Promising practices and main challenges in the field of violence against women and domestic violence in Slovenia

mag. Špela Veselič,
Association SOS Help-line for Women and Children,
Victims of Violence
November 2018

□ The groundwork of dealing with VAW and domestic violence in Slovenia started primarily by non-governmental organisations at the end of the 80s.

Their work filled the gaps caused by the still limited institutional response and the lack of knowledge about violence against women.

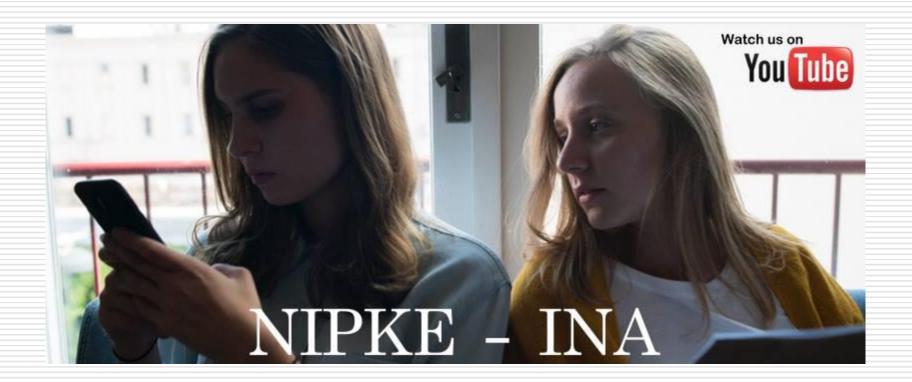
□ In 1989 – **first NGO** Association SOS Help-line for Women and Children – Victims of Violence.

□ Followed in 1990ties by others (Women's Counselling Service, Association against Sexual Abuse).

- In 1997 Association for Non-violent Communication (the first Slovenian nongovernmental organisation, establishing a program of advisory assistance to people perpetrating violence).
- □ The first safe house opened in 1991 under the auspices of Krško Social Work Centre and the second one in 1996 under the auspices of Maribor Social Work Centre.

- Other safe houses opened during the 2000s, under the auspices of women's NGOs, other NGOs and SWCs.
- The first women's NGO safe house was opened in 1997 by the Association SOS Help line.
- Prevention campaigns in 1990ies.

Prevention campaigns Everything except YES means NO



Prevention campaigns Everything except YES means NO



Prevention campaigns Everything except YES means NO

- Clear content: consent.
- Clear target group.
- Clear channels for communication:
 - Famous hip-hop artist.
 - Instagram.
 - FB.
 - Youtube.
 - Young women influencers.

At present - Network

- ☐ The **network** of safe houses is at present combined with:
 - safe houses (16),
 - crisis centres (3), and
 - maternal homes (12)
 - with capacity all together 445 beds.

At present - Network

- 1 of the safe houses is specialised for drug addicted women victims and
- one of them provides space for physically disabled women and their children.

Safe houses are:

- regionally dispersed.
- Obliged to accept women regardless of their personal circumstances (residential status etc.).
- Part of national social security network.
- Regularly funded from the state and some townships whereas Township of Ljubljana is having long-term clear policy in this field.

At present - Network

- Slovenia is developing a network of counselling services for victims of violence and
- programmes for comprehensive treatment, comprehensive assistance and support to victims of sexual abuse.

- 2008 the adoption of the **Domestic Violence** Prevention Act, amended in 2016:
 - a systemic:
 - sets a system of support;
 - role, tasks and cooperation of various state authorities and non-governmental organisations;
 - multy-institutional co-operation;
 - obligation for training and education;
 - court restraining order (up to 12 months with extension possibility); etc.

Police Tasks and Powers Act:

- enforces restraining order (for 48 hours and if the investigating judge upholds the restraining order she/he may impose the measure for up to 15 days).
- The injured party may, before the expiry of the 15 days measure, appeal to the investigating judge to extend the measure to 60 days.
- Enforces detaining offenders who do not respect the restraining order.

Harassment and sexual harassment prohibited by the Protection against Discrimination Act.

- Criminal Code covers the offences of:
 - domestic violence (Art. 191),
 - forced abortion (Art. 121),
 - rape (art. 170)
 - also includes intimate partner rape, but in this case the "prosecution shall be initiated by a motion",
 - sexual violence (art. 171),
 - stalking (134a), and
 - forced marriage (art 132a).

- □ Equal access to various forms of assistance/support services:
 - in many places there is no free psychosocial help from NGOs;
 - practices of institutions are not uniform to
 - ensure that a woman receives high-quality and comparable assistance
 - regardless of the place of residence and the person dealing with her case.

- Appropriate and practical trainings and educational programs for professionals are lacking.
- Prevention programs are lacking.
- Measures to implement Article 22e of DVPA on the prohibition of alternative dispute settlement have to be strengthened.

- Sexual violence is underreported and not dealt with in a proper manner.
- □ Victims directive needs to be implemented. (Directive 2012/29/EU of the European Parliament and the Council of October 25 2012 establishing minimum standards on the

rights, support and protection of victims of crime)

Create specialized programs to work with Roma women, older women and other vulnerable groups of women, survivors of violence who need different support services.

- Programs for perpetrators of violence need to be strengthened and obligatory.
- Extensions of restraining orders are rare in practice.
- Compensations for survivors are degradingly low.

- Alarmingly widespread practice of disregarding the history of violence from the institutions.
- Practices of **media** reporting are not improving.
- Administrative data sources are not related to each other.

Summarized from

- Mag. Špela Veselič (2018) Council of Europe fact finding mission Summary of the main gaps and challenges in the field of violence against women and domestic violence in Slovenia with recommendations. Report.
- Dr. Ermira Danaj, mag. Špela Veselič (2018) Recommendations for the development of the slovenian national programme on preventing and combating domestic violence and violence against women. Challenges, gaps and best practices report. DRAFT.