The Centre of Christian Help in
Prague

This publication has been produced with the financial support of the "Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme 2014-2020" of the European Union. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of the authors and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Commission.



Funded by the "Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme 2014-2020" of the European Union



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