



revive

FROM VIOLENCE TO EMPOWERMENT

**A brief handbook for operators
of anti-violence centres and public services**



An EU funded project managed by
the European Union Office in Kosovo

Implemented by:



From violence to empowerment

**A brief handbook for operators of
anti-violence centres and public services**



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Reintegration of Victims of
domestic Violence

With co-funding from:



Under the auspices of the
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A publication by NGO RTM – Volontari nel Mondo (Volunteers in the World) in collaboration with Kosovo Shelter Coalition (KSC) and the Coordinating Committee of Anti-violence Centres of Emilia Romagna (CCAER/Coordinamento dei centri antiviolenza dell’Emilia Romagna), under the auspices of the Agency for Gender Equality of Kosovo (AGE).

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You walk on leaves that are bleeding

still

*this time you come from the forest
wrapped in hymns and silence
there is no rain to cover you
you came to talk*

*under your skin you carry solitude
and desperation of blood*

*rivers and woods follow your body
to give you a life which never dies.*

Gezim Hajdari

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Presentations

RTM – VOLONTARI NEL MONDO



RTM is an international volunteering NGO of Christian inspiration, founded in 1973 and based in Reggio Emilia. Its mission is to promote human dignity, protect fundamental rights, and support the economic and social development of communities in an environment-sensitive way.

In 40 years, RTM has carried out international cooperation programmes in Africa (Madagascar, Central African Republic), Eastern Europe (Ukraine), Western Balkans (Kosovo and Albania), Latin America (Brazil), and the Middle East (Palestine).

RTM's 6 main priorities and areas of intervention are: rural development, women's empowerment, healthcare, fair trade, food safety, early childhood education.

In Kosovo, RTM is present and operates continuously since 1999 in 3 sectors: rural development, women's rights, and pre-school education. In Kosovo and Albania, RTM is currently engaged in two intervention programmes in the areas of agricultural development and contrast to gender and domestic violence.

RTM operates through long-term programmes in partnership with public and private bodies as well as civil society organisations, with the active participation of local actors from the territory of Emilia Romagna (e.g. universities, local institutions, companies, associations) in order to foster exchanges between communities, territories, and experts.

To date, RTM has carried out 85 interventions for development – 25 financed by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and 29 by the EU, dispatching a total of over 280 long-term international volunteers.

In Italy, RTM is engaged in activities of information, awareness-raising, and education to citizenship on three main topics: women's rights, critical consumption, and education to global citizenship.

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KSC – KOSOVO SHELTER COALITION



KSC is an umbrella organisation comprising 8 women's associations with the shared mission of supporting women and children victims of violence and trafficking.

KSC includes:

- *Centre for the Protection of Women and Children of Prishtinë/Priština*
- *Women Wellness Centre - Shelter of Pejë/Peć*
- *Safe House of Gjakovë/Đakovica*
- *“LIRIA” Centre for the Protection and Rehabilitation of Women and Children of Gjilan/Gnjilane*
- *“RABA VOCA” Centre for the Protection of Women and Children of Mitrovicë/Mitrovica*
- *Center for Protection of Victims and Prevention of Trafficking in Human Beings of Prishtinë/Priština*
- *Centre for the Sheltering of Women and Children of Prizren/Prizren*
- *Hope Centre and Children's Home of Prishtinë/Priština*

Formally registered in 2011, but existing informally since 2009, its mission is to eliminate any form of violence and discrimination against women and children, promote gender equality, and involve women in the country's democratic process.

Over the years, KSC has carried out several projects in support of women and children, financed by multiple international donors. These projects have provided individual anti-violence centres with greater capacity to impact the external reality and support women. On the other hand, as a coalition, KSC enabled individual centres to act as privileged interlocutors for institutions in the process of drafting the main laws in defence and support of victims of violence and trafficking.

To date, KSC continues to pursue its goals of prevention of violence, support to women and children who are victims, and advocacy towards the government.

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CCAER – COORDINAMENTO DEI CENTRI ANTIVIOLENZA DELL'EMILIA ROMAGNA



CCAER is a second-tier association created in Bologna (Italy) in 2009. Its members are 13 women's associations based in Emilia Romagna that contrast violence against women, which they see as rooted in power imbalance between the sexes.

The 13 member associations share the following principles:

- (1) management of sheltering services for women victims of violence and their children, with no distinction of ethnicity, religion, culture, and profession;
- (2) projects aimed at training and empowering women;
- (3) a methodology based on woman-to-woman relationships – operators/volunteers/members/consultants of anti-violence centres are women who work according to the principles of female empowerment.

CCAER was born from the concrete practice of exchange and relationship between anti-violence centres, developed over the years thanks to shared projects of research-action and training. Such projects have provided individual anti-violence centres with greater knowledge and capacity to impact reality. Therefore, CCAER stems from the need to formalise cooperation between individual anti-violence centres and strengthen their activities and visibility on the territory.

The main functions of CCAER include:

- identifying political objectives and the yearly planning of the actions individual Associations wish to pursue;
- favouring exchange, dialogue, support, and reciprocal promotion between Associations;
- promoting knowledge and exchange of experiences on new projects developed by individual Associations;
- devising shared research projects in order to raise awareness about violence in the public and increase the knowledge of the phenomenon;
- devising training for different professional profiles, including law enforcement, healthcare and social workers, teachers, etc.;
- organising conferences, debates, and seminars to spread knowledge on violence against women and educate the public, the media, and institutions;
- promoting training for operators/volunteers of Associations in order to develop shared methodologies and new competencies;
- interfacing with local institutions on the topic of violence against women to introduce and improve laws related to women's rights.

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AGE - AGENCY FOR GENDER EQUALITY



AGE operates as an independent agency within the Office of the Prime Minister of Kosovo.

AGE facilitates, promotes, and monitors the implementation of the National Plan for Gender Equality 2008-2013 and the National Plan against Domestic Violence 2011-2014.

AGE's staff comprises 18 operators working in 4 Divisions: Legislation, Cooperation, Monitoring, and Administration and Finance.

AGE promotes the adoption of the principle of gender equality within public institutions by:

- contributing to the drafting of law proposals or to the revision of current legislation by integrating gender equality matters;
- providing technical assistance to public administration and civil society organisations for preparing, implementing, and evaluating programmes for the promotion of equal opportunities;
- coordinating the implementation of gender equality projects;
- carrying out and disseminating research on gender issues.

AGE's role within the project is to:

- provide data and information on domestic violence;
- provide updates on the implementation of the National Plan against Domestic Violence;

- facilitate relationships with local institutions for the adoption and implementation of social inclusion plans for women beneficiaries of the intervention;
- favour the creation of synergies with initiatives by other actors on gender violence in Kosovo.

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PROJECT REVIVE - *Reintegration of Victims of domestic Violence -*



*by Francesco Gradari **

REVIVE stems from a reflection on the role of women and the seriousness of the phenomenon of gender violence in Kosovo. Starting from such reflection, RTM – already active in Kosovo side by side with rural women’s associations for 10 years – decided to approach civil society organisations that protect women’s rights and support women who are victims of violence. RTM and KSC thus met in 2011. This encounter stemmed the idea of elaborating a project proposal which would answer women’s need to be re-included in society after a path to awareness together with KSC anti-violence centres.

Considering the intrinsic difficulties of this type of intervention and aiming at promoting excellences of its original territory (Emilia Romagna Region), RTM involved CCAER in the project. The value added of REVIVE lies exactly in the exchange between two realities similar in nature and functions. Over time, thanks to the direct, daily contact with the women hosted in the respective anti-violence centres, RTM and CCAER developed specialistic knowledge and practices able to provide adequate answers to the needs of women victims of violence.

REVIVE supports networking between Italian and Kosovar associations contrasting violence against women, in order for the reciprocal exchange of work methodologies to create new ways of dealing with this phenomenon, which is dramatic on both sides of the Adriatic.

With this project, RTM, KSC, and CCAER plan to promote the social inclusion of women victims of domestic violence through the strengthening of the professional capacity of anti-violence centres and public services engaged against gender violence in Kosovo. Namely, REVIVE plans to support anti-violence centres in empowering the women they shelter and developing collaboration with local authorities and public services present on their territories. Therefore, REVIVE acts in synergy with and contributes to the implementation of the National Plan against Domestic Violence 2011-2014. Henceforth the involvement of AGE, body tasked with facilitating and monitoring.

This publication is an activity of the REVIVE project, but it is first of all the result of an exchange between anti-violence centres of Kosovo and Emilia Romagna on the topic of social inclusion of victims of violence. It is a reflection on the daily practices of every centre that supports women. What anti-violence centres shared to create this handbook is a gift to both centres – as each can benefit from the experiences of others – and for readers, who will have the chance to understand the complexity and sensitivity of the work of anti-violence centres in Kosovo as well as in Italy.

For RTM, KSC, and CCAER the REVIVE project is not a “spot” intervention. In fact, it is the beginning of a common, long-term commitment to provide concrete answers to the needs of women who are victims of violence in Kosovo.

**Project Director for the Balkan Area - RTM*

Synthesis REVIVE project	
Place of implementation:	Municipalities of Pejë/Peć, Gjakovë/Đakovica, Prishtinë/Priština, Prizren, Prizren, Gjilan/Gnjilane, Mitrovicë/Mitrovica
Project leader:	RTM – Volontari nel Mondo
Partners:	KSC – Kosovo Shelter Coalition CCAER- Coordinamento Centri Anti-violenza dell'Emilia Romagna
Associated organisation:	AGE - Agency for Gender Equality
Duration:	24 months (July 2012 – July 2014)
Target groups:	- 7 anti-violence centres [200 persons] - Social workers and psychologists [80 persons] - Doctors [90 persons] - Six municipalities of Kosovo [50 persons]
Final beneficiaries:	Women victims of domestic violence hosted in anti-violence centres in Kosovo [400 persons/year]
Expected results:	(1) Improvement in the rehabilitation services offered by anti-violence centres in collaboration with healthcare and social agencies in order to increase victims' self-confidence and self-determination. (2) An inclusive strategy on domestic violence adopted in 6 target municipalities.
Main activities:	<i>SET N.1 – CAPACITY BUILDING</i> Training for operators of anti-violence centres and healthcare and social services on the empowerment of women victims of domestic violence. Publication of a handbook containing guidelines on the empowerment of women victims of domestic violence. Development of agreement protocols between anti-violence centres and healthcare and social services present on the territory. Start-up of new pilot services in anti-violence centres to support victims of violence. <i>SET N.2 – NETWORKING AND COOPERATION ACTIONS</i> Creation of coordinating tables on domestic violence at the municipal level. Adoption of local action plans on domestic violence. Start-up of pilot initiatives on housing and employment of women victims of violence.
Donors	European Union (EIDHR - CBSS Kosovo 2011) Region Emilia Romagna (Italia) Province of Modena – Territorial Fund for International Cooperation for Development (Italy)

PREFACE

Dialogue and exchange between anti-violence centres of Kosovo and Emilia Romagna

*by Naime Sherifi **

In these two years, many project activities were carried out by KSC and CCAER, also thanks to the ongoing, invaluable facilitating role played by RTM. The fruitful exchange of experiences between CCAER and KSC certainly strengthened the work of KSC and its anti-violence centres in the path of rehabilitation and social inclusion of victims. This included networking with local actors involved in the process of reintegrating women and negotiating at the institutional level, with the goal of providing quality services which answer the needs of victims.

The exchange of good practices with CCAER as regards the reintegration of women victims of violence has been an excellent stimulus for KSC: both coalitions were able to share knowledge on strengthening networking, methodologies of working with victims, and the internal functioning of the respective organisations.

The visits to anti-violence centres, training sessions, and workshops carried out within the framework of the REVIVE project by operators of CCAER, RTM, and KSC were important opportunities for exchanging and sharing experiences and good practices. These moments strengthened KSC as an umbrella association and brought innovation and new knowledge to individual anti-violence centres for improving the quality of services targeted to women victims of violence, both during their stay in the shelter and in the process of social reintegrating.

Violence against women in Kosovo is an increasingly apparent phenomenon, as increasingly apparent are its ties with multiple factors such as financial, social, and cultural matters, family traditions, and other issues.

Considering the hardships experienced by women victims of domestic violence, I can say how sensitive the work of anti-violence centres and of the other actors offering support to victims of violence is. Therefore, the work and commitment of actors involved in contrasting domestic violence remain crucial for our country in order to give adequate answers to those victims who wish to end violence and build an autonomous life in the full respect of their rights.

** President of KSC and Director of the Centre for the Protection of Women and Children of Prishtinë/Priština*

*by Alessandra Campani and Elisa Bianchi ***

Since the early 90s, Italian anti-violence centres have felt the need to meet once a year for an intense, informal exchange on methodologies for welcoming women into shelters, training, and organising conferences and seminars on violence against women. Anti-violence centres of the Emilia Romagna region can be safely considered to have been among the most active and numerous forms the very start.

CCAER includes 13 anti-violence centres – active and rooted in Emilia Romagna – that deal with the crucial work of offering shelter to women victims of violence and share methodologies, good practices, and projects. Furthermore, CCAER constantly strives to provide information and raise awareness on gender violence. Anti-violence centres also tackle the problem with an

invaluable prevention work: education to gender in high schools, workshops, meetings with teachers, initiatives and campaigns targeting teenagers. Legal instruments, public funding, and institutional support are necessary to provide women victims of violence with concrete solutions and help. CCAER's mission has always been double: at the internal level, an exchange on work methodologies, specific projects, and negotiation with local bodies as well as reciprocal support; on the other hand, developing strength and cohesion to promote policies at the regional level.

Over these years, CCAER has become a direct interlocutor of regional administrations and has found support and funding for initiatives, projects, research activities, and support for local actors. At the regional political level, CCAER has emphasised the importance of activating inter-institutional thematic tables on violence against women and invite all those Actors involved in prevention and intervention on the topic. Such tables are a crucial planning occasion for the Region, local bodies, law enforcement, social and healthcare services, educational institutions, and civil society associations.

CCAER primarily tasked the association Nondasola¹ of Reggio Emilia with carrying out consultancy and training actions within the REVIVE project.

The many women victims of violence sheltered every day motivate anti-violence centres across the world to experiment “distant sharing” of experiences and good practices in order to promote protection policies for women and liberation from all forms of violence. This is because, even when a country has good laws in place, it is their implementation that makes the difference in terms of respect for women's rights.

This project was, first of all, a precious opportunity to exchange experiences, knowledge, and practices between the anti-violence

centres of Kosovo and Emilia Romagna, that work for the protection and acknowledgement of women's rights, and between women who help other women to affirm women's freedom. The goal was to create the conditions for a dialogue between equals, where every anti-violence centre could share its competences, strengths, and good practices as well as fatigue, criticisms, and room for improvement.

The dialogue developed on three levels:

- (1) work with abused women, with particular emphasis on reintegration paths;
- (2) prevention and local networking in support of women victims of violence;
- (3) training for operators.

Significant differences between the two coalitions emerged from this dialogue: a different history of anti-violence centres in Emilia Romagna (created earlier and tied to women's political movements) and Kosovo (more recent and tied to the war emergency); the different historical, cultural, and social contexts (centres of Emilia Romagna operate on territories with a higher level of awareness and institutions with greater financial resources); different ways of supporting victims of violence (in Kosovo, centres only manage shelters, while centres in Emilia Romagna offer counselling, a dedicated phone line, and shelter). Finally, CCAER has existed for a longer time and can therefore share more results, good practices, and experiences.

On the one hand, these differences have generated richness, desire for knowledge, and reciprocal curiosity. On the other hand, they have made the dialogue even more complex, requiring a long phase of building reciprocal trust and leading us to review

1. www.nondasola.it

together goals, expectations, and expected results. Thus, we reviewed the planning in order for differences not to be irredeemable, but subject to interrogation and integral part of the experience for both sides.

What kept together these differences, however – the shared goal of CCAER and KSC – was the desire to keep up the attention to the phenomenon of violence, to prompt institutions to take responsibility, to invest in prevention, and to remain by the side of abused women despite of difficulties, lack of resources, prejudice, and cultural resistance to acknowledge violence as a violation of human rights, which often slows down the correct implementation of laws in support of victims.

Against this backdrop, and given the ‘recent’ history of anti-violence centres in Kosovo and of KSC, our invitation was to give more importance to their experience, both collectively and as individual centres. Elaborating on the experience of working with abused women means to systematise knowledge and competences that “belong here”, to communicate them as qualified, recognised subjects, and to become part of a network the credibility of which derives from the ‘specificity’ of practice-based knowledge. In our experience, it is this very knowledge that supports us in promoting a change in relations between men and women, in reciprocal respect and acknowledgement.

*** CCAER consultants and trainers.*

INTRODUCTION

by *Danila Zizi* *

Women are often associated with family unity and warmth. The notion of the woman who finds self-realisation in motherhood and family has become integral part of many cultures. Today, Kosovar society still roots its identity in this notion, relegating women to a passive performance of the role of mother and wife. Over time, this has generated a gender inequality that finds its saddest expression both in domestic violence and – in the recent past – in the silencing of the genocide faced by women during the war².

In the post-war period, awareness of independence, past suffering, and international influence slowly started to revive consciences and stem the first reflections on gender and the role of women in Albanian Kosovo. Over the years, several studies have been carried out on the role of women. The result was the emergence of alarming figures on gender violence rates in the country.

Only in 2011-2012, the Kosovo police registered 2,067 cases of domestic violence. In the 79% of cases, victims were women. In 2013, 743 women reported cases of violence³, with a 278-unit decrease compared with 2012. This constant decrease in official reports has been accompanied by an increase in the activities of the anti-violence centres of Kosovo: 500 women victims of violence were sheltered in anti-violence centres in 2013, 90 more than 2012⁴. Perpetrators were mostly men in a relationship with victims: in the 88% of cases, partners and/or ex-partners; to a lesser extent (10%), other members of the family⁵.

2 Farnsworth Nicole. 2008. Exploratory Research on The Extent of Gender-Based Violence in Kosova and its Impact on Women's Reproductive Health. Kosovo Women's Network: Prishtinë/Pristina p. 19.

3 KP Report 2013.

4 KSC Report 2013 presented to the Ministry of Work and Welfare

5 Agency for Gender Equality. 2008. Security begins at home, Prishtinë/Pristina.

Unreported violence needs to be considered in addition to official data. On this point, figures are diverging and not up to date. Yet, according to research carried out by AGE in 2008, only 10% of cases are reported to the police, against a European average of 25%⁶. The reasons for this are to be found in the widespread view of violence as a private, family matter, combined with victims' feelings of shame, fear of escalating violence, social stigma, and economic dependency on the abuser. Most people, furthermore, see violence as a common, natural part of relationships and therefore find it acceptable.

The complexity of the social structure and patriarchal culture make reporting as well as working in support of victims particularly difficult. The experience of the anti-violence centres here represented, speaks of a power imbalance between men and women as well as of the importance of an approach centred on women and their needs. Supporting women in identifying their own needs and accompanying them in the path to autonomy are some of the core tasks of anti-violence centres. Over time, shelters have developed significant experience in prevention services and victim support, but keep encountering obstacles in the phase of rehabilitation and social reintegration of women, both because of the complexity of their needs and the lack of cooperation with other actors in the network.

In the awareness that women leaving a violent relationship do risk a relapse, anti-violence centres – with this handbook and in general with the REVIVE project – seek to make themselves known and start a dialogue with the public services present in the territories where they operate. This is why the handbook contains concrete experiences of reintegration of women victims of violence, with their critical and their small, yet great successes.

* *Coordinator of project REVIVE – RTM*

6 Agency for Gender Equality. 2008. Security begins at home, Prishtinë/Pristina.

PART ONE

Leaving violence behind

1.1 Dynamics and obstacles faced by women leaving violent relationships.

Telling about women's stories of violence requires considering the different social and cultural contexts. However, some common elements in the issues faced by women in violent situations can be identified.

A first, general element is the strong inner conflict caused in the woman by the emotional connection with the abuser. Acknowledging oneself as a victim of violence, admitting the failure of the relationship, and the value attributed to women's role in the family make women's choice even harder. On the one hand, they feel responsible for ensuring the unity of the couple; on the other hand, they feel the need to protect themselves and, where present, their children. In Kosovar society, this element is very strong. Marriage marks the transfer of the woman from the property of the father to the property of the husband. The expectations put on women act as informal control mechanisms, pushing them to embrace the culturally enforced role of selfless mother, wife, and daughter-in-law, while fearing stigma and isolation in case of rebellion. Society pressures women to stay, tolerate violence, and modify their behaviour in order to contain the partner's aggressive tendencies. The tolerance threshold becomes particularly high where violence alternates with loving, tender behaviour by the man.

Dynamics in abusive relationship generally follow a cyclical pattern. Following an acute episode of abuse, man usually adopts

behaviours aimed at obtaining forgiveness and shifts the responsibility for his actions onto external factors (e.g. work, alleged provocations by the woman). As a reaction, women elaborate self-containment strategies to contain violence, albeit unsuccessfully. A feeling of impotence grows in the victim, while the abuser tends to reproduce prevaricating behaviours in order to annihilate and subjugate the woman's will. Over time, intervals between episodes of abuse decrease considerably, until tensions and aggressions completely dominate the relationship.

Violence has also economic repercussions. If women in Kosovo already are at a distinct disadvantage in terms of employment opportunities, violence cannot but exacerbate this situation. Increasing isolation and the consequences of physical and psychological violence often lead women to losing their job or prevent them from looking for one. Women's unemployment rate reaches 40% of the active population, while men's is 28%. Women also have fewer chances to access job opportunities and start a business: only 9% of self-employed persons are currently women⁷.

Economic repercussions of violence are exacerbated by the absence of the rule of law. Where present, laws protecting gender equality are systematically ignored. The denial of women's right to inheritance is emblematic. Persisting traditions deny women the inheritance of family wealth, depriving women of all possessions when they join the husband's family. To date, only 10% of women access family wealth, against 80% of men⁸. Power, authority, and wealth are therefore passed along the male family line. Unwritten social norms assign the two sexes roles, responsibilities, and reciprocal expectations that have become "naturalised". The man is the head of the family, who provides for the family and makes decision in the public realm, while the woman is confined within the sphere of domestic and care work.

7 World Bank. 2012. Kosovo: Gender Gaps in Education, Health and Economic Opportunities .World Bank: S.n.,p.

8 Kosovar Center for Gender Studies. 2011. Women's property inheritance rights in Kosovo. p. 41.

In this context, women do not find a supportive environment, but one that hinders any autonomy project. They are therefore forced to remain confined in the role of mothers and wives. When the woman is victim of violence, the feeling of isolation is stronger. The role of wife and mother becomes a cage difficult to escape. An alert community, able to recognise violence and its complexity, supports the victim of violence by answering adequately women's specific needs and helping them feel less isolated and helpless. In this sense, an integrated, collaborative response of all services present on the territory makes victims' process of finding self-esteem, pursuing autonomy, and leaving violence behind less difficult and traumatic.

1.2 From violence to empowerment.

1.2.1 *Anti-violence centres in Kosovo: origins, mission, and development*

Historically speaking, anti-violence centres in Kosovo were born in the post-war period from the need to support women out of a painful conflict. The war, but especially the post-war period, marginalised women's specific suffering⁹. Against this backdrop, anti-violence centres were born to "*feminise*"¹⁰ war, listening to and supporting women victims of abuse during the conflict.

Over time, also thanks the support of international partners, anti-violence centres started to evolve, assess women's different needs, and offer temporary shelter and support services in cases of violence – not only war violence, like rape, but also gender violence.

9 Estimates point to at least 20,000 women victims of rape during the conflict, while the number of children born from rape and abandoned in hospitals or on the streets is unknown. Few women, if any, were listened to or were able to come to terms with their tragedy. Rape victims' babies pay the price of war, by Helena Smith, The Observer, Sunday 16 April 2000 <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2000/apr/16/balkans>.

10 DEP, Lo stupro della nazione: le donne raccontano il genocidio, by Rodin Lentini. <http://www.unive.it/media/allegato/dep/n10-2009/Ricerche/Lentini.pdf>.

Anti-violence centres started to speak up for better conditions for women and respect for women's rights. In this particular historical moment, between the late nineties and the early 2000s, 7 anti-violence centres were officially founded by 7 women's associations in the main municipalities of Kosovo.

Then, they became 8. One of them is specialised in sheltering women potential victims of trafficking, one in protecting minors. The remaining 6 focus on protecting and supporting women victims of domestic violence.

Although each of these anti-violence centres has its specificity, they share some common principles. They are shelters managed by women who couple their profession with a gender perspective on violence. In opposition to the idea of violence in relationships as a private, individual phenomenon to remain between the domestic walls, they work to make violence visible as a social, cultural, and therefore public issue. In order to strengthen their impact and raise awareness, anti-violence centres joined in a coalition, informally created in 2007, where individual anti-violence centres unite their resources to develop greater strength, authority, and negotiating capacity towards institutions.

Four years later (2011), the KSC – Kosovo Shelter Coalition was registered as an umbrella NGO in Kosovo. Goals of KSC include: consolidating and standardising services offered by anti-violence centres; preventing violence through awareness-raising actions; strengthening the role of anti-violence centres through joint lobbying, advocacy, and fund-raising; promoting laws, policies, and strategies for the protection of women and minors victims of violence¹¹.

11 Kosovo Shelter Coalition, Program, Strategy and Action Plan, and Standards for Shelters functioning of Kosovo Shelter Coalition, funded by USAID and IOM 2011.

Following its formal registering, KSC increased its influence and became a national actor on violence. In 2012, KSC signed a memorandum for the direct support to women hosted in anti-violence centres with the Ministry of Labour and Welfare (MLSW). KSC and/or individual anti-violence centres started cooperation with other governmental bodies, including the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Education, AGE, and individual municipalities.

Following the work of anti-violence centres and pressures by women's rights associations, the Kosovo government started to adopt laws and policies for contrasting violence against women. In 2010¹² a specific law was adopted against domestic violence, followed in 2013 by the National Strategy against Domestic Violence¹³ and the related Action Plan, containing concrete measures for contrasting domestic violence, from prevention to rehabilitation and reintegration services.

Further steps forward, confirming the acknowledgement of the work of anti-violence centres, came in 2013 with a series of concrete measures for the implementation of the framework law on domestic violence and the adoption of the "Standard Operation Procedures for Protection from Domestic Violence in Kosovo" (SOP), which specify competencies and measures on domestic violence in order to strengthen the synergy between territorial actors in an integrated system of contrast to domestic violence.

1.2.2 The function of anti-violence centres

By definition, anti-violence centres are born to contrast violence and prompt cultural change to create relationships based on the acknowledgement of equal rights and opportunities between men

12 LAW NR No.03/L –182ON PROTECTION AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

13 National Strategy and Action Plan against Domestic Violence in Kosovo 2010-2013

and women. An essential function of anti-violence centres is to draw attention on social distortions in terms of gender equality. The very presence of anti-violence centres on the territory makes violence against women visible and thus encouraging society to take responsibility.

Anti-violence centres provide protection, shelter, and support to victims of abuse both in the emergency phase and the process of leaving violence behind. Sadly, an anti-violence centre is a privileged point of observation on violence in close relationships for this very reason, it is a key actor in consolidating intervention principles and methods to support women victims of violence.

Although rooted in different territories, Kosovo's anti-violence centres share the will to contrast women's subordination. Women in anti-violence centres support other women who decide to start a process of liberation from violence and preserve its memory. The memory of violence is an important part of the work of anti-violence centres. Women who ask for help often carry the consequences of past trauma. This pain strongly affects the woman's self-esteem, leaving her feeling helpless, isolated, and desperate.

Women victims of violence attempt several steps to end abuse. First within the family, trying to contain and control the man's violence; then by looking for external support from family, friends, and other women, and/or local institutions like hospitals, healthcare centres, social services, and law enforcement. These women often cancel the memory of violence before they find the strength to face it.

Therefore, the goal of anti-violence centres is also to accompany victims to seek empowerment, find back their own self and resources, strengthen their decision-making skills, preserve the memory of violence, and pass it on to the new generations.

This approach is based on the notion of women not as passive objects of violence, but as active subjects able to oppose and end it. The operators of anti-violence centres acknowledge women as carriers of awareness of violence and its risks. When, in some cases, women tend to underrate risks to themselves and their children, operators realistically assess the situation with women themselves.

Intervention is centred on women as subjects who know what is best for them. Therefore, operators do not impose ready-made knowledge on women, but rather adopt an intervention methodology which is constantly centred on women's needs and desires.

1.2.3 Professionalism and woman-to-woman relationship: the principles of support intervention

Welcoming women into shelters is often the first contact, the start of the relationship. Therefore, the first contact is managed by adequately trained operators with specific competences on male violence against women.

The operator's first goal is to build a trusting relationship with the woman, in order to encourage her to open up, maybe for the first time, without fears. It is crucial for the woman to feel safe and protected, in an environment where she is free to express herself and elaborate on her experience.

For trust to develop, the operator will base her work on listening the woman without judgement, acknowledging her feelings and views, and acknowledging her as a credible subject. It is also crucial for the woman to clearly perceive she is in a confidential environment, where nothing will be shared with third parties and no decision will be taken without her consent.

Dialogue and reciprocal support between women are therefore the starting point of a process of finding awareness and identifying one's own skills and talents. Giving voice to and acknowledging the woman's personal experience, supporting her choices, helping her take control on her life are all mechanisms and strategies the operator enacts in order to strengthen the empowerment of the woman victim of violence.

1.2.4 The path to empowerment

In the first phase of the process of leaving violence behind, most women focus on their partner's needs and feelings, while feeling guilty and inadequate. The first step taken by the anti-violence centre is to debunk this perspective, encouraging the woman to focus on herself, her feelings, the way she feels about the relationship. One of the goals of this work is to support the woman in assessing the situation realistically, place the responsibility for violence on the partner, and decide consciously whether to go back and try a renegotiation or leave him for good.

During the process of empowerment, the operator helps the woman recognise and express her specific desires and needs. Although these can appear conflicting (e.g., desire to end violence and desire to stay with the partner; thinking of family and wanting to choose for oneself), the woman needs space to nominate, acknowledge, and understand them. The answer to some of them comes in small steps, attempts, micro-goals which can be reviewed and modified as the woman's horizon changes.

The empowerment process aims to help the woman find back the power to decide for herself, encouraging her and acknowledging her ability to face problems in autonomy, within the limits of the external context. This way, she is stimulated to make a transition from paralysing guilt feeling to taking responsibility for herself and making more self-preserving choices.

Enabling the woman to leave a violent relationship also means to answer material needs. Very often, these can be met by the anti-violence centre. In other cases, other actors in the network are involved. The process of empowerment and regaining autonomy goes in parallel with the need to meet concrete needs, including healthcare, protection for oneself and one's children, housing, and employment. During interviews with the operators of anti-violence centres, women can have a space for reflection on themselves and their relationships, but also receive information on their rights and services available by other agencies and institutions present on the territory.

Operators never provide predetermined solutions, but try to build, together with the woman, some opportunities that consider the social, economic, and cultural context. This approach increases the effectiveness of the intervention, because it makes women protagonists who decide for themselves.

For the process to be successful, the operator needs to keep an open, non-judgemental attitude and practice active listening in order to increase the woman's trust and awareness that she is not alone. Understanding this helps the woman think of possible ways to leave violence behind. During the whole process, the operator always remains one step behind the woman, does not make decisions for her, does not push her to take actions she is not ready to take, and does not take any decision without her consent.

In synthesis, everything is centred on the woman victim of violence. The operator of the anti-violence centre supports her in her path to awareness. The empowerment work is strengthened thanks to the building of trust and solidarity between women. Within the anti-violence centre, the woman is encouraged and supported in the analysis of her experience and emotions, creating a positive relationship between women and at the same time increasing the victim's self-esteem as well as esteem for other women.

Leaving violence behind is therefore a joint effort of women and anti-violence centres. Centres share the view that reintegration processes need to provide answers to women's both emotional and material needs, enabling her to increase her control on her life.

PART TWO

Good practices

2.1 The importance of good practices

The ability to frame one's work in "good practices" serves the need to identify effective actions to meet the needs of beneficiaries (e.g., women victims of violence) as well as to create a model that can be reproduced in analogous contexts. Shaping good practices in anti-violence centres and making them available on the outside ("*between centres*"), is basically based on the opportunity for "*the other*" to learn from the experience of those who already faced similar problems. By favouring the spread and accessibility of its good practices, an anti-violence centre has the opportunity to support the choices and activities of other anti-violence centres, but also to involve other services and agencies present on the territory in a complementarity and cooperation perspective.

The analysis and presentation of good practices of KSC anti-violence centres contained in this publication were carried out with the following goals:

- making the complex work of anti-violence centres more visible from the outside;
- favouring the exchange of experiences between different actors in order to identify useful criteria to replicate good practices in other territories too;
- sharing with other actors in the network the good practices built and the methodology used to reach goals. Furthermore, sharing favours the active involvement of each subject, which can then implement the good practice in its own territory and starting from its own capacities.

2.2 Good practices in KSC anti-violence centres

In this framework, KSC anti-violence centres identified 7 good practices, one each. The good practices are described in this chapter (paragraphs 2.2.1 – 2.2.7) and are accompanied by a brief introduction of each anti-violence centre. The good practices are related to the following macro-areas of support services for women victims of violence: housing, work counselling and/or placement, monitoring and follow-up after the woman leaves the shelter.

Identifying a safe, independent housing solution for the woman (and her children, if any) is one of the first needs anti-violence centres need to meet after sheltering. Independent housing is often the only alternative to going back to the abuser's family. Furthermore, it is a space where the woman can start developing herself as an autonomous subject. The woman takes active part in the whole process. In collaboration with the operator, she identifies the housing characteristics that best meet her needs, like safety and closeness to certain services, like schools, hospitals, or the workplace.

A safe, independent housing solution provides several benefits for the woman. On the one hand, having a house of one's own provides safety and independence in the organisation of one's life. On the other hand, it significantly increases the woman's trust in her own management skills, strengthening psychological and emotional independence. Furthermore, building new relationships – with neighbours and/or other women in the case of co-housing, encourages the woman to increase her relationship and conflict management skills, build a new social network, and count on reciprocal support. Having to manage a house on her own and respect co-housing rules, where present, increases the woman's sense of responsibility. A process of regaining personal independence starts from the appropriation of personal space and time. Housing autonomy gives the woman a sense of freedom and

limits the chances of relapse, as women are less willing to leave a situation of safety and control and the level of tolerance for violence decreases enormously.

Another crucial element for the woman's reintegration is work counselling and access to employment. Financial independence allows women to build long-term self-sufficiency. This process starts – always in collaboration between the operator and the woman – with identifying the woman's competences, possibilities, and aspirations. The operator helps the woman make sense of the local labour market, advises her on useful instruments for seeking employment, and guides her around relevant public and private actors (e.g., training centres, employment offices, private businesses, etc.).

In this phase, the woman increases her knowledge of useful elements for finding employment and realistically assesses her chances. In the active search for work, centres usually approach directly the public sector (through employment offices) and private businesses or refer the woman to other NGOs which support small business start-ups. Starting from the need to provide guests with instruments for long-term independence, centres seek to overcome the economic repercussions of violence on the victim. The value of this service lies not only in finding employment for guests, but also in providing women with the instruments to access the labour market in autonomy, assessing and using their competences, what the territory offers, and their ability to navigate this context. This process, undoubtedly long and complex, increases the woman's awareness of her own resources and limits, trust in her choices, and ability to elaborate on her experiences.

Once the process of building housing and work autonomy starts, the woman has already regained small spaces of independence and self-confidence, but the experience and memory of violence will always be part of her, and this can come with moments of discouragement, when the centre intervenes in support. For this reason, a monitoring service was activated for women who have

left the centre. The monitoring process is always activated upon request by the woman, both when she has decided to go back to the family or to live autonomously.

Thanks to the direct experience of anti-violence centres, the monitoring service has proven a precious instrument, able to support the woman in a reintegration process which is all too often complex, strengthen her self-confidence, and giving her more serenity and autonomy in making decisions and living with them. Monitoring allows operators to understand the woman's progress in the empowerment process, the family dynamics she experiences, and the way she deals with this new routine. Furthermore, it enables the shelter to preserve the memory of the women's stories, experiences, and the patterns of violence. Starting from the precious heritage of the women's historical memory, the centre can assess its work, reflect on patterns of violence and their evolution, and dialogue with institutions on patterns and evolution of violence in the territory.

2.2.1 Sheltering a woman in a safe house

*by Nazife Jonuzi **

Area of intervention

Empowerment/ support in leaving a violent relationship

Goals

1. Re-establishing the woman's emotional balance
2. Increasing the woman's self-awareness as woman
3. Renewing and strengthening the woman's self-confidence
4. Showing and offering the guest relationships of solidarity between women

Synthetic project description¹⁴

A woman is housed in the shelter to keep her safe and break the pattern of violence with a strong, immediate action. The first need

expressed by the woman when entering the shelter is to feel safe, protected. Instead, the need for independence and autonomy stems from a process that takes place during the woman's stay. In order to facilitate such process, the shelter's staff clarifies that the stay is a phase of transition and support into autonomy. In fact, only in exceptional cases are women housed for over 6 months. Women should never perceive the shelter as a permanent housing solution, as this would prevent them from taking full responsibility for their lives.

Standard practices and instruments

First interview with the case-manager. The interview aims at assessing the woman's situation and the degree of risk (a divorce in course, a report to the court, and so on). Once collected the woman's history, level of education, and traumas, she is invited to have an interview with a psychologist.

Interview with the psychologist. The psychologist establishes a deeper dialogue with the woman and integrates the preliminary information provided.

Meeting between case manager and psychologist. Case manager¹⁵ and psychologist assess the case together and elaborate a common strategy in the relationship with the woman, strategy that will be shared with the woman herself.

Relationship with the woman. Once completed the preliminary phase, meetings with the woman are managed by the psychologist, who keeps in daily contact with the case manager.

The psychologist manages meetings on two levels: *individual* and *group*. Initially, individual meetings take place 3-4 times a week. When the woman appears to open up, both towards other women

¹⁵ During the woman's stay in the shelter, the case manager filters and manages the relationships with the outside. In a methodological perspective, recovery is successfully started when the woman starts showing that she is taking responsibility for herself and develop conscious decision-making skills.

in the centre and towards the external world, weekly meetings are cut to two, of which one individual. *Group meetings* deal with topics related to shared experiences, and the psychologist herself shares her own family experiences and issues¹⁶. Discussions are led by women themselves who, in turns, agree on a topic to be developed.

Strengths

- The strong sense of solidarity and collaboration between staff members communicates trust and serenity to the woman throughout her stay
- Relationships between operators show women how solidarity and a healthy relationship between women can help overcome difficulties

Internal criticism

- None

External criticism

- Although the shelter enjoys good relationships with institutions, these are perceived as easily subject to change according to political shifts.

Possible difficulties in transferring to other areas of the country:

- None, but strong harmony between operators needs to be created.

* *Director of “LIRIA” Centre for the Protection and Rehabilitation of Women and Children of Gjilan/Gnjilane*

¹⁶ A counsellor intervenes when the case requires it, usually when there are divorce procedures in course, contested children, property. Usually, however, the counsellor is tasked with the external SOS line and advising women who do not need or wish to be sheltered.



"LIRIA"

Centre for the Protection and Rehabilitation of Women and Children Gjilan/Gnjilane

Mission Protecting, supporting, and promoting women's rights throughout Kosovo; developing understanding, tolerance, and spirit of cooperation to achieve full welfare for women. The shelter for women and children victims of domestic violence does not discriminate on grounds of ethnicity, age, sex, nationality, religion, educational level, political and sexual orientation.

Services

- Safe, comfortable housing
- Food and clothing
- Healthcare and health education
- Psychological and legal counselling
- Social activities
- Family mediation and counselling
- Basic professional training
- Educational activities
- Awareness-raising, self-esteem services and recreational sessions.

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2.2.2 *Personal autonomy: the rehabilitation path for women in the shelter*

by Jubilea Kabashi *

Area of intervention

Empowerment/ support in leaving a violent relationship

Goals

1. Physical rehabilitation in cases of serious physical abuse
2. Increasing the woman's physical and psychological self-awareness
3. Strengthening the woman's psychological autonomy and resilience
4. Strengthening the woman's autonomy in managing herself, work, and family/children

Synthetic project description

The woman's needs are assessed both in formal individual interviews and informal moments of dialogue that can make her less inhibited.

Standard practices and instruments

Preliminary interview. Women are usually referred to the centre by competent institutions (police, social workers). With their collaboration, the director assesses the case and verifies the woman's documents (ID as well as reports and charges on the abuser, medical files, etc.). Only women who consciously decide to stay are accepted into the shelter. Risk levels for the woman and the kind of violence she was victim of are assessed in collaboration with institutions. Once accepted, the woman spends a *reflection period* during which she does not meet the directors nor the operators.

The first individual interview with the director takes place at the entrance of the woman in the shelter, whilst the assessment of her needs and the begin of activities in the centre take place after 48 hours. At the end of the meeting an *attention plan* is drafted. The attention plan is implemented by the director in collaboration with the operators and the psychologist¹⁷.

Interviews with the psychologist. The first interview with the psychologist or the psychiatrist is compulsory after the 48-hour recovery period and is aimed at offering the woman adequate psychiatric or psychological treatment consistently with her desires. The following personal interviews with the psychologist are scheduled and held in the respect of the woman's wishes.

Attention interviews with shelter staff. After the recovery time, the woman is introduced to staff members and their tasks as well as the services offered. For a conscious stay, she is given a copy of the house rules. The Staff is available 24/7 and rotates in three turns. During the day, staff is present according to scheduled activities. During the night, an operator is present to support women if needed. During day-time activities, staff provides women with food, medicines – where prescribed by the attention plan – and answers other needs. The staff or the woman herself inform relatives about her location.

Mediation with family. Always respecting the woman's wishes, the shelter mediates with the family of origin. Meetings are usually held in the premises of the local social support centre.

Empowerment. The woman's self-esteem is strengthened through courses and classes according to her preferences and individual meetings with her counsellor and the staff.

Interviews with external operators. Individual interviews with external staff, in particular social workers, are always scheduled in accordance with the woman's wishes.

16 Directives are given by the director.

Strengths

- Mediation with the family of origin aimed at either reintegrating the woman or finding independent long-term solutions.
- Mediation with competent institutions aimed at identifying safe, long-term solutions.
- The centre favours the woman's psychological autonomy and her social reintegration.

Internal criticism

- Lack of financial resources which forces the shelter to use staff as volunteers.

External criticism

- Absence of social housing that would enable women to find emancipation from the abuser's family.
- The persisting economic crisis brought high level of unemployment in country, thus achieved full reintegration for women is even more difficult.

Possible difficulties in transferring to other areas of the country

- None

** Director of the Centre for the Sheltering of Women and Children of Prizren/Prizren*



*Centre for the Sheltering of Women and Children
Prizren/Prizren*

Mission To provide shelter for women and children victims of domestic violence in the region of Prizren and beyond through forms of prevention, treatment, education, advocacy, and lobbying for the rights of women and children victims of violence.

Services

- Housing, protection, training, and rehabilitation of victims of violence through psychological and social programmes
- Strengthening and capacity building through workshops and training
- Family and social reintegration of victims of violence

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2.2.3 *A job for autonomy: independence through work*

by Naime Sherifi *

Area of intervention

Work/financial autonomy

Goals

1. Increasing the woman's self-awareness
2. Strengthening the woman's decision-making autonomy
3. Effectively supporting the woman in the process of social reintegration

Synthetic project description

Most women sheltered in anti-violence centres need constant support, not only during their stay, but also once they go back into society. Some decide to go back to their family of origin, others to their husband's family, others to live on their own and build an independent life. In any of these cases, women need constant support in seeking employment. In this perspective, the staff accompanies the woman in exploring her job opportunities and navigate the labour market. The woman is therefore advised taking into account her experiences, skills, and competences, and referred to employment support agencies present in Kosovo. She is also informed about juridical and social support mechanisms that can help her find a job.

After identifying her skills, the woman is supported in approaching the labour market, and particularly in identifying local channels and approaching employment agencies, institutions, and private actors. Another important channel are NGOs operating in Prishtina, that over the years have activated support instruments for women leaving the shelter through funds for training and small business start-ups.

Standard practices and instruments

Individual interviews. Counsellors work with the woman to identify her interests, talents, and aspirations. Then, they draft an attention plan and establish the criteria for its implementation. The plan includes steps both within and outside the centre.

Reintegration attention plan. When the woman gets to the reintegration phase, the plan is updated and key points for reintegration are established.

Training. Once identified the woman's needs and aspirations, she is offered professional training and help to achieve: good CV writing skills; a thorough understanding of existing job search channels; an adequate awareness of workplace risks and safety.

External reintegration process. With her consent, the woman receives ongoing support from operators in the form of follow-up meetings. Steps taken are discussed and the family situation is monitored when the woman has decided to go back. In particular cases, the woman also receives support in terms of clothing, food, and gynaecology services. After a set period, operators assess whether monitoring should continue.

Both during and after the stay in the shelter, the woman's privacy and personal safety are guaranteed.

Strengths

- Ongoing contact between the woman and the centre
- Institutional lobbying for supporting women victims of violence during the reintegration stage
- Mediation between the woman and the family of origin
- Mediation between the woman and the abuser's family to extend benefits on the woman's life
- Constant evaluation of the shelter's work to support the woman

Internal criticism

- High costs of monitoring (staff transfers, monitoring resources), so that this activity is often carried out by staff on a voluntary basis
- Scarcity of staff available for monitoring activities
- High workloads

External criticism

- Increasing unemployment and lack of safe places for the woman
- Lack of donations for the reintegration phase
- Physical threats from the woman's relatives

Possible difficulties in transferring to other areas of the country

- *None*

** Director of the Centre for the Protection of Women and Children of Prishtinë/Priština*



***Centre for the Protection of Women and Children
Prishtinë/Priština***

Mission To improve the rights of women and children in all spheres of life and protect them by providing direct support to their physical and psychological welfare, including personal safety. To advocate for the rights of women and children and fight for equal opportunities for women in the country's decisional democratic process.

Services The centre has the capacity to host *16-19 victims*. Victims are offered physical safety and services for the time necessary for complete rehabilitation. Victims can be hosted in the centre for *1 to 6 months*, according to needs. The centre also offers reintegration services, tailoring and manufacturing workshops, computer courses, Internet services, English courses, applied arts, fitness, and aerobics.

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2.2.4 *Housing autonomy: supporting women in the path to social inclusion*

*by Sakibe Doli **

Area of intervention

Housing autonomy

Goals

1. Supporting the woman in gaining personal and home management independence
2. Strengthening the woman's self-esteem
3. Favouring the woman's proactive role in the reintegration process

Synthetic project description

The shelter is based in Gjakova and is open, i.e. the woman can both stay in a secure premise and start a work placement process during her stay. Operators work with the woman to help her recover her self-confidence, accompanying her in a process of empowerment in view of leaving the shelter. When the woman finds her independence and is ready to leave, the shelter takes the first steps to support her in seeking housing.

Standard practices and instruments

Housing needs. As a first step, the woman and the operators assess the woman's housing needs, depending on the presence of children. Housing is usually selected in the province of Gjakova, in other provinces when the risk level is high.

Search of the house through estate agencies and the personal efforts of operators and the woman herself. Once selected a list of potential solutions, the centre staff checks on owners through informative interviews. When an owner is regarded as reliable, he or she is put in contact with the woman. If meetings prove positive, the parties sign the contract with the centre's approval.

Stay. After signing the contract ¹⁸, the woman signs with the shelter a conduct code for the house, which is valid for the whole period of the rent support and is based on the following rules:

- Entrance is forbidden to men, including relatives;
- Conflict in house management is forbidden, both in case of co-housing and woman with children. In the chance the woman is not able to manage a conflict, she can count on the support of operators to find a solution. However, if she persists in an incorrect behaviour, she can be evicted;
- Availability for reciprocal support for childcare (when mothers are at work);
- Housework is compulsory;
- Sharing house expenses is compulsory.

Strengths

- The woman recovers her identity and autonomy in managing her daily life, her property, and her children.
- Violence episodes decrease (even when the woman reconciles with the abuser, her newly found autonomy makes her less subject to abuse and less tolerant to violence).

¹⁸ The shelter provides for the rent and electricity bills for 1 or 2 years at most, while all other bills and tasks are taken care of by the woman.

Internal criticism

- Mistakenly assessing the woman's needs and readiness to leave the shelter.
- The woman does not feel ready to leave and asks to stay despite successful counselling.
- Difficulties on the side of the shelter in supporting the woman who refuses to leave, as it depends on external donors.

The shelter provides for the rent and electricity bills for 1 or 2 years at most, while all other bills and tasks are taken care of by the woman.

External criticism

- Inadequate housing available (in areas at risk for the woman).
- Absence of donors.
- High, unsustainable rents.

Possible difficulties in transferring to other areas of the country

- None

** Director of Safe House of Gjakovë/Dakovica*



*Safe House
Gjakovë/Đakovica*

Mission An open shelter for women and children victims of domestic violence, the centre contributes to preventing domestic violence through educational, professional development, and social/judicial/healthcare awareness programmes. It also helps create a favourable environment for promoting women's rights and a spirit of cooperation to achieve full welfare for women.

Services

- Education and awareness-raising of youth, community, and institutions on domestic violence
- Hospitality, counselling, and support to women victims of violence
- SOS line active 24/7
- Monitoring and awareness-raising of civil society on human rights
- Lobbying local institutions for the protection of and support to women victims of violence
- Developing competences of staff

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2.2.5 A job-placement paths for women

by *Emine Kabashi* *

Area of intervention

Work/financial autonomy

Goals

1. Favouring the woman's achievement of financial independence
2. Increasing the woman's self-awareness of her strengths
3. Supporting the woman in seeking employment

Synthetic project description

“Raba Voca” is a closed shelter where women can start a process of empowerment in view of an independent life. Work/financial autonomy is a particularly crucial need for the woman, who – with the centre's support – assesses her own skills and resources for the labour market, notwithstanding the achievement of central knowledge on how to move and search a job.

Standard practices and instruments

Assessment of the woman's needs. Through informative, support, and skill assessment interviews, operators and the woman jointly explore the shelter's programmes and training activities.

Creation of a collaboration plan with the woman and drafting of her CV.

Job search. Operators send the woman's CV to the local employment office and then contact businesses that advertise vacancies¹⁹.

Job placement. The contract is initially signed between the employment office, the shelter, and the woman.

19 The centre confidentially informs the employer about the woman's history.

Strengths

- Ongoing empowerment work during the work placement process.
- Low cost for the centre.
- Work counselling in the reintegration phase.
- The woman improves her self-esteem and freedom of movement.

Internal criticism

- Limited staff with limited capacity to follow a case through.
- Lack of stable contact networks in the labour market.
- For what concerns the private sector, more success was had when international donors financed 50% of the salary for a set period (the remaining 50% was covered by the employer). In absence of donors, reintegration procedures are limited to courses within the centre and mediation with potential employers.

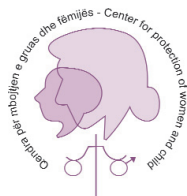
External criticism

- Very high unemployment rate.

Possible difficulties in transferring to other areas of the country

- None

** Director of the “RABA VOCA” Centre for the Protection of Women and Children of Mitrovicë/Mitrovica*



***“RABA VOCA” Centre for the Protection of
Women and Children Mitrovicë/Mitrovica***

Mission To promote and protect the human rights of women and children, and support their personal, physical, and psychological safety, filling the State’s gaps and working for gender equality in decisional processes as a fundamental part of the democratisation process. The shelter is multi-ethnic and does not discriminate on grounds of ethnicity, sex (sons are hosted until the age of 12), nationality, religion.

Services

- Monitoring the rights of women and children
- Counselling
- Social and psychological support
- Short period shelter
- Medical assistance and sexual education
- Legal and social support and counselling
- Professional training
- Family and social reintegration

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2.2.6 *Financial autonomy: job orienting and employment*

*by Hamijet Dedolli **

Area of intervention

Work/financial autonomy

Goals

1. Favouring the woman's recovery from the traumas of trafficking
2. Recovering the woman's self-confidence, strengthening her decision-making skills, and preparing them for a new community life free of violence
3. Identifying services existing on the territory for professional training and analysis of the labour market
4. Identifying the woman's skills and needs to choose relevant professional training which can favour her social and financial emancipation
5. Supporting the woman in seeking employment and achieving financial independence.

Synthetic project description

The reintegration programme targets not only women who are hosted in the shelter, but also those who have completed rehabilitation and are back with their families or have started an independent life. The beneficiaries' full reintegration includes all services provided until they feel stronger and able to take care of themselves. Each victim of trafficking needs to be dealt with individually, taking into account her specific skills and characteristics. The centre offers a rehabilitation programme able to answer each woman's specific, individual needs. It is worth noting how, since 2005, the centre signed an agreement with the ministry of Labour and Welfare and established a cooperation

system with regional and municipal employment centres, regional centres for professional training, and Social Work Centres (part of the ministry of Labour and Welfare). On the basis of such cooperation, beneficiaries have so far been given priority in regional centres for professional training, but not in work centres, given Kosovo's high unemployment rate.

Standard practices and instruments

Rehabilitation programme. The centre's staff helps the woman develop her potential. The centre also offers basic and specialist healthcare services, individual and group psychological counselling, legal counselling, educational and professional training, awareness-raising sessions to prevent further trafficking and empowerment sessions to prepare the woman to the work that suits her best.

A *reintegration plan* is drafted by the woman together with operators after the recovery, if the woman feels strong enough to face change. The reintegration plan includes the woman's needs, skills, and desires and plans the next steps.

Professional training. The woman is encouraged to sign up for professional training outside the centre. In line with her wishes, she is referred to employment offices/centres operating at the municipal and regional levels for interviews, counselling, and orientation sessions. On the basis of her skills, the woman is referred to free professional training available in regional professional training centres. In the lack of suitable training options, she is referred to the private sector. After the completion of training, the woman is assisted by the centre and the employment offices/centres in seeking employment.

Job search with the support of the operator. In the preliminary phase, the woman attends information sessions on human trafficking and courses on financial management, opening a bank

account, and else that can be useful for an independent life. In a second phase, the operator and the woman jointly assess her needs, desires, and opportunities, assess the local labour market, and plan the next steps.

Work and training counselling. The woman is supported in compiling a CV as a self-acknowledgement step.

Active job search through the employment centre or a network of private businesses. In the first case, the woman is signed up for employment. When a suitable vacancy is advertised, the centre contacts the potential employer to assess their reliability. If the outcome is positive, the contract is signed by both the woman and the centre. In this case, the salary is paid by the employer. In the second case, the Staff seeks for suitable employers. This solution is conditioned to funding by external donors, which partially cover the salary and therefore facilitate the woman's employment by the company. In this case, the contract is signed by the beneficiary, the centre, and the private company. In most cases, the centre offers incentives for 3-6 months. Although the employer is required to maintain the work relationship after the incentives end, this is often not the case. In both cases, the woman's progress is regularly monitored and assessed.

Strengths

- A tough empowerment work throughout the reintegration process
- Increasing self-awareness through the woman's assessment of her own resources and weaknesses
- Increasing self-confidence and encouragement to gaining autonomy
- Facilitation in identifying and using job search and work counselling instruments
- If the contract is interrupted, the woman is encouraged to assess the competences acquired

- Good cooperation with involved actors
- Limited financial investment

Internal criticism

- Unstable collaboration with private companies
- Caution is needed in identifying suitable workplaces due to specific characteristics of victims of trafficking

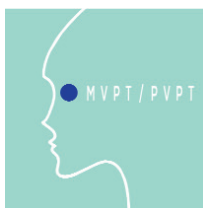
External criticism

- High unemployment rate
- Inadequate professional training, incompatible with the labour market
- Companies tend to fire women after financial incentives end
- Difficulties in finding vacancies through employment offices
- Limited educational level of beneficiaries
- Lack of self-confidence due to family dynamics and lack of work experience

Possible difficulties in transferring to other areas of the country

- None

** Director of the Centre for the Protection of Victims and the Prevention of Human Trafficking of Prishtinë/Priština*



**Center for Protection of Victims and Prevention of
Trafficking in Human Beings (PVPT)**
Prishtinë/Priština

Mission A non-profit, independent NGO, the centre daily deals with causes and consequences of trafficking through a multi-disciplinary approach (social and economic support, awareness-raising campaigns, protection, and implementation of social policy).
The centre seeks to facilitate the empowerment of women and children victims or potential victims of trafficking through social services, prevention, education, awareness - raising and empowering activities, long - term rehabilitation, professional training, recreational activities, social reintegration, advocacy, and information.

Services

- Emergency housing
- Rehabilitation
- Long-term rehabilitation
- Prevention
- Awareness-raising

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2.2.7 *Women monitoring after sheltering ends*

*by Ardita Ramizi Bala **

Area of intervention

Empowerment/support in leaving a violent relationship

Goals

1. Supporting the woman in the reintegration process
2. Favouring the woman's sense of safety
3. Strengthening the woman's self-confidence
4. Increasing the woman's awareness of her needs and decision-making autonomy
5. Monitoring the changes in the woman's life in terms of autonomy and self-esteem

Synthetic project description

When the woman is ready to leave the shelter, she can still be emotionally and materially unstable. Monitoring is a useful instrument to guarantee her safety while strengthening her in the process of empowerment.

Monitoring interventions usually take place at the woman's place of residence. Visits allow operators to understand the woman's environment and notice family dynamics, in case of reintegration into the family of the abuser or the family of origin. When the woman has opted for an independent life, visits enable the operator to assess the woman's management of her new reality. Monitoring lasts 2-3 years from the moment the woman leaves the shelter. In the beginning, visits are more frequent, 3-4 times a year on average, and then decrease in proportion to the woman's increase in confidence and independence.

This choice is related to the need to give the woman the time and space necessary to rebuild her life and her relationships, avoiding dependency from operators.

Standard practices and instruments

For greater safety, visits are carried out by two operators, one of them being the woman's manager during rehabilitation – this allows maintaining and consolidating the trust developed in time. Main instruments include:

Monitoring plan. Jointly drafted by the woman and operators in view of her leaving the shelter, it is based on the woman's needs and desires. The plan establishes the guidelines for future individual interviews. At the end of the draft, operators note down the woman's contacts and references and have her sign the authorisation to start monitoring.

Individual interviews. Operators schedule visits via phone. Visits take place where the woman lives, so that the counsellor can pay attention to the woman's situation and the relationships with relatives. Together, the woman and operators assess the woman's current needs. The maintaining of the relationship with the woman enables the centre to continue supporting her in crucial steps like seeking employment, education, and training. The woman is also supported in material needs like clothing, food, and healthcare.

Prosecution of monitoring. At the end of the 2 years, counsellors and the woman assess whether further monitoring is necessary and/or appropriate.

Strengths

- Visits are used by counsellors to mediate between the woman and the family in case of conflict
- In case of reconciliation with the abuser, monitoring has positive consequences on him too, as it stimulates verbal confrontation within the couple
- Further strengthening of the empowerment work
- Preserving the historical memory of women hosted in the shelter.

Internal criticism

- Monitoring costs (transfers, bills, etc.)
- Lack of material resources
- Limited time available for monitoring

External criticism

- Physical threats to operators by the woman's relatives.

Possible difficulties in transferring to other areas of the country

- None

** Director of the Centre for Women Wellness Centre of Pejë/Peć*



***Women Wellness Centre– Shelter
Pejë/Peć***

Mission Protecting, supporting, and promoting the rights and interests of women and girls throughout Kosovo; developing understanding, tolerance, and spirit of cooperation for their full welfare.

The shelter for women and children victims of domestic violence does not discriminate on grounds of ethnicity, age, sex, nationality, religion, level of education, and political or sexual orientation.

The shelter has the capacity of 16 beds.

-
- Services**
- Temporary housing, psychological, social, healthcare, and legal support
 - Support in social reintegration for women and children victims of domestic violence
 - Community education and awareness-raising on gender violence and gender equality
 - Networking against domestic violence
-

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AGE	Agency For Gender Equality
CCAER	Coordinamento dei Centri Antiviolenza dell'Emilia Romagna
EIDHR	European Instrument For Democracy And Human Rights
KSC	Kosovo Shelter Coalition
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
REVIVE	Reintegration Of Victims Of Domestic Violence
RTM	Reggio Terzo Mondo
EU	European Union
KP	Kosovo Police
MLSW	Ministry Of Labour And Welfare

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