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Campaign „16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence“

Since 1991 the International 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence Campaign has been carried out by more than 1,700 organizations in more than 100 countries worldwide. The Campaign commences every year on 25th November, which is proclaimed by United Nations as the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, and ends on 10th December, the Human Rights Day. It aims to symbolically relate gender violence with human rights, and to emphasize the fact that this kind of violence is violation of human rights.

This campaign was carried out in Montenegro in November and December 2011 as part of the Gender Equality IPA Programme, supported by the Ministry for Human and Minority Rights, EU Delegation in Montenegro and the UN system in Montenegro through United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

The campaign was opened by signing the **Protocol on cooperation in cases of domestic violence**. Subsequently, it was continued with the activities of the partner NGOs: **ANIMA**- Center for Women's and Peace Education, **Povjerenje (Trust)**, **Nova**- Center for Feminist Culture and **SOS Podgorica**.

Campaign Activities:

- 1. Signing of the *Protocol on cooperation in cases of domestic violence by the institutions relevant for its implementation* (25 November 2011)**

Law on Protection against Domestic Violence adopted in 2010 and the correspondent Strategy 2012-2015 adopted in 2011 envisage drafting of the Protocol on action, prevention and protection against domestic violence. The aim of the Protocol is to encourage and establish multidisciplinary cooperation with the clearly developed actions of each system. The protocol has been designed as to respect the fundamental principles



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arising from the conventions and the legislation mentioned in the Strategy for Protection from Domestic Violence, and it refers to the comprehensive protection of family from violence.

The Protocol regulates the mutual work of all systems required for the implementation of the legislation and conventions. It further regulates the necessary measures for securing the organization, equipping and training of sufficient number of experts specialized in domestic violence related issues.

The content of the Protocol is the result of the cooperation between all institutions in charge of its implementation- the relevant ministries, courts, police, the state prosecutor, health and social work centers. The NGOs which deal with violence and care of victims- SOS Podgorica, SOS Niksic and Women's Safe House have shared their rich work experience with the institutions' representatives. The experts from Croatia and Serbia who participated in the drafting of the Protocol were: Branka Zigante Zivkovic- judge of High Misdemeanor Court in Croatia (in capacity of the UNDP consultant), Ivana Scepanovic- president of the Belgrade Centre for Children Rights (in capacity of UNICEF consultant). The preparation process of the Protocol and signing ceremony have been supported IPA Gender Equality Programme.

The Protocol has been officially signed on 25 November in Podgorica by: **Dusko Markovic**, Minister of Justice; **Stanka Vucinic**, deputy president of the Supreme Court; **Ranka Carapic**, Supreme State Prosecutor; **Slavoljub Stijepovic**, the Minister of Education and Sport; **Miodrag Radunovic**, Minister of Health; **Suad Numanovic**, Minister of Labor and Social Welfare; **Veselin Veljovic**, the Director of Police Directorate; **Zoran Zivkovic**, president of Misdemeanor Council. The speeches were delivered by **Dusko Markovic**, the Deputy Prime minister; **Leopold Maurer**, Head of EU Delegation to Montenegro; and **Ratislav Vrbensky**, UN Coordinator/UNDP Resident Representative to Montenegro.

“Gender Programme IPA that is implemented in partnership of Ministry for Human and Minority Rights, EU Delegation and UNDP offers direct programmatic interventions, including capacity building for institutions and comprehensive research. Other two components of the Programme – strengthening political participation of women and economic empowerment, are designed to substantially support its anti-violence interventions”- **Ratislav Vrbensky**

“In Montenegro, the Law on Protection from Violence in the Family was adopted on 27 July 2010 by Parliament. Practitioners dealing with violence in the family expect that this new Law, which is based on Austrian, Croatian and other EU legal practices and measures included have proved to be very efficient not only in terms of protection, but also in prevention. Gender Programme implemented in partnership with Ministry of Human and Minority Rights, Department for Gender Equality and United Nations Development Programme – UNDP, aims to support the implementation of this newly adopted Law, through the creation of coordination and monitoring mechanisms at the national level, to ensure budgetary commitments and fair interpretation and implementation of the law in daily practice, ensuring that victims actually do experience full systematic support. “- **Leopold Maurer**



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“It is necessary to improve the coordination of the authorities, so as to implement the laws consistently. I am confident this very Protocol will contribute to the achieving this goal.”-**Dusko Markovic**



Signing of Protocol at ceremony on 25 November 2011.

2. NGO Anima

(organized screening of documentaries and discussion on *From Violence to Resistance* u Kotor, Niksic, Pljevlja, Bijelo Polje, Ulcinje, Cetinje i Podgorica)

Gender-based violence in Montenegro is most often understood as domestic violence, while systematic and structural violence against women is less visible. Domestic violence is a serious problem, but gender-based violence is a broader concept. It is present and manifested in the economic, political and social spheres in Montenegro. In the long transition process, it also makes a continuity along with gender-based forms of war violence. Anima's intention was to draw the public attention to the complexity of violence against women and to the necessity of taking serious systematic measures aimed at its reduction.

As part of the campaign 16 Day of Activism against Gender Violence held between 25 November- 10 December 2011, **NGO Anima** organized, together with the local NGO coalition a three-day long screening of films in Kotor, Niksic, Pljevlja, Bijelo Polje, Ulcinj and Podgorica. The films were followed by a discussion on different forms of violence which women suffer. With this series of activities called *From Violence to Resistance*, the feminsit NGOs wanted to make visible the systematic violence against women, as well as to



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The programme has followed the same structure in each city:

Day 1:

- Introduction speeches on global campaign *16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence*
- screening of documentaries *Find a Name for It* and *Femicid in Huez*
- Discussion

Day 2:

- Introduction on **violence against women in wartime**
- Screening of the feature film *Milk of Sorrow*
- Discussion

Day 3:

- Introduction on the **scope of the institutional mechanisms for achieving justice**
- Screening of the feature film *Hunt on Justice*
- Discussion

consolidate the women's solidarity and give support to the initiative of Women's Court¹ in former Yugoslav countries.

During the discussion the viewers mostly agreed on the following:

- war violence against women is rarely discussed and unfamiliar topic
- women do not make decisions about wars nor do they make wars, but this does not abolish them from violence conducted against them in these conditions
- violence of such proportion is hard to believe
- women should rebel, but this is hardly to happen soon in Montenegrin circumstances
- women should be taken out of 'comfortable home' and be pointed to the today's reality

¹ Anima- Center for Women and Peace Education has been part of the Initiative Committee of Women's Court for Gender Justice in the former Yugoslav countries since 2008. Women's Courts are one of the alternative models of transitional justice developed by the civil society. Women's courts are the places for women's voices, their testimonials, taking responsibility for justice, gendering justice, creation of feminist model of justice encouraging feminist ethics, responsibility and care, strengthening of solidarity networks, mutual building of just and viable peace. It is a place where all the known forms of violence become visible and defined within the political, economic and social context. Women in Black (Belgrade) are the holders of educational, research, art and publishing activities within the regional project „Women's Court- a Feminist Approach to Justice“ which is ongoing.



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- there should be Women's Court established and supported in order to discover the truth, punish the crime and to get the crimes individualised
- there should women's groups established within political parties, which would be active
- NGOs should be more active in protection of women's human rights
- To familiarise though education as many young people as possible with war violence and other violence against women
- These documentaries should be re-screened in other places with wider public
- Anima should continue to be present and active, and continue cooperation with them
- Give support to Anima's activities in the organisation of the Conference for the Women's Day because it is a way to develop solidarity among women
- NGO should have greater support from citizens and insitutions





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3. NGO Trust from Bar

(organized a series of workshops and round table on topic of health domestic violence in Bar, its suburbia and nearby villages)

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and all other international and regional documents, which impose the standards of the international law regarding human rights, oblige the member states to fulfill, protect and respect the human rights and freedoms on the basis of equality between women and men. Hence, the member states are not just obliged to forbid the violation of women's human rights, but also to take active measures of prevention and protection. The states are also obliged to secure that domestic violence does not take place, and even if it does, to protect the victims.



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NGO Trust has launched the project *For Healthy Family and Peace in Home* with the aim to raise the level of awareness and understanding of this issue through a series of workshops in the municipal districts of Sutomore/Canj, Virpazar, Ostros, Mrkojevici, Polje and Stari Bar, and as well as through the round table on the topic of domestic violence and family health. All the project activities were adjusted to the structure of the participants. The attendance of the workshops was high in the rural area. The workshops combined lectures and shared activities. The lectures were given by the psychologist Branka Stepanovic Ilic, the inspector Sasa Vujosevic, and Gina Masoncic. During the interactive part, the participants spoke of their own experiences and

Domestic violence is a specific form of violence which disproportionately affects women, and as such, it is a form and manifestation of discrimination against women. Domestic violence threatens the realization of fundamental human rights and freedoms of women.

Domestic violence comprises threats, verbal and emotional abuse, and physical violence which can sometimes lead to homicide. It also comprises cases of physical, psychological and sexual violence, economic exploitation and violation of the reproductive rights. Domestic violence takes place, as it is indicated in the term itself, among family members or the members of the same household. In such cases one individual overpowers and takes control over others by using physical and emotional coercion. Domestic violence recognizes no boundaries. It can happen between husband and wife, former spouses, grown up children and senior family members, between children and their biological parents' partners, in the same-sex couples, between parents and children, foster parents and foster children- in another word, it can happen in all types of families

asked questions about violence. Finally, they completed an anonymous survey, the sum results of which were presented later to the public.

The round table was organized in the Town Hall of Bar as the final phase of the project *For Healthy Family and Peace in Home* realized by partner NGOs Trust and SOS line form Bar and sponsored by the Municipality of Bar- Office for Gender Equality. The promotional material that we distributed was highly marked. A survey was conducted among the participants whose results would be used to make an expert analysis with regard to this issue. Also we received useful suggestions which would be of use for the future projects. We already pointed out to the management of the Health Center some of the needs and requirements, so their experts could plan some of their field activities. Over the course of the project we distributed information packages from which the participants could get information about the issues discussed at the workshops. The SOS hotline for victims of violence was open over the course of the Campaign.



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The realization of the project was helped by: **Jasmina Rastoder**- SOS hotline coordinator; **Branka Stepanovic Ilic**- psychologist; **Nedeljka Pavlovic**- journalist of Radio Bar; **Sasa Vujosevic**- employee of the Police Directorate; **Leposava Raicevic**- associate of SOS hotline- **Jelena Cavlovic**, **Miodrag Masoncic** and **Nada Dukanovic**- NGO Trust; **Gina Masoncic**, the president of NGO Trust.

We would like to thank especially to the young members of „24 November” for their contribution to the workshop and the round table in Sutomore- **Jelena Jovanovic**, **Helena Muratovic**, **Andja Vukmanovic**, **Srdjan Pandurevic** and **Marko Vukmanovic**.



Campaign 16 Days, project NGO “Trust” called “For Healthy Family and Peace in Home”
In photography: participants of workshop in Ostrosu

4. NVO Centar za feministički kulturu „NOVA“



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(NGO Centre for Feminist Culture NOVA made a video clip: “A woman to a woman: 16 days against gender violence” in order to foster societal solidarity to confront with the violence issues)

The Montenegrin public still does not sufficiently and appropriately recognize violence against women. Despite certain steps forward (legislation, implementation, sensibilization), violence against women in Montenegro is often perceived as a private, and not public (political) issue. It is, as a whole, perceived further on as a “constructed” and marginal, or even non-existing social problem. Today’s positive alternations in attitude toward violence relates for the most part to the violence in families and physical aspect of the violence. The public is not sensibilized to recognize other types of violence against women like: economic type of violence, oppressions using culture and mass media, education, process of socialization and ideology from the broader perspective.

This kind of attitude toward the violence against women is connected to the great extent with the way of perception of feminist organizations and activists in Montenegro, whose work is identified with the problem of violence against women. The perception of feminist activism in Montenegro is marked with the prejudice and distrust. Such an attitude toward is often used as an alibi to ignore the problem of violence against women. Although the activists are not essentially responsible for this perception (patriarchal stereotypes and insufficient readiness in the community to face with violence against women are the foremost causes), with the aim to reduce the violence, they can surely influence the change of this perception. One of the ways to strengthen the perception of activism can be to underline the solidarity as a foundation of a feminist activism, or to emphasize the idea that violence against women is a problem of the entire community, but also in this context there ought to be a specific responsibility of a woman for the other woman that is personal, “human”, ethical and political at the same time. The presentation of feminist activism aiming to make an auspicious impact in a community would be utilized to highlight some aspects of an activism to which communities cannot remain indifferent in spite of the patriarchal stereotypes. It would make a strong impact on a change of attitudes toward the activists and with that, the violence against women.

NOVA – the Centre for Feminist Culture made a short clip of a documentary and informative kind as to document thoroughly the aims of the project in the framework of the IPA Gender Equality Programme 2010-signing the Protocol and activities of feminist NGOs that are being realized in the campaign of 16 days of activism against the gender based violence. In addition, this organization facilitated a panel discussion named *Woman to Woman: 16 Days against Gender Violence-Montenegro, 2011* where the participants were the activists from the NGOs who participated in the campaign. The panel focused on summing up of various experiences obtained during the campaign, confronting the problem of violence against women on the field.



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5. SOS Podgorica

(facilitated a workshop with feminist NGOs that focus on the issue of violence and 3 round-table discussions with the representatives of institutions working on the violence prevention and victim protection)

The feminist movement, throughout 16 years of existence, has initiated vital social issues in Montenegro. Of the first organizations that worked on the protection of women from violence, the movements expanded to different directions and areas covering all important segments of women's lives. In all political events women from various NGOs had a fundamental role. They were courageous enough to stand for peace, equality and non-discrimination in times of war and to talk transparently about criminal, corruption and violence. In doing so, women did not only talk but also acted. Thanks to them, thousands of victims have been provided with security, they changed laws, initiated a number of actions to protect the marginalized and had a great influence in the process of sensibilizing the public to respect human, particularly women's rights. Women's groups in Montenegro are characterized by common values, knowledge, the experience of the activists, courageous individuals, mobility and rapid response in times of crisis.

As the activities of women's organizations are in direct relation to the improvement of policies and practices that have an impact on human life, their existence is the kind of guarantor of human rights and the creation of a good government. Support services provided by organizations dealing with victims of violence directly address the social and economic regeneration. The basis of feminist support is the reduction in the degree of social exclusion of women and increase in their involvement. Social inclusion and equality reduce gender-based discrimination, poverty and equality lead to the creation of a just society. In the framework of governmental bodies there is no similar option. Even when countries create a legislative framework that would be consistent with the needs of victims a close cooperation between the two sectors will be required, in order for the professional institutions to successfully retrieve models of good practice based in the NGO sector and as to consolidate the fine control of implementation of a new legislation.

The activism of women's organizations is no longer unknown, although the perception and knowledge of an ordinary male citizen and female citizens on the subject is very vague and hazy. Women's organizations whose mission is the promotion of gender equality and women's position in our society through creative projects, education and concrete action, they are turned to the ones for whom they exist. For such a work non-profit organization need enthusiasm, altruism, time, sensitivity and identification of problems of others and respect for others and a great desire and willingness to help. Involvement of others besides the will and desire, seek time, knowledge, experience, networking and collaboration.



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But as violence against women is not and cannot be "women's stories," even as domestic violence is not a family but a social problem, it is necessary to change the social consciousness of the fellow citizens.

In the process of support to victims of domestic violence professionals of various agencies have a key role, whose attitudes and prejudices have a huge impact on the efficiency of their operations. By raising awareness of community members and officers of the institution about own responsibility for not / involvement in solving the problem of domestic violence, is the basic prerequisite for effective intervention.

Lack of information of the women and the communities as a whole about the possibilities of protection from violence disables effective support and in cases of women who are abused leaves a sense of deadlock. New legislation regulation that should provide prompt and effective intervention is unknown to the general public, while a degree of trust in public institutions is low. In order to encourage more efficient reaction of society to prevent and eliminate violence against women, women's NGOs strongly and publicly speak out and call for accountability in the system's institutions and the entire community, which sends a clear message that all is personal - political, that all is personal - institutional and to „change the world begins with each of us."

One-day panel for 40 representatives of feminist NGOs across Montenegro that concentrate on prevention and protection from violence was held in Podgorica on November 26th 2011. Each of the aforementioned organizations prepared a short presentation about the mission, goals and key accomplishments in the past period as well as they provided the handouts of publications, promotional and educational material, in order to make an exhibition that would transparently and effectively show the results of the work. The participants of the panel arranged recommendations and claims for the government and authorities so to enhance instruments and mechanisms for looking after abused women.

Three major cities in Montenegro organized a roundtable discussion on "condition-sectoral cooperation for prevention of violence," attended by representatives of the police, courts, social welfare centers, local government, health authorities and NGOs. At all events there were booths set up with the publications and promotional material of women's groups.

SOS Podgorica printed leaflets with information about opportunities to protect victims of violence in accordance with the Law on Protection against Domestic Violence in all institutions and NGOs. The booklet contained a description of the legal regulations as well as information on the basic characteristics of domestic violence, protective measures and powers of all key institutions in the protection system. Informants were printed in 30,000 pieces in 5 Montenegrin towns, where are distributed in all public institutions - police, courts and social welfare centers. The booklets would be distributed to all clients, which would greatly help to successfully plan the steps out of the violence and achieve the protection and security.



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In this way, the exhausting walkabouts of the victims is reduced, and the institutional effectiveness is enhanced.





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