

NATIONAL REPORT GEORGIA 2016

DETAILS REPORT WRITING ORGANISATION

Country: Georgia

Organisation writing report: Anti-Violence Network of Georgia

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Representing any other organisations? No

1. ORGANISATIONS/PROGRAMMES

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

The Anti-Violence Network of Georgia (AVNG) has been working on domestic violence issues in Georgia since 2003. The organisation provides legal consultation and psycho-social rehabilitation to domestic violence (DV) survivors. AVNG has ten regional committees and five sub-committees located throughout Georgia.

AVNG runs shelters for the victims of domestic violence in Tbilisi and in Akhaltsikhe. AVNG was the first organisation to open shelters of this kind, and remains the only non-governmental organisation to provide this service.

What type of activities related to preventing domestic violence has/have your organisations carried out in the last three years?

AVNG works on legislative initiatives, conducts trainings for stakeholders to increase their knowledge of DV issues, organises informational campaigns to raise awareness amongst

the general public, shares international practice concerning the effective protection of DV victims, and organises advocacy campaigns on DV issues.

AVNG's involvement in law-making and active advocacy is a significant part of the organisation's approach to violence prevention. AVNG co-authored the law "On Prevention of Domestic Violence, Protection and Assistance of Victims of Domestic Violence," which was adopted by parliament on 25 May, 2006. Since 2007, AVNG has authored five packages of legal amendments, including 22 draft laws. These amendments aim to create a legislative framework that will support the fight against domestic violence, and enable the effective protection of victims.

AVNG builds awareness of DV issues in several key ways. For example, AVNG regularly organises public meetings through its regional committees. Meetings are held in community centres and villages, and involve medical workers, the police, teachers, students, and those involved in prosecution and the judiciary. These regional committees regularly distribute booklets and brochures to the population. AVNG also utilises its webpage and social networking sites to disseminate information concerning women's issues, and available protective mechanisms. The organisation actively works with the general media to spread information on DV issues, trafficking, and other issues affecting women.

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

Gender stereotypes are the greatest hurdle women face. These stereotypes shape women's lives from birth. The serious harms engendered by such stereotypes are particularly evident in cases of domestic violence.

A significant obstacle to AVNG's work on violence prevention is a lack of male participation in public meeting training at all levels.

Another serious challenge is a lack of regular support for developing and financing work with victims and perpetrators.

Finally, the Istanbul Convention is not yet ratified, presenting another challenge for our work.

2. COUNTRY

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

Various statistics exemplify the scale of domestic violence in Georgia. Studies show one in three women experience some form of violence, and one in every 11 married women suffer physical violence.¹ Together with representatives from other governmental and non-governmental institutions, AVNG co-authored the law “On Prevention of Domestic Violence, Protection and Assistance of Victims of Domestic Violence,” which was adopted by parliament on 25 May, 2006. According to the law, the most important administrative mechanisms for the elimination of domestic violence, and the protection of victims, are protective and restrictive orders. Legislation defines temporary protection measures for victims of DV on the one hand, and set limitations on the actions of abusers on the other.

In 2012, an amendment made to the penal code of Georgia made domestic violence a criminal offence.

¹ National Research on Domestic Violence Against Women in Georgia - UNFPA, 2009: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cedaw/docs/AdvanceVersions/GeorgiaAnnexX.pdf>
AVNG Project: Strengthening administrative capabilities of Georgian state with the purpose of preventing domestic violence and supporting violence victims - Supported by Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Nevertheless, despite the progress the country has made in terms of addressing domestic violence, and violence against women, domestic violence remains a serious problem in Georgia.

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?)

The package of legal amendments developed by AVNG was adopted in 2014 and came into force in September 2015. According to one such amendment, the state has a responsibility to provide a rehabilitation programme, aimed at changing abusive behaviour, for people on probation for domestic violence-related crime and for people who have had a protective order issued against them. The Ministry of Corrections has since prepared and implemented a programme for perpetrators, developed by AVNG, within the probation system. However, the current programme does not cover perpetrators in prison. Although the law obliges penitentiary establishments to implement programmes for abusers, such programmes are not yet in place.

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

Georgia has signed the Istanbul Convention, but has not yet ratified it.

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

The Ministry of Corrections of Georgia has prepared the abovementioned programme for perpetrators.

Working with domestic violence perpetrators is a new concept in Georgia, and currently AVNG is the only organisation that has begun work in this area.

3. BEST PRACTICES

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

AVNG, with the support of UNICEF, has worked towards developing rehabilitation programmes for perpetrators. The work was conducted with two pilot groups of probationers predisposed to violence. In addition, AVNG worked with two pilot groups consisting of family members of child perpetrators (mothers, grandmothers, aunts, etc.), in a project we named “Parents’ School”.

Work of this kind is a new approach in Georgia, thus there is not a lot of local experience in this field.

4. NEEDS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. Rehabilitation programs for abusers need to be developed.
2. Laws need to be implemented, obliging perpetrators to undergo a rehabilitation programme as an alternative sentence.
3. Restricted and protective orders must automatically define the process of the rehabilitation program.
4. International practices must be introduced and shared.

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?

Advocating with the MIA to establish a specialized unit/division on DV/VAWG.

Written by Nato Shavlakadze, Anti-Violence Network of Georgia

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