

Launch of the MOVE project to tackle men’s violence against women and girls through a culturally sensitive approach

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A EU-wide project that is developing a multi agency model for frontline services and perpetrator programmes who work with men.

Starting February 2022, partners from Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, and Spain have joined forces to work on the EU-wide “MOVE” project, with the European Commission.

Gender-Based-Violence is a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women. Displaced women and girls face increased risks and multiple forms of violence as a result of conflict, persecution and displacement. Some studies have also established an association between pre-migration political violence exposure and recent IPV perpetration among immigrant men or the “remasculation” strategies of some migrant men after experiencing a crisis in masculinity due to forced displacement.

“Displacement often causes instability, marginalization and insecurity which results in violence against the most vulnerable - women and girls. Therefore it is essential to comprehend and address these instabilities and at the same time develop tools to prevent GBV all together”, says Daliah Vakili, GBV & Migration Expert WWP.

Differences in culture, religion, ethnic origin, national boundaries, and geographic region play a significant role in perceptions and attitudes towards gender-based violence.¹ It is important not to stigmatize migrant men as (potential) perpetrators through whom sexual and gender-based violence is “imported” to Europe, while still responding to specific risk factors. Therefore, it is important to engage professionals working in GBV prevention and frontline professionals working with(in) migrant communities, to share a culturally sensitive and ant-racist approach to addressing GBV.

Covid pandemic and the worsening of violence against migrant women

The COVID-19 pandemic has clearly worsened the situation both in the fields of gender equality and gender-based violence and migration , exacerbating vulnerabilities of both migrant populations and women and children, especially survivors of sexual or gender-based violence. “The COVID-19 pandemic had far-reaching effects on all areas related to asylum and migration throughout 2020”.²

This makes the migration and integration processes even more difficult and it affects migrant communities disproportionately. At the same time, the COVID19 pandemic has also detrimental

effects on gender equality in Europe³ and, specifically, on gender-based violence, including important challenges in providing adequate support for them⁴. Needs already existing before COVID-19 have only been drastically increased through the pandemic resulting in disproportionate effects on this sensitive target population.

“Gender roles, expectations and ideas of masculinity are often changing radically during violent conflicts (wars, refugee experiences) and returning to pre-conflict role models seems impossible, which often contributes to extreme stress and an ongoing cycle of violent behavior, including gender-based violence. Therefore, GBV prevention programs in the context of post-conflict interventions therefore need to pay more attention to psychosocial support and the development of healthier, non-violent behaviors - and at the same time highlighting caring models of masculinity”, says Elli Scambor, Advisory Board member.

Building on previous projects to end men’s violence against women and girls through a culturally sensitive approach

The MOVE project builds on the work of and lessons learnt by previous European projects ENGAGE and FOMEN, which highlight the importance of training for frontline professionals to identify and refer GBV, especially within intercultural contexts. Moreover, the ASVARW research (Addressing Sexual Violence Against Refugee Women), involving MOVE Advisory Board member Professor Marianne Hester, has shown that training professionals working in a migrant context has increased the ability of professionals to address gender and sexual violence against women, and has also provided a range of professionals with new skills and greater effectiveness in dealing with cases of violence by adopting a new approach in a multidisciplinary team. Programs for perpetrators are concerned with how to deal and address cultural issues to identify, target and effectively address perpetrators of gender-based violence in a migratory context using an anti-racist, inclusive and culturally sensitive approach.

“It is important to involve men in tackling violence against women and enabling men to recognise their own potentially abusive behaviours as well as the attitudes they have that may undermine women. MOVE will help to develop capacity in this respect”, affirms advisory board member Professor Marianna Hester.

About the partnership

The MOVE project is developed by an international, interdisciplinary team consisting of:

- [CAM](#), Centro di Ascolto Uomini Maltrattanti Onlus, NGO and perpetrator programme focussing on the intervention in violence against women and children by promoting the work with men who act violently in emotional relationships, Italy
- [Conexus](#), Associació CONEXUS Atenció, Formació i Investigació Psicosocials, no-profit NGO with GBV its main fields of expertise and activity, offering intervention programmes for women and children, and for male perpetrators, Spain

- [Psytel](#), France, a cooperative of independent experts working in the field of information systems in health and prevention of violence against children, adolescents and women.
- [UWAH](#), NGO active in the promotion and protection of women’s and children rights; while also engaging with raising awareness and advocating for human rights at local, national and European level, Greece
- [WWP EN](#), the European Network for the Work with Perpetrators of Domestic Violence
- [ENoMW](#), secular, non-partisan platform that advocates for the rights, freedoms and dignity of migrant, refugee and ethnic minority women and girls in Europe

An external Advisory Board supervises and supports the project team:

- **Professor Marianne Hester**, Affiliated Professor and leading researcher of gender-based violence at the University of Gothenburg, and Chair in Gender, Violence & International Policy at School for Policy Studies at the University of Bristol, supervises overall quality and methodology as a major expert in addressing GBV
- **Elli Scambor** from the Institute for Masculinity Studies and Gender Research (VMG, Austria) supports the quality and methodological development in working with male refugees and migrants based on the EU project FOMEN - Focus on Men

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- 1) Nayak, M.B., Byrne, C.A., Martin, M.K. et al. Attitudes Toward Violence Against Women: A Cross-Nation Study. *Sex Roles* 49, 333–342 (2003). <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1025108103617>
- 2) The impact of COVID-19 in the migration area in EU and OECD countries
<https://www.oecd.org/migration/mig/00-eu-emn-covid19-umbrella-inform-en.pdf>
- 3) Gender equality and the socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic (EIGE, 2021):
https://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/20211734_mh0921078enn_pdf.pdf
- 4) The Covid-19 pandemic and intimate partner violence against women in the the EU (EIGE, 2021):
https://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/20210224_mhna30566enn_pdf.pdf