

Report of the first WWP Regional Meeting, Berlin-Woltersdorf 2015

In the beginning of July, a Concept Team of five WWP –Network Members (Atila Uligaj - *Woman to Woman*, Sandra Jovanovic - *OPNA*), Tomislav Vurusic -*Lux Vitae*, Neli Zhekova - *Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation*, and Milan Manojlovic - *OPNA*) under the coordination of Heinrich Geldschlager (*Conexus*) has been formed. The Team had the main goal to assist with the organization and preparation of the First Regional Meeting. In order to accomplish this goal, one of our tasks was to distribute a questionnaire to all participants of the Regional meeting, so to collect important data and feedback on their main expectations, interests and hopes for this meeting. The questionnaire consists of six items which address participants' main concerns, needs, challenges and important issues. The information collected was used as a basis for our preparation work as it provided valuable input on the main areas we needed to focus on in order to contribute for the Meeting' s organization.

The Content analysis that has been conducted consequently, gave us a clearer picture on the important topics that we needed to take into consideration for our First Regional Meeting. Some of the main problems participants shared were related to insufficient financial and institutional support, the need of standardization of perpetrators, social and cultural attitudes supporting domestic violence tolerance, and more. In addition to this, the feedback from the participants tackled the need of knowledge exchange, getting to know professionals working in the field of domestic violence and organizations as well as learning more about the existing efficient and successful treatment approaches and how to establish perpetrators program.

In order to address the expressed need of the participants to get to know more organizations/professionals in the domestic violence field, a market place has been included in the agenda, where all participants could have a chance to present the organizations they are representing and to give information on the model of work and services they provide. Further, a geographical mapping of the people/programs was also a fruitful idea, that has been added to our agenda.

Another important part of the organization of the event was our joint work on the preparation of a SWOT Analysis that would help us gain even more detailed information on four main aspects in respect to the work with perpetrators: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The SWOT Analysis has been identified as a practical mean for developing goals, objectives and proposals for action. It has been commonly decided that our main goal would be rather to propose future actions to the participants of the Regional Meeting that would address some if not all of their main concerns and expectations.

All collected data could be also useful for initiating possible common projects and activities intended to address and overcome similar obstacles such as forming a Regional network that would be built and organized around common ideas and interests.

The Regional meeting was held near Berlin from September 28th till September 30. It included 25 participants from 10 countries (Bulgaria, Poland, Russia, Estonia, Serbia, Czech Republic, Albania,



Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldavia and Croatia). The idea of the Regional meeting was to foster mutual knowledge and collaboration in the South- Eastern region and to receive a feedback about the specific situation and needs of the Member Organizations in the Region. We could divide the meeting in three specific parts:

- 1) Presentations of participants and organizations (market place session);
- 2) Working with perpetrators in the region: - stocktaking (SWOT analysis), - needs, goals and steps for action, and
- 3) Workshops.

Every participant had a small task before arriving to Berlin - to make a poster of the organization s/he represents and to include information about the work they do in the field of domestic violence and work with perpetrators (e.g. name of the organization, city and country, services that are being offered, number of clients per year, cooperation partners, greatest successes in their work and major challenges/problems). It was really interesting to see all those colored posters providing valuable information about countries, people and work they do with perpetrators.

Consequently, the Meeting continued in the direction of the main issue of work with perpetrators in (South-) Eastern Europe. The next step in the Agenda was to conduct the assessment of the current situation through SWOT analysis in order to identify where were in terms of main challenges and needs in the work with perpetrators. Additionally, the SWOT Analysis was intended to help us develop goals and first steps for future actions.

We could also participate in many interesting workshops delivered from colleagues from different regions of Europe. What was also very interesting to hear was presentation from the WWP-EN Network about possible regional collaboration including joint projects and goals. Many participants at the Regional meeting have shared the common issue: problem with sustainability of work with perpetrators because of lack of funds.

The last day we had opportunity of open space discussion, to talk with each other and focus more on issues we think were important for the organizations from different parts of Europe. Taking our strengths and weaknesses and caring all the opportunities and threats with us, the concept team decided to start a mutual collaboration to clarify joint goals and issues and hopefully at some point, to start a joint project regarding work with perpetrators. It is a starting point on which road we hope others will get involved so we could maintain the same level of professionalism seen at WWP-EN.

The Regional meeting was followed by the Annual meeting "Sharing our strengths in a growing network - creating a base for collaboration" where we all could participate in interesting workshops and common activities.

Written by Nelly Zhekova and Tomislav Vurusic



With financial support from the "Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme 2014-2020" of the European Union