

# Full Cooperation: Zero Violence

*Challenge of large scale multi-agency training in a different cultural context*

Annalise Muscat

*Ministry for European Affairs and Equality, Malta*

# Full Cooperation: Zero Violence

- To strengthen multi-sectoral and multi-disciplinary cooperation, enabling relevant professionals to collaborate on, mitigate and respond to violence against women (VAW) and gender-based violence (GBV) effectively;
- To develop and implement training programmes, a manual of procedures (MOP) and a set of standard operating procedures (SOP) enabling cooperation and coordination of professionals from various sectors who come into contact with potential victims, thus ascertaining an upgrade in the quality of services and the introduction of national minimum standards;
- To raise awareness and encourage victims and potential victims, witnesses and bystanders to report violence and seek help through the upgraded services; and
- To share lessons learnt in European Union (EU) fora and bilaterally.

# Work streams

1. Research
2. Collection of Services
3. Training
4. Awareness Raising Campaign



# Research

- ‘Barriers to Help-Seeking in Gender-Based Violence Against Women’
- Identify and explore barriers being faced by survivors and professionals
- 8 main barriers:

Cultural barriers	Socio-economic barriers	Survivor-related barriers	Perpetrator-related barriers
Offspring-related barriers	Informal networks (Family and Friends) barrier	Psychosocial/Health Care/Education provision barriers	Justice system barriers (including police and courts)

# Collection of Services

- To equip multi-sector, multi-disciplinary professionals with protocols and guidelines to be able to respond effectively to VAW and GBV in conjunction with other professional entities in Malta in a co-ordinated and safe way.
- Following Stage 1 Training for professionals feedback: 'Collection of Services'
- Standard Operating Procedure

# Training

- To equip multi-sector, multi-disciplinary professionals with the knowledge, understanding and skills to respond effectively to domestic violence
- To develop multi-sectoral and multi-disciplinary cooperation that enables relevant professionals to effectively collaborate to prevent and respond to domestic violence
- To strengthen coordination in the provision of all related services to reduce the risk of repeat victimisation and work towards prevention

- Stage 1 Training focused on ...
  - Stage 2 Training focused on ...
  - Stage 3 Train the Trainer will focus on ...
- 
- Plan: 520 professionals for Stage 1 and Stage 2
  - Actual: 717 professionals attended Stage 1
  - Actual: 428 professionals attended Stage 2 so far

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dFnWhphiyXE>

# Raising Awareness Campaign

- Video Clips
- Radio campaign
- Toilet-Frames Posters
- Facebook and Google Adverts
- Twitter promotion



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KaYdT0S2Hk8>



# Policy

- Society's Concern: Gender-Based Violence and Domestic Violence Strategy and Action Plan (Vision 2020)
- This Strategy is also in line with the policy recommendations included in the Council of Europe Convention on prevention and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention), which Malta ratified in 2014.
- 4 pillars:

Area 1: Legal Measures and Integrated Policies	Area 2: Data Collection, Research and Training	Area 3: Awareness-Raising	Area 4: Protection and support for victims and child witnesses
------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------	---------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------

# The after effect

- Professionals to develop Multi-Agency risk assessment meeting (MARAM). High risk cases are to be discussed during
- Professionals to conduct a risk assessment with all victims using DASH (Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Honour Based Violence) to determine the seriousness of the situation and the risk of repeated violence in order to provide coordinated safety and support.
- MARAM and DASH assessment and management model will be implemented by various agencies to determine the level of risk of the victim and design a safety plan.



# Change in Legislation

## Gender-Based Violence and Domestic Violence Act

The main object of this act is to fully integrate and implement the provisions of the Istanbul Convention in national law and to repeal and recast the Domestic Violence Act as the Gender-Based Violence and Domestic Violence Act, and amend various other laws in order to ensure that adequate, sufficient protection is available to victims of violence, and ensure that justice is made with regard to perpetrators of such violence.

# Thank you for your attention

Annalise Muscat

[annalise.muscat@gov.mt](mailto:annalise.muscat@gov.mt)



Co-funded by the Rights, Equality and Citizenship (REC) Programme of the European Union



# MALTA

FULL COOPERATION: ZERO VIOLENCE

Beverley Gilbert, CVP



# Who are we training?



# 720 professionals – 6 days

- Police; front line uniform, Vice Squad and Victim Unit
- Domestic Violence Professional Support Workers
- Social Workers
- Probation Officers
- The Judiciary; Judges and Magistrates; Lawyers
- Health; GP's Nurses, Paramedics, Health Centre Staff
- Education; teachers, assistants, youth counsellors
- Addiction professionals, support workers
- Psychology & Mental Health professionals
- Survivor support organisation - SOAR
- Commission on Domestic Violence staff, Government staff
- Religious community members
- University of Malta colleagues

# Mindful of Cultural Specifics

- University of Malta undertaking qualitative research with survivors – experts by experience
- Meetings with survivor led campaign and support organisations
- Meeting government Ministries and officials
- Meeting EU Evaluator of the project

# University of Malta Research

Dr Marceline Naudi

Dr Marilyn Clark

Holgar Saliba

*Department of Gender Studies, Faculty for Social Wellbeing*

**FULL COOPERATION: ZERO VIOLENCE**

**BARRIERS TO HELP-SEEKING IN GENDER-BASED  
VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN: A RESEARCH STUDY**



Co-funded by the Rights,  
Equality and Citizenship  
(REC) Programme  
by the European Union



# Purpose of Research

The research attempts to identify and explore the barriers being faced by:

- **Survivors** of gender-based violence against women in Malta and Gozo when seeking help at the various state and voluntary services as seen from their perspective,
- **Professionals** when delivering a service to the survivors as seen from the professionals' perspective.

# Research Findings - Barriers

- (1) Cultural barriers
- (2) Socio-economic barriers
- (3) Survivor-related barriers
- (4) Perpetrator-related barriers
- (5) Offspring-related barriers
- (6) Informal networks (Family and Friends) barriers
- (7) Psychosocial/Health Care/Educaton provision barriers
- (8) Justice system barriers (including police and courts)

# Cultural barriers

- Patriarchal Maltese Society – “underlying and ubiquitous barrier”
- Gender inequality
- Perception of lack of respect towards women
- Small size – isolates itself, resists change
- Strong male identity
- Influence of Catholic Church
- Restrictive codes of femininity regulating women’s behaviour
- All results in structural violence

# Socio-economic barriers

- Financial dependence on the male partner
- Trapped by having no personal access to resources
- Everything placed in the man's name
- Fear of having to live off social benefits rather than have access to home, assets and family resources
- Malta has lowest female labour participation in EU

# Survivor-related barriers

- Acceptance myths – women are inferior to men and expected to be submissive, passive and willing to obey (Kennedy, Dugan & Roger, 2006)
- Guilt, shame and embarrassment
- Self blame
- Shock and acute stress
- Fear of not being believed, self blame
- Lack of knowledge of what is abuse
- Concern for personal, economic, relational loss

# Perpetrator-related barriers

- Manipulative and controlling
- Minimising the abuse
- Victim blaming and no acceptance of personal responsibility
- Emotional dependent on female partner
- Jealousy
- Lack of empathy
- Unpredictable abusive behaviours
- Persuading victim of remorse

# Offspring-related barriers barrier or motivator?

- Concern for child safety and wellbeing
- Can be a motivator to leave the violent relationship if fears for children's safety
- Children can be a barrier to leaving or to help seeking, as the mother fears losing her children to the abusive parent/system
- Pressure culturally for a united family unit
- Stay to enable children to enjoy material quality of life

# Informal networks (Family and Friends) barriers

- 71.6% victims spoke to family members, friends or neighbours in Malta (CDV, 2011)
- 35% disclosed to services
- 14% to priest or religious leader

**Informal systems are strongest/more trusted in Malta**

Only 57% Malta respondents likely to speak to anyone – very low in Europe

- Informal support networks have their own internalised beliefs, myths and misperceptions
- **VIOLENCE WITHIN THE FAMILY IS A PRIVATE MATTER – should only be discussed in the family**
- 73% support this view in Malta, far higher than across EU  
e.g. 2% in Sweden, 34% Bulgaria

# Community Disbelief

- View that victim will exaggerate or be dishonest in reporting abuse or rape
- 47% in Malta (compared to 8% Sweden)
- 40% believe violence is provoked
- Most of community believe myth that most rapes are by strangers (52% in Malta)
- Yet, in Malta 85% do not file a police report
- Due to knowing the offender and shame

# Psychosocial/Health Care/Education provision barriers

- Barriers in protection and support services, and the justice system
- Resourcing is an issues, so too accessibility
- Collaborative, multi agency practice is necessary to minimise barriers for reporting

# Barriers in formal support system

## Malta - 54% survivors do NOT seek help

- Insensitive reactions by or encounters with professionals
- Lack of trust in social services – especially confidentiality
- Lack of privacy in shelters
- Time limited shelter accommodation
- Lack of resources of social workers

# Justice system barriers (including police and courts)

- Survivors' re-victimisation through the justice system – insensitive and inflexible
- CJ process too slow and lengthy
- CJ system requires sensitivity of victim perspective and situation
- Perpetrators use the institutions to control the survivor
- Police should improve competence - VAW

# Police responses

- Can present as dismissive of victim or of the case
- Victim blaming routine
- Consider 'domestic' offences as less serious than other crimes, or simply not a police matter
- Pass to women police officers, rather than see GBV/DV as every officers business to investigate
- Do not necessarily take steps to ensure everyone's safety and immediate protection
- Onus of investigation/proof on victim, rather than investigating officer
- Often police responses do not involve care, patience and sensitivity
- Police need to understand shock, PTSD, trauma informed interviewing techniques, evidence collation and preservation
- Specialist investigation units to respond to GBV/DV are under resourced

# CVP research

- CVP Research into the impact of our training on multi agency professionals
- The attitudinal and behavioural changes of professional to domestic violence
- Willingness and capacity to make links with other agencies and to reduce the silo approach to working practice
- Enhancement of multi agency accountability, collaboration and information sharing

# 'This is what your training means to me'



- You cut through the barriers for us
- You bring us together to talk
- We've started MARAM already just being here
- I'm optimistic for the future
- We can do this, we've started in this training

