



COMMISSION ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Annual Report 2016





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Message from the Minister

Violence against women ranks high on the agenda of Government and for this reason my Ministry drafted a new bill that strengthens the mandate of the Domestic Violence Commission. The remit of the Commission shall be widened to cover gender based violence, as well as, to have the necessary mechanism to ensure that the provisions of the Istanbul Convention are adhered to.

Apart from its core business of co-ordinating the various entities in the sector and advise Government on legislation and policy, the Commission shall also be engaged in pro-active initiatives at the national level. The new draft bill mandates the Commission to promote positive attitudes regarding equality and respect especially among the young, to ensure the efficient and proper referral and access to quality services by survivors of violence, as well as, mobilising the community to stop violence.

I am also pleased to note that the Commission is gearing itself well for this important milestone. A new organisational structure and re-branding was approved reflecting the new responsibilities and implemented during the Malta Presidency of the Council of Ministers. Moreover the Commission has already started operating from new offices to accommodate the additional staff members and the needs of the NGOs.

The Commission set the scene for its operational priorities during the annual conference in November “Violence against Women is Everybody’s Business”. The networking effort to include all stakeholders is reflected in both the new NGO network facilitated by the Commission and the Steering group of the public institutions facilitated by the Human Rights Directorate. The Commission has also

widened its network of data sources, most notably the contribution made by the Courts Department.

The Commission has taken a number of important measures namely; creating a network of training providers which is supporting stakeholders in developing their training curriculum and commissioning research studies that are a first for Malta. These are two critical tools to strengthen the capacity of the sector.

My Ministry shall in the weeks to come embark on the development of a strategy to combat violence against women and gender based violence.

The role of the Commission in the development and implementation of this strategy is significant. I trust that the commitment and engagement of all shall carry us to a high level of effectiveness, in combatting this problem.

I take this opportunity to thank the Board of Directors and the staff for their good work.

Dr Helena Dalli

Minister for Social Dialogue,
Consumer Affairs and Civil Liberties

Foreword

Persons suffering violence have only one thing on their mind regaining dignity, personal security and safety. Therefore while the new commission had to hit the ground running, it had to make sure that it capitalises on past experiences while alienating its operations to deliver the real and the emerging needs of the institutions, in their effort to protect the victims of violence.

The members of the commission believe that in order to address the multi-faced and complex issue of domestic violence and gender based violence, it is imperative to approach it in an organic and comprehensive way. Therefore, our Mission is to create enabling environments where individual institutions develop and respond to the problem in an effective and integrated manner.

Experience has shown that a multi-pronged approach is crucial for coherent development and therefore we are committed to adopt this approach for sustained success. In this regard, the Commission actively participated in the development of the new draft bill on Domestic Violence and Gender Based Violence. It also submitted recommendations for the restructuring of the Commission and developed an operational plan for the term.

At the institutional level, the Commission established close collaborative relationships with the major institutions including the Ministry for Home Affairs, Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity, Ministry for Education, Ministry for Health, Department for Justice, Department for Local Councils, Police Force, the Academy for Disciplined Forces, Law Courts, Aġenzija APPOĠĠ, Mater Dei Hospital, Mount Carmel Hospital, MEUSEC and the office of the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations. The networking among these entities was critical to establish the right working relationships that would strengthen and develop the integrated approach to service delivery that everyone aspires for.

The Commission actively supports these institutions in delivering their priorities for the sector particularly through research work that focuses on organisation specific issues, such as the need to develop a risk assessment tool and the training for the professionals operating within the same organisations. In this regard, the setting up of the Steering committee, in view of the EU project on Zero Tolerance, came at the right time as it facilitated the creation of the formal structure where these entities can work together in an integrated manner.

Consistent with Government's priority to upgrade the quality of the human resource in the sector, the Commission set up a Board sub-committee to bring together experts in the field and mobilise the expertise to assist the various institutions in their capacity building programmes with regards to issues of domestic violence. These experts are currently supporting the Police Force and the Academy for Disciplined Forces to upgrade their programmes and access a wider pool of experts in the field.

Being true to its belief, the Commission set its sight on establishing close contacts with the community in order to ensure that it gains first-hand information of what survivors of violence need and want. This does not only ensure that the Commission is kept abreast with the real needs but it also ensures that the community is fully engaged in our common effort to change attitudes in favour of gender equality. In view of this, a board member has been designated to liaise with the local authorities and action is being planned in collaboration with the department for local councils where the Commission reaches out to the community.

The voluntary organisations also play a central role in reaching out to the community and an NGO network was set up that meets regularly to plan and implement activities and programmes together. The teamwork generated through this approach has already yielded positive results as documented in the report.

The commitment of so many organisations, public and private, as well as, individuals who came forward to support the vision of 'STOP VIOLENCE' has been very encouraging and augurs well for the future. The Commission greatly appreciates the effort and collaboration of all entities and individuals including the staff working within the Commission. And I would like to take this opportunity to thank my predecessor Dr Yana Micallef Stafrace and her team for the sterling work that they did.

Finally I wish to acknowledge the unconditional support of Minister Helena Dalli and her secretariat which is critical for the success of the Commission's work. She is an inspiration to so many in our collective effort for social cohesion.



Joe Gerada
Commissioner

1. The Commission

1.1 THE LAWS OF MALTA CHAPTER 481

The Domestic Violence Act, Chapter 481, Article 4 establishes that the main role of the Commission is that of advising the Minister on all aspects of Domestic Violence. The Act defines domestic violence as any act of violence, even if verbal, perpetrated by a household member upon another household member and includes any omission which causes physical or moral harm to the other. The Commission is also guided through the terms of reference as listed in the Domestic Violence Act.

1.2 MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION

The Commission on Domestic Violence is composed of the chairperson and nine members, and a board secretary. They are nominated in accordance to the Domestic Violence Act of the Laws of Malta, Chapter 481. The chairperson and members are nominated for three years, whose varied expertise and experience enable the Commission to gather information for policy recommendations for effective service delivery.

The composition of the Commission on Domestic Violence, whose term of office ended on the 9th May 2016, was made up of the following members:

CHAIRPERSON

Dr. Yana Micallef Stafrace

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON

Ms Renee` Laiviera

MEMBERS

Ms. Charlene Barbara
 Ms. Marouska Bonnici
 Inspector Louise Calleja
 Dr. Charles Cassar
 Dr. Oriella De Giovanni
 Dr. Roberta Lepre`
 Notary Dr. Josef Masini Vento
 Dr. Rita Borg Xuereb

SECRETARY

Ms Doris Vassallo

The composition of the new Commission on Domestic Violence is as follows:

CHAIRPERSON

Mr. Joe Gerada

MEMBERS

Dr. Cheryl Azzopardi
 Ms. Charlene Barbara
 Inspector Louise Calleja
 Dr. Charles Cassar
 Dr. Lara Dimitrijevic
 Ms. Stephanie Fenech
 Ms. Amanda Grech
 Ms. Renee Laiviera
 Dr. Josef Masini Vento

SECRETARY

Ms Katya Unah

The Commission has two employees; a Research Analyst and a Research Officer.

1.3 COMMISSION MEETINGS

Board Members	OUTGOING COMMISSION		NEW COMMISSION			Attendance
	Meeting 01/2016	Meeting 02/2016	Meeting 01/2016	Meeting 02/2016	Meeting 03/2016	
	14 th Jan	7 th Apl	13 th Sept	11 th Oct	29 th Nov	
Micallef Stafrace Yana (Chairperson)	P	P	-	-	-	2
Laiviera Reneè (Deputy Vice-Chairperson)						
Barbara Charlene	AP	P	-	-	-	1
Bonnici Marouska	AP	AP	-	-	-	0
Borg Xuereb Rita	P	P	-	-	-	2
Calleja Louise	AP	AP	-	-	-	0
Cassar Charles	AP	P	-	-	-	1
De Giovanni Oriella	AP	P	-	-	-	1
Laiviera Renee'	P	AP	-	-	-	1
Lepre' Roberta	AP	AP	-	-	-	0
Masini Vento Josef	AP	AP	-	-	-	0
Vassallo Doris (Secretary)	P	P	-	-	-	2
Gerada Joe (Chairperson)	-	-	P	P	P	3
Azzopardi Cheryl	-	-	-	-	P	1
Barbara Charlene	-	-	P	P	AP	2
Calleja Louise	-	-	P	P	P	3
Cassar Charles	-	-	P	P	P	3
Dimitrijevic Lara	-	-	AP	P	P	2
Fenech Stephanie	-	-	P	P	P	3
Grech Amanda	-	-	P	P	P	3
Laiviera Renee'	-	-	P	P	P	3
Masini Vento Josef	-	-	AP	AP	AP	0
Unah Katya (Secretary)	-	-	P	P	P	3

P denotes present for the meeting / **AP** denotes apologies.

(-) denotes that the member was not appointed on the board at the time

2. Business of the Board

The new board drew up a three year operational plan delineating the major initiatives that the board shall deliver during the period. The main thrust of the plan is to create a coordinating system among all operators that is both sustainable and effective. This function shall develop in tandem with the objectives of the Zero Tolerance project managed by the HRID. Another priority area shall be research and the training of professionals in the sector.

In addition the board discussed and submitted its recommendations in relation to the white paper for the upcoming new bill that shall cover issues of domestic violence, as well as, gender-based violence.

Consistent with the legislative development, the Commission submitted its proposals with regards to the institutional development namely the re-structuring of the Commission. In this regard the Commission issued a tender for office space and awarded in December 2016. The Commission starts operating from the new offices in March 2017.

The board appointed three sub-committees namely; for research projects chaired by Dr Cheryl Azzopardi and Dr Lara Dimitrijevic, for Training initiatives chaired by Ms Amanda Grech, and for community awareness chaired by Ms Stephanie Fenech.

3. Human Rights and Integration Directorate

During 2016, the Human Rights and Integration Directorate (HRID) dedicated significant attention to the area of gender-based violence. Indeed, a public consultation was launched with regard to a Bill intended to fully implement and exceed the minimum criteria of the Istanbul Convention in national law. Furthermore, two projects were submitted for funding to calls issued by the European Commission to implement the policy and promotional aspect of the Istanbul Convention, and by the end of 2016 both projects had received an approval.



Photo -DOI - Jeremy Wannacott

3.1 THE GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE BILL

In September 2016, the Gender-Based Violence and Domestic Violence Bill was launched for public consultation and following its finalisation by the HRID, it was then, sent to the Attorney General for review. The first reading took place in November, and the parliamentary process will continue once the reviewing process is finalised and the Bill is published in the Government Gazette.

3.2 'FULL COOPERATION: ZERO VIOLENCE'

Following an open call across all Member States by DG Justice, EU Commission, HRID submitted a project application in June 2016. The Ministry for Social Dialogue, Consumer Affairs and Civil Liberties was awarded the project in November 2016. Its implementation is targeted for January 2017 and completed by the end of 2018.

The project intends to:

- a. 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;
- b. 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;
- c. Raise awareness and encourage victims and potential victims, witnesses and bystanders to report violence and seek help through the upgraded services; and
- d. Share lessons learnt in European Union (EU) fora and bilaterally.

3.3 'BREAKING THE CYCLE OF VIOLENCE'

Following an open call across all Member States by DG Justice, EU Commission, HRID submitted a project application in October 2016. The Ministry for Social Dialogue, Consumer Affairs and Civil Liberties was awarded the project in November 2016. Its implementation is targeted for January 2018 and completed by the end of 2019.

The project intends to:

- a. Identify the behaviours and attitudes of victims experiencing violence against women which impede them from breaking free from the cycle of violence;
- b. Raise awareness among vulnerable groups of women with a focus on women with disabilities; migrant women; and lesbian, bisexual, trans and intersex (LBTI) women, and for them to be informed about support services and protection measures;
- c. Raise awareness among children and youths, and actively engage boys and men in the fight against violence against women;
- d. Raise awareness and encourage victims, potential victims and witnesses to report violence against women and seek help;
- e. Develop and implement a set of mentoring workshops for victims who experiencing violence against women to instigate the behavioural changes required in breaking the cycle of violence against women; and
- f. Develop and implement an educational programme for children and young adults on violence against women prevention and spread a clear message of zero tolerance to violence against women.

4. Statistical reporting

The administrative data collection from different sources but in particular the police and the justice system are critical to inform policy-makers whether measures to protect victims of violence and to punish perpetrators are working or not. However differences in definitions and recording can hinder efforts to obtain reliable and comparable data. Therefore, harmonising administrative data collection on victims of intimate partner violence is key to provide a reliable and comprehensive picture of the situation.

The Commission is currently publishing intimate partner violence which compiles data coming from various entities such as the police, department of health, Aġenzija Appoġġ and NGOs. As from January 2017 two courts shall also start

contributing information which is a very important milestone in the development of an integrated data set. However, more needs to be done to ensure that the statistics reach a level of detail that enable an analysis that matches the standards required for policy development and adherence to the legal obligations locally and internationally. In this regard, in 2017 the Commission shall be publishing an analysis of the local situation taking into considerations the various sources of information while comparing the results with other European countries.

In 2016 the Commission on Domestic Violence worked on the harmonised data for year 2015. The resulting data are presented as follows:

Table 1 - SERVICES PROVIDING DATA

Services	Number of Records	Number of Individuals ¹
Malta Police	1195	1107
Domestic Violence Unit, Aġenzija Appoġġ	844	809
Għabex, Aġenzija Appoġġ	45	40
Department of Health	23	23
Dar Merħba Bik	88	80
Dar Qalb ta' Ġesu`	11	11
Victim Support	33	33

Table 2 - NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS BY SERVICE AND GENDER

Services	Gender
Malta Police	942 Females, 253 Males
Domestic Violence Unit (DVU), Aġenzija Appoġġ	787 Females, 22 Males
Dar Għabex, Aġenzija Appoġġ	40 Females
Department of Health	22 Females 1 Male
Dar Merħba Bik	88 Females
Dar Qalb ta' Ġesu`	11 Females
Victim Support Malta	30 Females, 3 Males

¹ This refers to the number of persons who made a report/sought a service at least once.

Table 3 - AGE AND GENDER OF SERVICE USERS AT THE MALTA POLICE

Age	18-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61-70	71-80	81+	Grand Total
Females	257	330	183	115	46	8	3	942
Males	49	69	56	42	29	4	4	253
Grand Total	306	399	239	157	75	12	7	1195

Table 4 - AGE AND GENDER OF SERVICE USERS AT THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE UNIT, AĠENZIJA APPOĠĠ

Age	18-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61-70	71-80	81+	Not specified	Grand Total
Females	137	194	170	105	66	17	4	94	787
Males	4	7	3	2	2	1		3	22
Grand Total	141	201	173	107	68	18	4	97	809

Table 5 - AGE AND GENDER OF SERVICE USERS AT DAR GHABEX

Age	18-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	71-80	81+	Not specified	Grand Total
Females	21	10	7	2	0	0	0	40

Table 6 - AGE AND GENDER OF SERVICE USERS AT DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Age	18-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61-70	71-80	81+	Not specified	Grand Total
Females	7	5	6	3	1	0	0	0	22
Males	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Grand Total	8	5	6	3	1	0	0	0	23

Table 7 - AGE AND GENDER OF SERVICE USERS AT MERHBA BIK

Age	18-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61-70	71+	81+	Not specified	Grand Total
Gender: Females	27	25	18	9	7	2	0	0	88

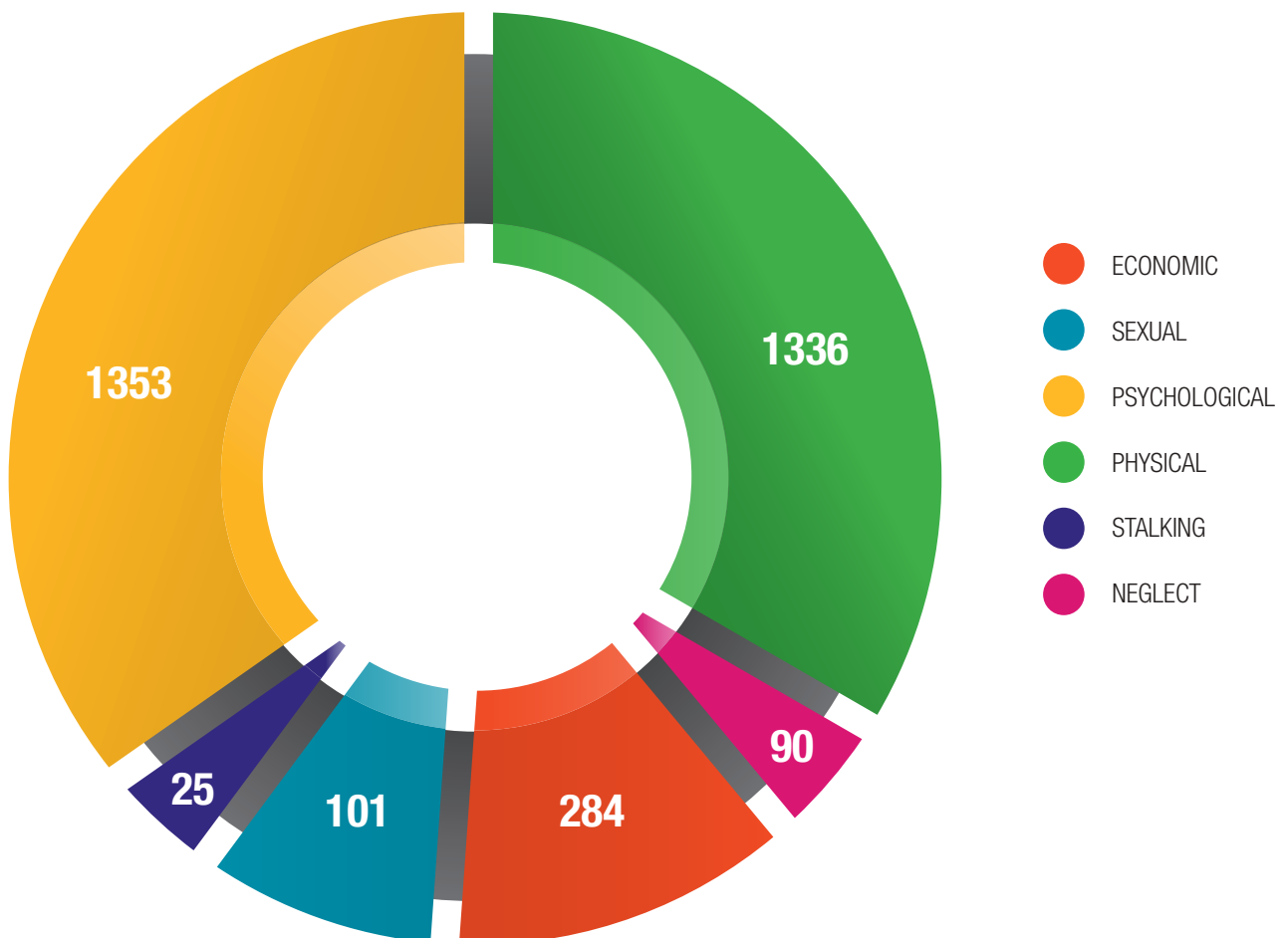
Table 8 - AGE AND GENDER OF SERVICE USERS AT DAR QALB TA' GESU'

Age	18-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61-70	71+	81+	Not specified	Grand Total
Gender: Females	3	2	5	1	0	0	0	0	11

Table 9 - AGE AND GENDER OF SERVICE USERS AT VICTIM SUPPORT

Age	18-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61-70	71-80	81+	Not specified	Grand Total
Females	2	12	7	5	2	0	0	2	30
Males	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	3
Grand Total	3	12	7	7	2	0	0	2	33

Figure 1 - TYPE OF VIOLENCE



5. Research

5.1 OFFICIAL QUESTIONNAIRES

The Commission on Domestic Violence is periodically approached by the relevant authorities to give the National position on domestic violence with regards to various dossiers being discussed at EU Commission or at United Nations meetings. In 2016 the Commission was called upon to submit information to questionnaires by the European Institute on Gender Equality and the Council of Europe.

5.2 FOCUS GROUPS AMONG GOZO STAKEHOLDERS

On the 25th May 2016, a focus group meeting of Gozitan stakeholders was organised to analyse various issues facing the service providers in Gozo and identify possible solutions. The participation was an encouraging one and the findings and recommendations were presented to the Permanent Secretary at MSDC. A number of measures have been taken and in particular improved effective networking with the Maltese counterparts.

5.3 RESEARCH PROPOSALS

Consistent with the main objectives of the operational plan, the board approved the commissioning of two research studies. The first one shall focus on the cost of domestic violence to the Maltese economy. This study has never taken place in Malta but while it offers challenges, the importance of having such information in hand is critical for policy making. The second study is an evaluation of the domestic violence cases that have gone through a particular court in Malta in a specific period of time. This is also a new initiative in Malta and shall give policy makers and researcher an insight of how a domestic violence case develops when appearing before the courts and shall give a clear picture of the trends in sentencing decisions.

5.4 UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' INFORMATION BOOKLET

In addition, the board is aware of the valid contribution that the University students can make to the bank of knowledge in the sector and for this reason the board shall be publishing a booklet for University students with research suggestions for the dissertations and assignments. The booklet was also discussed with the lecturers at the Faculty for Social Wellbeing who are interested in the area and who collaborated to realise this project. The Commission is also offering the library and office resources at the new premises for students to use for their work.



5.5 RESEARCH ON RISK ASSESSMENT TOOLS

Risk assessment is a process of decision-making which enables the professionals particularly the Police Officers to determine the best course of action by estimating, identifying, qualifying and quantifying risk. During a meeting with the Malta Police Force, it was suggested that a domestic violence risk assessment tool would greatly assist them at the first point of contact for reports on domestic violence, as well as, offer a better service to the victims of crime in order to ensure their safety and the most effective handling of the case. A preliminary study was carried out in conjunction with the police officers, on existing and successful risk assessment tools used internationally while contacts with the responsible organisations was established. Following an in-depth study of the literature, the most suitable tool for local use shall be identified and presented to the Police Force. The findings are scheduled to be presented in May of 2017.

5.6 DATA COLLECTION AND COLLATION

The Commission on Domestic Violence works closely with various stakeholders in the collation of data which when harmonised presents a clear picture of the situation of domestic violence in Malta. In view of the various approaches adopted in collecting data by the institutions and NGOs, the process to harmonise the data can be complex. For this reason meetings with all stakeholders were conducted to streamline the process. In this regard the two courts that process most of the domestic violence cases shall be submitting data as from 2017. This closes a lacunae in the way statistics were compiled in the past and is a significant step forward. However the Commission shall continue to enrol more data sources of information in order to keep improving the reporting system.

The collection of data also fulfills the legal obligations of the Istanbul Convention Article 11. For this reason, the Commission is in contact with EIGE the European Institute on Gender Equality to assist in the process of developing a more robust system of data collection. It is envisaged that a seminar on the subject is conducted in Malta in 2017.

The data for 2015 was submitted by the Malta Police Force, Aġenzija Appoġġ, Mater Dei Hospital and Gozo General Hospital, Dar Merħba Bik, Dar Qalb ta' Ġesu` and Victim Support Malta.

5.7 DATA PROTECTION POLICY

A data protection policy agreement in collaboration with the Commission for Information and Data Protection and the Malta Police Force Community and Media Relations Unit (CMRU) was signed to ensure the protection and proper use of the data submitted.



6. Annual Conference

“ Violence against women – Everybody’s business” was the theme of the 2016 annual conference held on the 23rd November. Over 150 participants attended coming from different backgrounds including survivors of domestic violence and representatives of voluntary organisations operating in the sector, as well as, public authorities and entities, professionals, educators, academics, police officers, members of the judiciary and politicians.

The need for closer collaboration through agreed work practices and joint training were highlighted. On the other hand, a solution-oriented approach that is objective-led was described as critical for a meaningful service to victims of domestic violence.

The Hon. Ministers Helena Dalli and Michael Farrugia attended for most of the day. Minister Dalli said that it is time to consider evicting from the matrimonial home the perpetrator of domestic violence instead of moving the victim and her children out of their home. On the other hand, Minister Michael Farrugia made a case in favour of children who witness domestic violence and who need to be assisted to overcome the trauma.

The conference proceedings shall be published in 2017 and shall be accessed from the Commission’s website.





6.1 INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENTS

The staff of the Commission participated in a number of international events namely;

- EIGE: Recommendations for the Improvement of Data collection on Rape, Femicide and Intimate Partner Violence - meeting in Vilnius- Lithuania 14 September 201.
- GEAR: Project GEAR against IPV entitled Building Healthy Intimate Relationships - Conference in Athens, Greece 22-23 September 2016.
- Council of Europe: Meeting on the implementation of the Recommendation on the access of young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods to social rights. Seminar in Strasbourg, France 27-29 September 2016.
- WAVE: The 18th WAVE Annual Conference. Berlin, Germany 19 - 21 October 2016.

7. Talent Management

7.1 TRAINING RESOURCE

Three voluntary organisations namely; Victim Support Malta, St Jeanne Antide Foundation, and Men Against Violence, together with two State entities; Aġenzija Appoġġ and Mental Health Services joined the Training sub-committee to co-ordinate their work and improve the service quality. The main trust of the committee is to offer a more focused and client-led training service to all entities engaged in combatting domestic violence. The committee met several services users namely the Police Force, the Health Authorities and the Chamber of Advocates to assess the training needs but also to identify areas for collaboration. A number of training lacunae were identified and the committee is currently supporting the initiative of the Police Force and the Academy for Disciplined Forces to review their respective curricula. It is planned that the knowledge content on domestic violence increases, as well as, the corresponding skills needed by the officers to identify domestic abuse and handle difficult situations when they arise.



The committee is also facilitating the collaboration between the NGOs and other institutions such as the Health authorities, the Education division and the Judiciary, to capitalise on the local expertise in the sector and access this resource to further improve the competences of the staff with regards to domestic violence issues.

In this regard an agreement was reached with the Judiciary training committee to invite an Austrian expert on the Istanbul Convention to deliver a one day seminar in 2017 on the experience of the Austrian courts of the Istanbul Convention. In view of the request from other professionals, the same seminar shall be repeated for a wider audience.

7.2 PSYCHOLOGY TEAM WITHIN THE MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Mental Health Psychology Services provided training to members of the Police Force regarding domestic violence which commenced in 2015 and continued in 2016. The training was offered to five groups and is still ongoing. Four groups received five sessions of training of two hours each and another group in Gozo received a full day training workshop. The evaluation report showed that refresher courses are needed for the participants while such programs would be of great value for the wider audience in the Force. Psychological support for the Police Officers who face difficult situations on a daily basis, was highlighted.



8. Community Awareness

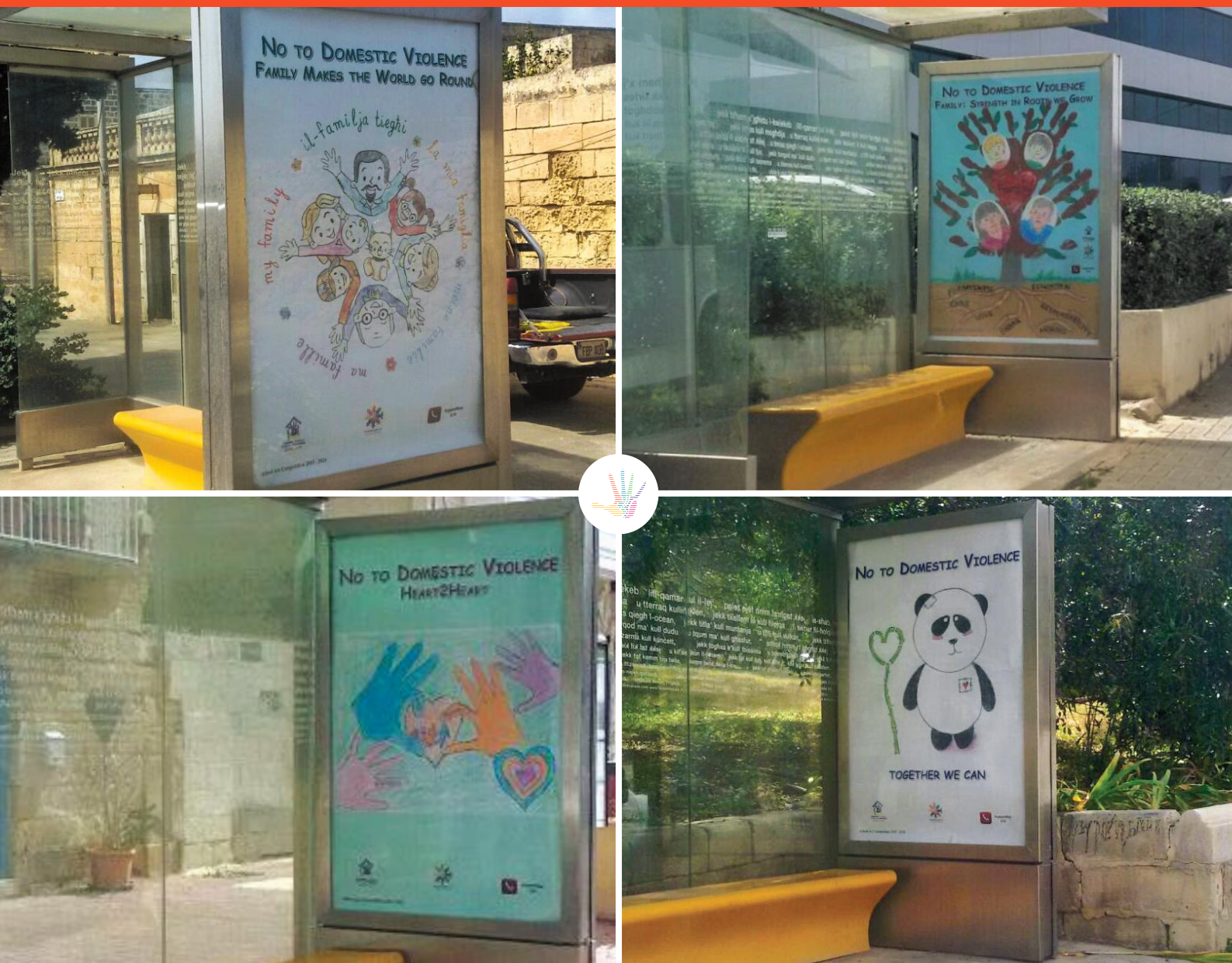
The initial meeting with the Director General of the Department for Local Authorities opened up many possibilities for collaboration. The structured meetings held by the department and the various initiatives taken at the local level are excellent opportunities for synergies. The Commission shall ensure that in all public awareness campaigns, the local authorities are engaged in the process of planning and implementation of such projects.

9. Social Marketing

9.1 BUS SHELTER CAMPAIGN

Influencing attitudes and perception is a core business of the Commission and in 2016 it embarked on a bus shelter campaign to raise awareness about Domestic Violence. The campaign which took place in April 2016 carried 116 adverts which were placed in 116 bus shelters.

The posters were created by students who participated in a school art competition organised by the Commission on Domestic Violence in collaboration with the Commissioner for Children.



9.2 DISTRIBUTION OF INFORMATION MATERIAL

In 2016, a total number of 4150 leaflets were distributed. The “What do I need to know about Domestic Violence?” leaflet which also includes a Maltese version assists victims to access services while ‘Il-Konvenzjoni ta’ Istanbul: Il-Ġlieda kontra l-Vjolenza Domestika’ was developed to inform professionals about the convention and the obligations emanating from the corresponding legislation.

The Commission also distributes thousands of cards with the relevant telephone numbers which are also meant to assist victims to reach out for support quickly, as well as, for professionals who need to refer clients.

The leaflets and cards were distributed to the Health Centres, LEAP and AĊCESS centres, parishes, University of Malta and MCAST, schools and colleges, public entities such as the Police Force, APPOĠĠ agency and an array of non-governmental organisations.



9.3 PARTICIPATION ON THE MEDIA

The Commission made a number of media appearances following invitations from local TV and Radio stations. Some of the invitations cover a period of time that shall run into 2017.

Table 10 - COMMISSION ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ON THE MEDIA

TV and Radio Station	Number of Appearances	Date
Skjetti on TVM	1	25 February 2016
ONE News Feature	1	1 November 2016
ONE Breakfast on ONE TV	1	23 November 2016
Dritt għall-Punt on RTK Radio	1	23 November 2016
ONE Magazine on ONE TV	1	25 November 2016
Familja Waħda on Radju Malta	1	25 November 2016
Sibt il-Punt on ONE Radio	1	26 November 2016
Espresso on ONE TV	1	1 December 2016
Niskata on TVM	1	2 December 2016
Kalamita on ONE TV	1	6 December 2016
Total Number of spots	10	By end of December 2016



9.4 INTERNATIONAL 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

The International 16 days of Activism against Gender-based Violence, that are marked by the United Nations Women, from the 25th November to the 10th December were commemorated by the Commission together with

the NGO Network. The activities included lighting up two prominent places in Malta and one in Gozo, namely Auberge de Castille, Porte de Bombes and the Three Hills fountain in Victoria Gozo. The orange colour was used to light up the places throughout the month, symbolizing the effort to change attitudes on domestic violence.

3000 leaflets were printed in the Maltese language about the Istanbul Convention and distributed during the period.

The media gave considerable support and offered air time to the Commission's board members and NGOs to communicate the message in favour of equality and respect for diversity while highlighting the ills of violence in the family and gender-based violence.

Further awareness and publicity for the 16 days of Activism campaign was carried out through sharing of social media posts on the Commission's facebook page and NGO Network facebook group.

Photo -DOI - Jeremy Wannacott



Photo -DOI - Clifton Fenech



Photo -DOI - George Scerri



10. Shaping positive attitude through education

Educational activities together with social marketing are critical to change attitudes and in Malta there are a number of programmes and initiatives carried by both voluntary organisations and public entities.

10.1 CHILDREN WITNESSING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

On the 30th March 2016, the Commission on Domestic Violence organised a seminar with the theme 'Domestic Violence and Children'. Professionals highlighted the negative effects of domestic violence on children and how professionals can detect this abuse. In this regard, timely and co-ordinated interventions by teachers and social workers were described as critical to stop and possibly avoid further trauma. During this event students were awarded prizes for their participation in the school art competition.

10.2 POSTERS IN SCHOOLS

During the month of April, the Commission on Domestic Violence distributed awareness raising posters to all Primary and Secondary Schools in Malta and Gozo. The images used were created by the students during the art competition. Students were awarded a certificate and a memento for their participation in the competition.

10.3 TEACHER TRAINING

On the 11th July, the Commission on Domestic Violence in collaboration with the Department for Personal Social and Career Development of the Catholic Church Schools, delivered training on Educational modules, from the Expect Respect toolkit by Women's Aid, that provides education against domestic abuse. The programme formed part of the in-service training for teachers.



10.4 TALKS TO PSYCHOSOCIAL PROFESSIONALS

A ġenzija Appoġġ together with the Commission deliver educational talks to school psychosocial professionals, on domestic violence. These talks are meant to support the teaching staff while imparting information and clarifying issues to enable teachers detect domestic abuse affecting their students. These talks shall continue during 2017 while the Commission shall collate the feedback from the participants and feed into policy.

10.5 FRIENDSHIP CARDS

The NGO “Relationships are Forever Foundation” developed the Friendship Cards which consist of an educational tool for primary school children to learn how to express themselves and how to use influence and persuasion as a way of addressing conflict. The Commission sponsored a number of this game for the State schools PSCD teachers. Teacher training is being planned so that this tool shall be used during the scholastic year 2017 / 2018.



10.6 ENTER DIGNITYLAND CARDS

Dignityland cards game is another educational tool developed by the Council of Europe to educate secondary school students about Human Rights. The commission made arrangements so that a quantity of these games are provided to school teachers in Malta. These educational games shall be supplied to the teachers in 2017 and shall also be used during the scholastic year 2017 / 2018.



11. NGO Network

11.1 TOGETHER THEY STAND

Dar Qalb ta' Ġesu', Dar Merħba Bik, Victim Support Malta, Women's Rights Foundation, Men Against Violence, St. Jeanne Antide Foundation, Rainbow Support Service, the Malta Girl Guides and the National Council of Women have joined forces to work together for added effect in facing the problem of domestic violence. Aġenzija Appoġġ, the Mental Health Services and the Police Force are associate members in view of the involvement and contribution to the sector. Since its set up in 2016, the network met four times and registered success in a number of initiatives. Facilitated by the Commission, the network set up a group facebook page to facilitate communication and the dissemination of information. In addition, the Network supported Dar Merħba Bik to organise the solidarity walk on the 4th December 2016. The Commission has also

made available its resources at the new offices to the network.

11.2 DIRECTORY OF SERVICES

Furthermore, the network submitted information about how their services could be accessed. The information shall serve as a directory of services to facilitate access both for the operators and victims of violence. Fourteen entities with a total of twenty service providers feature in this booklet with services ranging from education and awareness; emergency shelter, legal assistance, refuge, training, counselling and assistance with employment. The publication shall be launched in May 2017 and will be accessible from the Commission's website.

Photo -DOI - Jeremy Wannacott



12. Financial Overview

In January 2016, the Commission was allocated a budget of €70,000. The following is a breakdown of the Commission on Domestic Violence's expenditure:

Financial Estimates Vote 17 (5477) Recurrent

Corporate Running Costs

Rent and Maintenance Fees	14,514
Honoraria of members	18,737
Local Transport	158
Overseas Travel	301
Overtime Paid	876
General Expenses	1,511
	<hr/>
	36,097

Social Marketing

Campaigns and Marketing	18,358
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Education and Training

Publications	1,108
Educational Tools	2,040
	<hr/>
	57,603

Projects

Seminar on the effects of DV on children	3,983
National Conference 2016	8,332
	<hr/>

Total Expenditure	69,918
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Income Over Expenditure	82
	<hr/>

Financial Estimate 2016 Vote 5477	70,000
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13. Public socio-medico services

13.1 MATER DEI HOSPITAL

There are a number of services provided in the public sector such as the services of the Emergency and the Gynaecology department that carry out sterling work in treating all the victims of domestic violence that are referred to Mater Dei Hospital especially those experiencing sexual abuse. Alternatively some victims are treated at the health centres when appropriate. However physical treatment is one aspect of caring for the victims, the mental health and social work interventions are other aspects which assist the victim deal with the trauma and re-gain the strength to move on with living.

13.2 AĠENZIJA APPOĠĠ

In 2014, the Domestic Violence Service dealt with 681 cases, 22 of whom were already known to the services. In 2015, DVS dealt with 689 cases, 109 of which were re-contacts. All service users who approached the services were initially assisted by members of staff who cover the intake system.

During the same period, DVS professionals attended to all the court proceedings of the Family Court, presided over by Magistrate Dr Anthony Vella. Service users already known to the DVS and potential service users are being offered support and the opportunity to learn more about the services on offer to both the survivors and the perpetrators of violence.

In order to meet the increasing demands and eliminate the waiting list, additional operational hours were allocated to the DVS throughout 2014 and 2015 to compensate for the loss of operational hours due to family friendly measures.

In 2016, the DVS carried out an internal exercise to determine the number of children witnessing violence reported by the DV service users and the type of interventions carried with these children. A literature review followed the analysis which included an evaluation on the effect of domestic violence on children. As a result two foreign experts were invited to Malta in December to deliver training about 'Engaging victims of domestic violence in working with children who have witnessed traumatic events'.

MANAGING ABUSIVE BEHAVIOUR SERVICES

The Managing Abusive Behaviour Services worked with 84 individuals in 2014, one of whom used the service more than once. Six service users completed the Domestic Abuse Intervention programme, two of whom were court mandated. The remaining service users either stopped reaching out for help or continued to be followed on a one-to-one basis. In 2015, 84 individuals were assisted, out of which 11 service users completed the Domestic Abuse Intervention Programme. Throughout the work with perpetrators, the social workers also collaborated with other professionals of the DVS and kept in touch with the probation officers involved in the respective cases.

A service audit was conducted by the National Audit Office, to evaluate the current service and identify areas for growth and expansion. It was decided to extend the service to Women Who Use Force, as well as, study the relatively new phenomenon of Child to Parent Violence. In fact this phenomenon was identified as an emerging trend and DVS is collaborating with other partners to see how best to address this issue.

GHABEX EMERGENCY SHELTER

During 2014, Ghabex offered shelter to 73 different individuals, five of whom were admitted twice in the same year. In 2015, Ghabex offered shelter to 47 individuals, 6 of which were admitted twice in the same year. Also in 2014, Ghabex accommodated 78 service users

with accompanying children whilst in 2015 Ghabex accommodated 37 service users with children. Residents were normally accommodated following an incident of abuse which would have made it very unsafe for the woman to remain living in the community especially with the perpetrator.

Ghabex is also committed to continue to advocate for better and larger premises so that victims of DV and their children would feel safer. They need to have a physical structure which is more conducive to healing and enhancement of life skills that will further equip them to lead an independent and fruitful life away from domestic violence.

Aġenzija APPOĠĠ manages the supportline 179 which celebrated the 20 anniversary since its launch. On this occasion, the Commission presented a memento in



appreciation for the sterling work conducted by the supportline 179 volunteers and staff, to survivors of domestic violence. In addition, the DVS team participated in various media programs in order to increase awareness and kept regular contact with all stakeholders involved, both to increase awareness and to increase the level of support for victims of domestic violence.

14. The Voluntary Sector

This year's annual report is featuring some of the initiatives and projects undertaken by the voluntary sector. Needless to say the critical role that this sector plays, especially in the areas of awareness raising, the treatment and care of victims and advocacy. In this regard hereunder are some of the highlights during 2016.



14.1 MEN AGAINST VIOLENCE

In 2016, Men Against Violence had the pleasure and privilege of hosting Dr. Michael Flood, an internationally recognised researcher on men, masculinities, and violence prevention. He has made a significant contribution to scholarly and community understanding of men's and boys' involvements in preventing and reducing violence against women and building gender equality. Dr. Flood also is a trainer and community educator with a long involvement in advocacy and education. He has worked with sporting and military organisations, community services, and governments, participated in international expert meetings, and contributed to social change campaigns.

During his stay, Men against Violence organised several workshops and events, all on violence prevention and engaging men and boys in a struggle for gender equality. This included training to over a hundred Education Department staff members and guidance teachers on creating non-violent school environment; a workshop to local NGOs on why involving men is important; a public lecture at University of Malta on why gender equality is good for men and also training sessions for Ambassadors for change of local HeForShe campaign.

14.2 MALTA GIRL GUIDES

In 2016, the Malta Girl Guides had its volunteers trained in the UN Badge curriculum as part of the Stop the Violence project, a non-formal educational programme which is meant to empower girls to pursue their dreams, stand up to their rights, assert equality in relationships and face the challenges with confidence, self-determination and leadership. In July nine teachers were trained in the curriculum and the first group of students from the educational department programme "Għozza" went through the training. Further teacher training is being planned for 2017.

The Female Genital Mutilation issue is one of the priorities of the Girl Guides and in April a conference was organised about the subject followed by a number of resolutions



that were presented to Government on the matter. One of the recommendations was to raise, the age of criminal responsibility for children from 9 to 14 which was eventually accepted and the legislation, amended.

During the year the Malta Girl Guides were active in lobbying for further changes in legislation in particular by the contribution to the consultation process on the new draft bill on domestic violence. Furthermore representations were made with the authorities with regards to the rules regulating the gentlemen's clubs.

In November, the association participated in the local conference entitled 'The Missing Link' in education and submitted a report to the conference on violence and its effect on the education of young people. In solidarity with the victims of domestic violence the Association participated in the walk organised by Dar Merhba Bik on the 4th of December.

14.3 NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN

In view of the consultation process initiated by MSDC in connection with the proposed changes in legislation, NCW submitted a proposal for an integrated, multidisciplinary approach, focusing more on prevention and early detection of violence in the family and gender based violence.

14.4 DAR MERHBA BIK FOUNDATION

I-Bon Pastur as it is commonly known runs the – ‘Dar Merhba Bik’ which is an NGO committed to give survivors of domestic violence a chance to regain their dignity and self-respect, so that they can stand up to their aggressors and look forward to a better life.

‘Dar Merhba Bik’ offers shelter to 14 families at any given time which runs at full capacity almost all year round. Each family is provided with a flatlet and all the necessary amenities to live safely away from abuse. In addition, the family is offered an array of support services including a care plan that best reflects the needs and aspirations of the survivor. The residence also offers recreational facilities which include indoor and outdoor play spaces, as well as, an outdoor gym area.

The residence is often the only safe and serene place that the victims of domestic violence would have experienced for a very long time away from abuse and fear. In 2015, an upgrade of the facilities was initiated. The project includes the upgrading of the surveillance system, a safer entrance to the shelter and a therapeutic section where professionals carry out their work. The project which is supported by funding from the MCCF, M.M.D.N.A. and donations from the public, shall be ready in 2017.

In December “Dar Merhba Bik” co-ordinated the first time ever solidarity-walk from Blata I-Bajda to Castille Place in Valletta. It was one of the very first joint initiatives among the NGOs forming the new network of organisations active in the sector.



14.5 ST JEANNE ANTIDE FOUNDATION

STAFF AND VOLUNTEER TRAINING

SOAR staff have received CPD training and attended seminars and conferences on nine occasions.

Table 11 - SEMINARS, CONFERENCES AND TRAINING ATTENDED IN 2016, ST. JEANNE ANTIDE FOUNDATION

Seminars, Conferences and Training Attended in 2016		
1	SJAF Staff CPD Re: Understanding some of the problems in the systems that provide family support.	22/1/16
2	Forum <i>Sexual Violence in Conflict and Beyond</i> held during the Working Visit of the President of the Republic of Kosovo	28/3/16
3	Commission on Domestic Violence Conference: <i>Domestic Violence and Children</i> .	30/3/16
4	MAV Capacity building. <i>Working With Men: Strategies and Challenges in engaging men in building non-violence and gender equality</i> by Prof. Michael Flood	3-5/4/16
5	SJAF Staff CPD: Human Resources Training: Meetings and Leadership by HRD	16/4/16
6	SJAF Staff CPD: Self Reflective Writing – Jeannie Wright	27/6/16
7	Conference by the Ministry for Social Dialogue, Consumer Affairs and Civil Liberties: The Implementation of the Istanbul Convention (and proposed changes in law).	
8	SJAF Staff CPD – Beginners' First Aid Course.	7-9/11/16
9	Aġenzija Appoġġ - Capacity Building - <i>Engaging victims of DV in working with children who have witnessed traumatic events</i> .	5-7/12/16

TV AND RADIO

Table 12 - SOAR, TV AND RADIO IN 2016

TV and Radio in 2016		
1	Radju Santa Katarina – Breakfast Show	15/1/16
2	Net TV - Elle	29/2/16
3	TVM 2 – Qalb In-Nies	10/5/16
4	Radio 101 – Opportunitajiet Indaq	6/8/16
5	Radju Hompesch – Bejn Erbgħa ħitan	25/8/16
6	Radju Hompesch – Bejn Erbgħa ħitan	22/9/16

SOAR has participated in awareness-raising TV appearances and Radio shows. The organisation made six media appearances in 2016.

NETWORKING AND COLLABORATION

SOAR staff have participated in 25 networking meetings with other NGOs and NGO networks, state agencies, commissions and institutions and the Malta Police Force. SOAR often collaborates with Men Against Violence, Women's Rights Foundation, Victim Support Malta, Merhba Bik Foundation, Dar Qalb ta' Ġesu, Aġenzija Appoġġ DVU through the NGO network facilitated by the Commission on Domestic Violence.



ART THERAPY

During the second phase of the project *My Survival, My Experience*, 8 survivors participated in ten Art Therapy sessions, facilitated by Ms Jeanette Fiott. With some of the art that emerged from the art therapy sessions was used to illustrate the book *Phoenix Rising – starting over after domestic violence*. The book brings together the survivors' experiences of systemic oppression and re-victimisation and transform it into a tool for advocacy and awareness raising.



PHOENIX RISING – STARTING OVER AFTER DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

The end product of the project “My Survival, My Experience” was the publishing of the book Phoenix Rising. This is a distinctive book about the journey of surviving domestic violence, as told by the survivors themselves.

The nine chapters in the book immerse readers in the turbulent world of violence, manipulation, desperation and struggle. It is a showcase of the incredible courage of survivors and their underlying determination to overcome systemic obstacles and pursue a life of dignity, free of violence.

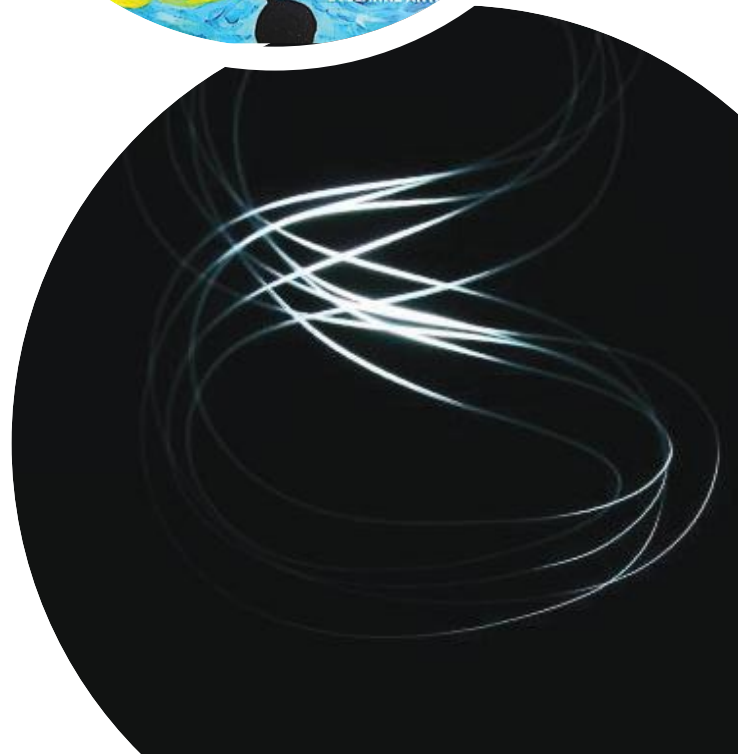
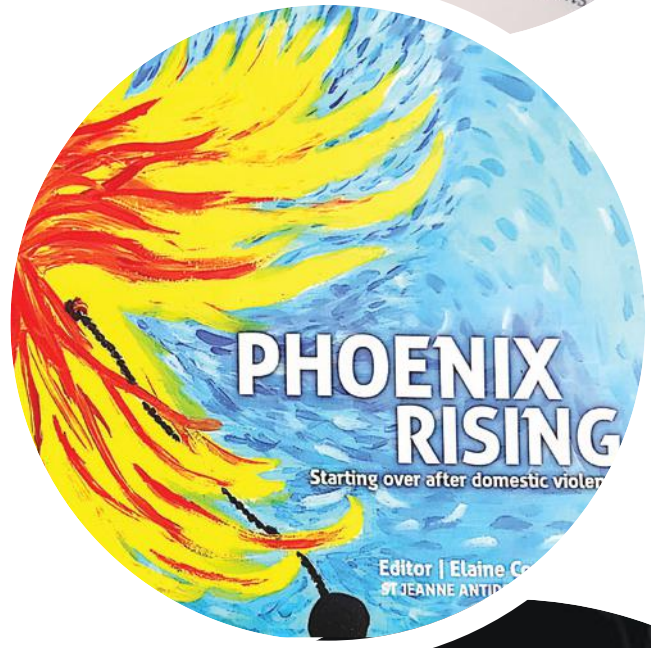
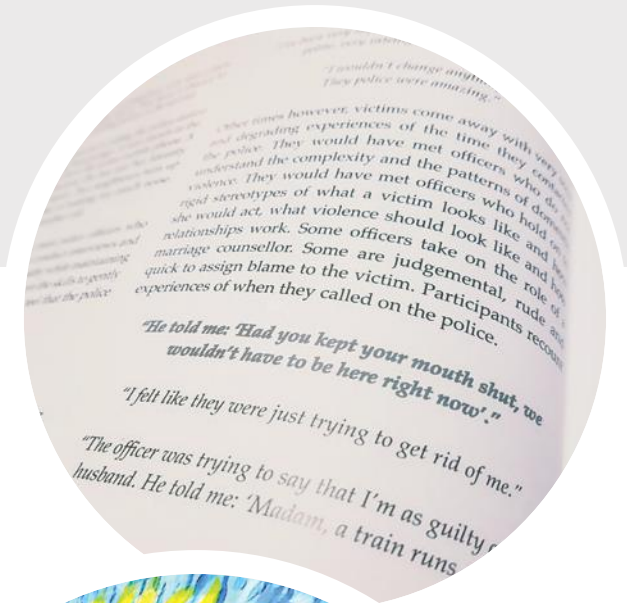
The book has 22 in-depth interviews and 15 focus group meetings that explore the collective experience of surviving domestic violence. It discusses common themes such as the experiences at the police station, experiences at the Courts of law, becoming homeless, the effects of financial violence, the effects of mediation and final separation.

The book offers a list of policy recommendations driven and presented by the survivors during the SOAR National Conference held in December 2015.

CREATE, LIBERATE, INTEGRATE!

In November, SOAR launched a new project titled Create, Liberate, Integrate! The project is being implemented over a period of 12 months. The creative skills sharing project will involve marginalised women, including migrant women and third country nationals, who are survivors of gender-based violence, and their teenage or young children. The project will consist of a number of therapeutic short programmes based on creativity and skills sharing. It aims to create a safe space where women and children can connect emotionally for healing, integration and improved interpersonal relationships.

The above images are an example of the photography that emerged in the first activity of the project. The Arts Council Malta and the President’s Award for Creativity are supporting the project.



14.6 DAR QALB TA' ĠESU` - PROGRAMM SEBH

Dar Qalb ta' Ġesu` is an NGO which offers a programme (Programm Sebħ) supporting women/mothers and their children/adolescents who experienced domestic violence in their homes. It is the only second stage shelter for these families after their initial stay at an emergency shelter.

Programm Sebħ offers a therapeutic holistic approach by a team of professionals. Once the family is referred to the shelter by Appoġġ social worker, the family is allocated to a small flat-let within the shelter. This will give more privacy to families so as to focus on their respective care plans while supported by a residential key worker throughout their stay. Once families leave the shelter they are offered a six month follow-up for further support in settling back into community.

Programm Sebħ offers:

- Living in a safe, protected environment,
- Support with emotional/psychological matters,
- Support in parenting skills,
- Support in Budgeting skills and Home Management skills,
- Support in further Self –Awareness,
- Support in legal matters,
- Support in Employment skills,
- Support with alternative accommodation close to their termination stay at the shelter,
- Support to children and Adolescents,
- Organizing social events and activities,
- Support in Spirituality.

14.7 VICTIM SUPPORT MALTA

Throughout 2016, Victim Support Malta remained at the forefront in calling upon the authorities to take concrete measures to implement the Victims' Rights Directive and the ensuing Victims of Crime Act 2015. VSM continued to offer its psycho-social support and legal support to victims of crime, mostly victims of domestic violence. VSM also provided training to participants of the RISE service, aimed at offenders serving the final part of their sentence, on the impact of crime on victims and society.

Victim Support Malta coordinates the Care for Victims of Sexual Assault, formerly known as SART. The aim of such services is to provide care which is as holistic and victim-centred as possible. The team operates on a 24 hour a day, 7 day a week on call basis from Mater Dei Hospital. In 2016, VSM supported a total of 36 victims of rape and/or sexual assault mainly by supporting victims through the provision of legal representation and therapeutic services. In addition, VSM worked on raising awareness on this problem and is active in dispelling myths and stereotypes. This was done through the production of videos disseminated on social media, writing and publishing of various articles, as well as, various informative posters and flyers while offering training to various stakeholders.





Commission on Domestic Violence, Continental Business Centre, Old Railway Track, St Venera.

Tel 2247 3100 **Email** domesticviolence@gov.mt