

WWP EN 2019 Study Visit Report
Helsinki, Finland, 5th-7th of June 2019

***Hosted by The Federation of Mother and
Child Homes and Shelters (FMS), Ensi- ja
Turvakotien liitto ry.***



1. CONTEXT

The WWP EN Study Visit 2019 took place in Helsinki, Finland on June 5th-7th. The event was hosted by WWP EN and Ensi- ja turvakotien liitto ry (The Federation of Mother and Child Homes and Shelters, FMS) which has already worked against domestic violence in Finland for 40 years. The overall goal of the study visit was to transfer knowledge and experience on work with perpetrators and exchange ideas and practices between representative colleagues. The Study Visit was designed to facilitate conversations and mutual learning between the visiting delegation and those who have policy and local operational responsibilities and practical experiences in working with perpetrators.



The following colleagues around Europe participated in the Study Visit:

Paula Bogović, Udruga UZOR, Croatia;

Katarína Farkašová, Alliance of Women in Slovakia;

Elmir Ibralic, UG Vive Zene, Bosnia;

Andrey Kolpakov, Men of the 21st century, Russia;

Marina Maloca, Duga-Zagreb, Croatia;

Josef Petr, League of Open Men, Czech Republic;

Nicholas Spetsidis, Union of Woman Associations Heraklion, Greece.

Antonia Montanus from WWP EN was participating in the Study Visit as staff member. We are thankful to Antonia for her guidance and patience with all the pre-arrangements and schedules. We also want to express our thanks to **Nina George** who was involved in the process at the very beginning. We would like to express our thanks to **Jeannette Bongé** for her kind help in many practical questions dealing with the contract for services.

The local national arrangements were operated by the team of Interpersonal Violence Prevention of FMS: Tiina Muukkonen, Tuulia Kovanen, Johanna Matikka, Maaret Parviainen and Veli-Matti Toikka.

2. THE FIRST DAY OF THE STUDY VISIT

The Study Visit consisted of three days, 5th-7th of June 2019. Day one included the following sessions:

- Presentation of the host organization and its national network
- Presentation of the FMS's framework history and present context for the work with victims and perpetrators
- The 1st excursion: Helsinki Shelter Association, Domestic Violence Unit and Supported Accommodation Unit.

2.1. THE HOST

Federation of Mother and Child Homes and Shelters is an NGO-based welfare organization that helps children and families in difficult and insecure situations and prevents domestic violence. The Federation is the central organization for its 31 member associations.

The member associations across Finland maintain 22 units working on domestic violence interactive service in open care, helping children, victims and perpetrators. In addition, the

member associations across Finland maintain 10 mother and child homes, seven homes focus on treatment of drug and alcohol related problems and a number of shelters.



The Federation of Mother and Child Homes and Shelters member associations across Finland provide families support in various stressful situations. When domestic violence came out from homes and turned from a private problem in late 1970`s to a social one, there was already created a network to help both victims and perpetrators.

The services of FMS`s associations are based on people`s real needs. Even if families contact our services because of a substance abuse or interpersonal violence in the family, or when daily life is a struggle, activities offered are a window that displays views of the situation of the baby, teenager, mother, father and the entire network. A holistic work approach ensures that families feel safe and protected. Work is also based on the reliance and reinforcement of peoples` own resources. The holistic work approach also reflects our equal respect for other services. All the member associations adhere to the agreed quality criteria and the implementation is assessed by workers, customers and partners in collaboration.

2.2 PRESENT CONTEXT ON WORK WITH VICTIMS AND PERPETRATORS

Development manager Tiina Muukkonen explained and presented the details of the work conducted by the team of Interpersonal Violence. The topics of the presentations were divided as follows:

- Work with victims: Johanna Matikka
- Online help, young people: Tuulia Kovanen
- Work with perpetrators: Veli-Matti Toikka
- Work with children: Maaret Parviainen
- Break the Transgenerational Abuse project 2017-2020 (together with the Demanding Baby Work team): Niina Remsu (project manager); Kene Truve (project advisor)
- Violence in dating relationships & Nettiturvakoti & Young people: Jaana Autto (project worker)

More details can be found in the PowerPoint presentation.

The Interpersonal Violence team pointed out the following issues and challenges to solve:

1. Strengthening open care services and equalize them nationally (with victims and perpetrators)
2. Strengthening the work with children in all our member associations
3. Work to prevent violence and affect other professionals and leaders to strengthen awareness and recognition of violence and support ways to find and get help
4. Develop online work as a method to help people to get help

2.3 EXCURSION TO HELSINKI SHELTER ASSOCIATION, DOMESTIC VIOLENCE UNIT AND SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION UNIT

The Helsinki Shelter association is a non-profit, non-governmental organization founded in 1978. The purpose of Helsinki Shelter Association is by the means of its forms of work to prevent domestic violence, to help to cope with it, and to recover from it.

The association works in the field of domestic violence through the various forms of work e.g. the Kilpola Supported Accommodation Unit and Domestic Violence Unit. In Kilpola Supported Accommodation Unit, clients are helped to build and stabilize a life free from domestic violence. The help in the unit offers post-shelter aftercare work, aiming for an independent life. Both adults and children living in a unit are provided with professional help and support in recovering from violent experiences, as well as practical help in daily life.

The Domestic Violence Unit stands for the cases of domestic violence or threat of it. Help is offered to all the parties of violent acts. The forms of help are based on therapeutic conversations. The aim of the work is to recognize and to end and prevent violence. It also aims to help to cope with emotional recovery from violent experiences. Methods of work are individual, couple and family meetings, and co-operation with other professionals supporting the family. The Domestic Violence Unit provides services for men and women who have been abused or have been abusive themselves in their close relations. Contact can also be made for preventive purposes.

3. THE SECOND DAY OF THE STUDY VISIT

Day two included the following sessions:

- Presentation: **Implementation of Istanbul Convention**. Development director (FMS) Sari Laaksonen
- Presentation: **Post-separational stalking – multiprofessional cooperation and interventions**. Specialist Jonna Brand, Viola, <http://www.violary.fi/in-english/>
- Presentation: **Perpetrator of sexual violence in a low threshold service**, Bachelor of humanities, Eija Ukonaho, Specialist in sexological counselling Ulla Konttila, psychotherapist Paula Mällinen. Serita, <http://www.seritahanke.fi/>,
- Presentation: **Jyväskylä model of working with family violence: Research and practice**, Clinical psychology and psychotherapy: Professor Aarno Laitila, PhD student Heli Siltala

<https://www.jyu.fi/edupsy/fi/laitokset/psykologia/en/research/research-areas/psychotherapy>

- Presentation: **"Lyömätön tie" – an Alternative to Violence program for domestic violence perpetrators.** Expert in Domestic Violence, Mika Väränkivi, <https://www.lyomatonlinja.fi/en/>
- **Speed dating – open dialogue on domestic violence.**

The participants had a chance to get acquainted more closely to practical work:

1. Settlementti (Samu) <https://www.setlementtitampere.fi/>
2. Turvakymppi (Kene)
3. Work with children (Maare)
4. Work with victims (Jonna)
5. Work with perpetrators (Velmu)
6. Integrative work – more about our work (Tiina).

- **The 2nd excursion: Miessakit ry,** https://www.miessakit.fi/en/main_page

The Study Visit concentrated on interpersonal violence issues and work with children, victims and perpetrators. There were just a few examples presented of the wide range of work practiced under the umbrella of the Federation of Mother and Child Homes and Shelters, e.g. associations such as Violar ry (Mikkeli), Espoon Lyömätön linja (Espoo), and Oulun Ensi- ja turvakoti ry, Serita-hanke (Oulu).

One of the purposes of the Study Visit was that participants could get acquainted with other experts and organizations working on the domestic violence issues in Finland. This was fulfilled by having explanatory sessions by the University of Jyväskylä, Department of Psychology, and at the speed dating session by Tampereen settlementti ry. The second day was ended with an excursion to Miessakit ry.

3.1 EXCURSION TO MIESSAKIT RY

Miessakit Association is a non-governmental expert organization established to support the mental, psychological and social growth of men. The organization complements the existing

crisis services available for men and promotes non-violent family life. Miessakit works as a national level link for men's groups with equal objectives and maintains international contacts in its field. Miessakit has a nationwide network of volunteers as local contacts for information regarding the organization and its activities. Miessakit also publishes literature in the fields of its operations and works actively to promote the male point of view in society. The Competence Center for working with men is a specialized development and training unit conducting research and development in the field of working with men and enforcing the competence of the various operators in this field.

Lyömätön Linja at Miessakit is a service to help men who have used physical or mental violence against their intimate partners. In individual work, the objective is to help the customer to give up using violence. Psychotherapeutic work offers the opportunity to find connections between emotional life and behaviour that are relevant to the use of violence. The basic principle is that the customer is willing to work to get rid of violent behaviour.

The objective of the Miesryhmätoiminta – men's group activities is to gather men across the country into small groups for discussing issues on being a man and using each other as mirrors to find material for personal growth. The organization also provides services for immigrant men and support for fatherhood.

4. THE THIRD DAY OF THE STUDY VISIT

Day three included the following sessions:

- Excursion at Maria Akatemia, <https://www.mariaakatemia.fi/in-english/>
- Excursion at Shelter Haaga
- Thoughts and evaluations of the Study Visit

4.1. EXCURSION TO MARIA AKATEMIA

Maria Akatemia is a non-profit organisation for research, development and education in Finland. The registered non-governmental organisation is independent of any political or

religious ideologies. The vision of Maria Akatemia is to promote the wellbeing and human inner growth of individuals and communities, for this further supports sustainable intercultural interaction at national and global levels. Its operations and research areas include gender specificity, violence prevention, work community wellbeing and ethical leadership.

Maria Akatemia is specialised in the recognition and treatment of women's inner ill-being and violence and have since 2003 implemented the Demeter programme for the prevention of violence by women. Maria Akatemia provides seminars, workshops and lectures tailor-made according to the needs of their clients or work community. All of Maria Akatemia's services and products are based on a psychodynamic conception of the human and on the theory of inner script dynamics.

4.2. EXCURSION TO HAAGA SHELTER

Shelter Haaga is one of the three shelters operated by the Helsinki Shelter Association. Shelters are a short-term refuge intended for those who experience violence, abuse or threat in their close relationships and when it is not safe to stay at home. Shelters provide support in an acute crisis, in recovering from a crisis and counselling in violence-related issues by trained staff available 24/7.

The aim is to strengthen the client's own resources and to support them in setting and achieving their own aims and goals in life. Children are also provided support in recovering from their experiences by shelter staff specialized in working with the children. Their experiences are made visible and their parents are made known of the effects of domestic violence.

5. SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS

In the opening session of the Study Visit, most of the participants set their goal for learning something new and getting new perspectives to one's work. As for the feedback from the participants, it was excellent.

As for the focus of the Study Visit, there were many opportunities to connect and discuss practical questions and methods on work with perpetrators. This was carried out with excursions and explanatory sessions with some member associations. Generally, the event itself was meant to give anyone a chance to broaden one's views, renew vision for one's work practices and gain new insights into work with perpetrators. It seems that the occasion was useful for the participants as well as for the hosts.

According to Finnish law, everyone is entitled to be treated equally. Such matters as discrimination and any kind of violence is a crime. Participants experienced that there is a high degree of trust in the social system, and people on average are more likely to receive the support needed. According to feedback from the participants, this can be seen in how the clients are served and dealt with. The clients are to be seen, understood and validated.

Work with perpetrators doesn't include programmes designated by court. Therefore, work with clients is mainly voluntary-based which was found astonishing. According to excursions and discussions, one of the reasons for this could be the client-oriented approach to counselling and assistance practice in Finland.

One of the topics of discussion during the Study Visit concentrated on The Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, known as the Istanbul Convention. The Convention includes all forms of violence against women. Violence against women is defined as all acts of gender-based violation that result in or are likely to result in physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm or suffering to women. Unfortunately, when discussing violence against women, it is common to avoid using gender-based language and instead use gender-neutral expressions, such as violence in close relationships, domestic violence or intimate partner violence. It is important that the comprehensive definition and the spirit of the Istanbul Convention are visible in the implementation of the Convention and in the terminology being used. FMS, among the other non-governmental organisations, is concerned and still challenged that during implementation, the terminology of gender-based violence against women and domestic violence as used in the Convention, will be transformed into gender-neutral terminology. As for this current topic, there was also a discussion with participants about FMS's current

challenges, like the lack of prevention programmes for men and young boys and how to encourage member organizations to align their work and methods more towards those mentioned in the Convention.

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October 28th, 2019

On behalf of the organisational team of interpersonal violence prevention of FMS

Veli-Matti Toikka

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