

Methodology and tools for mapping support services for victims of violence against women and girls

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In a nutshell

- The background to the task
- Definitions and distinctions
- Guidelines
- Proposed methodology
- Q&A
- Coffee break
- Working in small groups on the three templates
- Feedback and next steps

Background

- The presentations this morning on the sections of the Istanbul Convention on support services
- A research project in partnership with UN Women on support services in 6 countries in central and eastern Europe
- Research instrument developed 2012-14 for use by researchers and in relation to these contexts
- Feedback from researchers – need for more clarity on the distinctions between specialist and general services
- The four first reports by GREVIO also raised issues
- Some member states have very developed support services and their shape has shifted over the last decade
- The reality that across Europe support services most developed for domestic violence and for women without additional needs

The challenges

- To clarify what support services are
co-ordination is not support, nor are perpetrator programmes
- To clarify specialism and general services
- To distinguish between forms of support services and types of support
- To map the gaps in terms of forms of VAWG and access for groups of women facing intersectional inequalities
- To include issues of quality where an assessment at the national level might be meaningful
- That these tools are not for researchers, but to aid governments (and NGOs) in their reporting to GREVIO

The draft document

- A set of guidelines with distinctions and definitions and the relevant sections of the Istanbul Convention
- An explanation of the approach taken
- A proposed methodology
- Three tools to enable differentiation
 - Specialist services
 - Specialism within general services
 - General services

Distinctions and definitions 1

- Definitions of the forms of VAWG as provided in the Explanatory Report
- Only those forms of violence covered by the IC
 - Excludes trafficking and child sexual abuse
 - The latter is addressed through questions on services to children in sexual violence services
 - There is an open question as to whether sexual exploitation is covered under sexual violence
 - Child witnesses mainly refers to domestic violence, does this hide girls as direct victims of a range of forms of VAWG?

Definitions and distinctions 2

- Widespread recognition the best support services are delivered by specialist NGOs, often led and run by women
 - established to address the specific needs of victim-survivors
 - built through their experiential knowledge
 - some also encourage participation in shaping services
- There can be some specialisation within general services offered by public authorities such as social services, health services, legal aid and victim support
- In general services there is a responsibility on public authorities to identify victim-survivors and refer them into support services

Definitions and distinctions 3

- **Specialist support services** are designed to meet the needs of victims of specific forms of violence against women and are not open to the general public. While these may be services run or funded by government authorities, the majority are provided by NGOs, and are more likely to be 'holistic' in the types of support they offer. States are expected to recognise this unique contribution through funding and invitations to be part of assessing, adapting and extending existing support
- **Specialism within general services** – As the issue of VAW has been recognised some specialist responses have been developed within general services. These are staff or teams whose work is with victim-survivors. Examples here would be Sexual Assault Referral Centres within hospitals, trauma work in mental health with victim-survivors, housing or social work teams which specialise in domestic violence
- **General support services** are universal services 'offered by public authorities such as social services, health services, employment services, which provide long-term help and are not exclusively designed for the benefit of victims only'

What is support in the IC

- Article 18 and the explanatory report (paragraphs 111 to 123)
- Support should be rooted in a 'gendered understanding' and focused on 'the human rights and safety of the victim'.
 - These human rights include dignity, privacy and bodily integrity
 - Avoiding 'secondary victimisation' – not blaming victims or making them feel responsible for what has happened to them
 - Rooted in a 'culture of belief'
- Support should aim at 'empowerment'
 - Violence takes away control over one's body and life, so support should give control back and enable victims to make their own decisions (what is sometimes called 'self-determination')
 - This can be decisions about, for example, whether to make a formal report or whether they want to see a female professional
 - It should also enable the achievement of 'economic independence'
 - Redressing and undoing harms of violence –psychological and material
 - Counselling and advice includes, financial assistance, health care, housing, legal rights, and employment and training and other forms of social welfare provision.
 - Staff need to be 'sensitive and knowledgeable' – unlikely without training and supervision.

Specialist support

- Should be widely available geographically (there are standards for shelters, helplines, rape crisis centres set by the Council of Europe) and able to cover short-, medium- and long-term needs
- Cover all forms of violence and accessible to all victims (barriers to accessing support for some women – eg those with disabilities, from minority groups, older women, recent migrants, lesbians)
- Specialisation can be about the forms of violence and/or groups of women who are currently underserved

Forms of support in the IC

- Shelters
 - (emergence of non-residential forms of support around domestic violence)
- Helplines
- Sexual violence services
 - Rape Crisis Centres
 - Sexual Assault Referral Centres
- Counselling centres
- Also need recognition and space for other forms which have emerged in specific national/regional contexts

Types of support

- Services may offer a combination
- Crisis support
- Legal advice/counselling/advocacy
- Psychological counselling
 - Short/long term
- Case advocacy
- Economic empowerment
- (Outreach as a way to invite into support)

The three tools/templates

- We will look at them in detail after coffee break
- They use the specialist, specialism in general and general distinction, with the assumption that victim-survivors deserve access to specialist support
- The first two cover the forms and types of support covered by the IC, but adapted to context (eg safe accommodation is not appropriate for rape crisis centres)
- The focus for general services is on identification and referral
- Provide opportunities for member states to include information about variations in their contexts

PROPOSED METHODOLOGY

Methodological approach

- It is a state responsibility to report to GREVIO, therefore a specific person should have the responsibility to collate data on support services
- A process which will take 6-12 months initially
- To enable this two roundtables – one with NGOs and one with representatives from general services
- Initial training on the guidelines and the tools
 - This includes deciding which services fit under which tools, the headings within them and whether there are significant services that need an additional section included to cover them
- A process of data collection and collation by the designated official
- The opportunity to give feedback on draft GREVIO submission
- Re-convening to consider the report and recommendations of GREVIO

Composition of roundtables

- Specialist services
 - All umbrella organisations which support/co-ordinate VAW support services – i.e. shelter organisations, networks of rape crisis centres, networks of intervention centres.
 - Groups which work on underdeveloped areas of support e.g. FGM, forced marriage.
 - Groups which work with underserved groups e.g. women with disabilities, minority women's organisations, migrant women.
- General services
- Identify those in the health, social work, legal, employment and other sectors have a remit on violence against women - national or regional levels.
 - Clarify specialism within general and general services

Some additional questions to consider once data has been compiled

- Which forms of violence is there limited support available currently?
- How does the government promote a gendered approach rooted in human rights in support services?
- Does the government recognise the right of victims seeking support to confidentiality?
- Has the government supported or recognised common standards for support services, and if so for which forms and types of support services?
- Is there sufficient capacity in specialist support services (including those within general services) – for example, can women find a shelter place in an emergency, are their waiting lists for psychological counselling
- How is inter-agency communication and co-ordination undertaken – at national, regional and local levels, and does it cover all forms of violence against women ?
- How does the government intend to implement the standards for support services in the Istanbul Convention going forward – i.e. ensuring wide geographic coverage and addressing gaps in current provision?

Q&A AND FEEDBACK

Issues to raise here

- 10 minutes to clarify any confusions
- 10 minutes on questions about content
- 10 minutes on the methodological approach

YOUR CONTRIBUTION AND FEEDBACK

Work in small groups

- 45 minutes to look at the tools, bearing in mind the task, and the caveats about what is possible in an exercise which covers a whole country
- A rapporteur who writes comments onto a version of the tool and who gives some feedback
- Group 1 and 3 – Specialist services
- Group 2 and 4 – Specialism within general
- Group 3 and 6 – General services (if you finish within the time choose one of the others to work on)
- All groups to also discuss whether these should be converted into formats whereby they can be completed electronically and submitted to GREVIO

FEEDBACK AND NEXT STEPS

THANK YOU