



MINISTRY FOR JUSTICE,  
EQUALITY AND GOVERNANCE

## Breaking the Cycle of Violence



### **Training Pack for Migrant Women**

*Facilitators: Umayma Elamin Amer  
Diana Tudorancea*



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

## MESSAGE

The project *Breaking the Cycle of Violence* is co-financed by the Rights, Equality and Citizenship (REC) Programme of the European Union and builds on a previous project *Full Cooperation: Zero Violence* with the same theme. The project is aimed to complement Malta's plan of action to implement the Istanbul Convention, with the objective to raise awareness among victims of domestic violence as well as potential victims, with a particular focus on women with disabilities, LGBTI women and migrant women.

The identified objectives of this project were: 1) to carry out research in order to identify behaviours of target groups which need to be changed in order to break the cycle of violence; 2) to develop and implement an educational programme for children and young adults; 3) to raise awareness among the different target groups on violence prevention, victims' rights and support services available to them; and 4) to develop and implement mentoring workshops for victims of violence in a second stage shelter and female survivors who receive support services from the national agency.

These training packs are aimed to ensure the sustainability of the project and may thus be replicated. They include an outline and resources for eight mentoring workshops – which tackle topics such as self-awareness, communication and empowerment amongst others – and two one-to-one sessions. They also include recommendations based on an ongoing evaluation of the sessions themselves.

Despite the success in these sessions, they should not be viewed from a one-size-fits-all perspective. This project in fact tried to shift away from this approach by addressing the different needs of the different target groups identified for this project. Therefore, these training packs shall act as a guidance and may be tailored to suit the needs of a different audience.

Finally, let's hope that this training pack will serve as a practical tool that will break the cycle of violence.

**Commissioner on Gender-based Violence and Domestic Violence**

**Audrey Friggieri**



# Table of contents

1	Introduction .....	5
2	Objectives .....	6
3	Summary .....	7
3.1	Training Sessions: .....	7
3.1.1	Session 1: Gender Stereotypes .....	7
3.1.2	Session 2: Types of Violence .....	7
3.1.3	Session 3: Legal services provided in host community .....	7
3.1.4	Session 4: Conclusion .....	7
3.2	One-to-one mentoring sessions: .....	7
3.3	Certificate Award Ceremony:.....	7
4	Sessions .....	8
4.1	Session 1: Gender Stereotypes .....	8
4.1.1	Objectives of the session .....	8
4.1.2	Description .....	8
4.2	Session 2: Types of Violence .....	11
4.2.1	Objectives of the session .....	11
4.2.2	Description .....	11
4.3	Session 3: Legal services provided in host community .....	13
4.3.1	Objectives of the session .....	13
4.3.2	Description .....	13
4.4	Session 4: Conclusion .....	15
4.4.1	Objectives of the session .....	15
<b>4.4.2</b>	<b>Description .....</b>	<b>15</b>
5	One-to-one Sessions.....	16
6	Observations and recommendations .....	17

6.1	Facilitators observations:.....	17
6.1.1	Intercultural trainer .....	17
6.1.2	Mental health Trainer.....	18
7	Resources.....	19

# 1 Introduction

Established on 15 April 2015, the Migrant Women Association Malta is an independent non-profit organization, whose main priority is to enable the empowerment and harmonious integration of migrant women in the Maltese Islands.

As representatives and members of the female migrant community, we aim to:

- Facilitate migrant women to empower themselves and realise their full potential, including their right to a place of their choosing in Maltese society.
- Raise awareness of the challenges faced by migrant women, their needs, and the positive contributions that they make to Maltese society and culture every day.
- Promote intercultural dialogue, tolerance, and understanding between all migrant and Maltese communities.
- Challenge those in power to adopt policies and behaviour that advocate for migrant women, to enable economic, social, and cultural equity between communities.

## 2 Objectives

MWAM is a partner of the EU co-funded project 'Breaking the Cycle of Violence', with the Ministry for European Affairs and Equality, which aims to educate & raise awareness on violence.

MWAM embarked on this project to raise awareness about the harm that gendered stereotypes can do in every culture that has expectations of how men and women should act, or what roles they should fill in society. Fulfilling the roles expected by the community can be satisfying and can give women a sense of belonging. But, these roles can also limit a woman's activities and choices, and make her feel less valued than a man. When this happens, every woman, her family, and her community suffers.

MWAM has been working closely with migrant women in Malta since 2015, and the largest ethnic group of migrant women who approached MWAM came from a background where women are expected to be wives and mothers. Many women like this role because it can be culturally respected, and it gives them status in the community. However, some women would prefer to follow other interests, and if the communities do not give them the right to choose, migrant women are being given fewer opportunities to learn new skills and gain an education.

Our program consisted of four sessions. The main objectives for this training were as follows:

- to raise migrant women's awareness of sexual and gender-based violence
- to provide a space to discuss the topic and share ideas
- to break the cycle of silence on violence within migrant women communities
- to provide information for migrant women who might experience abuse on how to report an incident and the services that can help them in Malta

## 3 Summary

### 3.1 Training Sessions:

#### 3.1.1 *Session 1: Gender Stereotypes*

The first session aims to introduce the topic and is focused on building and maintaining a space with a culture of trust. A good relationship with the participants is essential to ease the discussion of sensitive topics, especially considering the need to be aware of cultural differences.

#### 3.1.2 *Session 2: Types of Violence*

The second session aims to deconstruct tacit justifications of violence which silence women. This aim was achieved by speaking about different kinds of violence.

#### 3.1.3 *Session 3: Legal services provided in host community*

The third session aims to present women's rights and give information and means to react against gender-based violence within migrant communities.

#### 3.1.4 *Session 4: Conclusion*

The fourth session aimed to conclude our project by completing our post-training survey and clarifying some points with the target group.

### 3.2 One-to-one mentoring sessions:

Women taking part of the seminar also attended one-to-one mentoring sessions with trained professionals.

### 3.3 Certificate Award Ceremony:

A seminar will be held to bring together NGOs working in the field of VAW and DV. Participants will exchange information and knowledge about their experience of the mentoring workshops. Certificates will also be awarded to all the participants.

## 4 Sessions

### 4.1 Session 1: Gender Stereotypes

The first session aims to introduce the topic and is focused on building and maintaining a space with a culture of trust. A good relationship with the participants is essential to ease the discussion of sensitive topics, especially considering the need to be aware of cultural differences.

#### 4.1.1 *Objectives of the session*

- Introduce a pre-training questionnaire that measures gender and violence beliefs and to establish a baseline against which to measure training impact;
- Acknowledge the presence of gender stereotypes in the day to day life of migrant women, develop their understanding of the triggers and the effects of gender stereotypes;
- Define gender stereotypes as a generalised or biased description of a group, which can become harmful when they are used to oversimplify or constrain the roles and abilities of both men and women;
- Enable migrant women to understand that stereotypes are often recognized as being illogical even though many people still believe them, and that this might have an effect on behaviour and the choices one makes in life;
- Encourage migrant women to speak out and break the cycle of silence to hear about their experiences, allowing them to share their knowledge, discuss problems and offer suggestions.

#### 4.1.2 *Description*

##### 1. General introduction (presentation and survey):

- Introduction about MWAM's mission and vision for the participants.
- Short briefing about the training.



- Ask the participants to tell us a few basic facts about themselves, their name, where they come from, and their nickname as a great way to spice up the training in order to make the participants feel more comfortable.
2. Provide a broad definition of beliefs and attitudes concerning the abilities of women compared to men and propose reality testing for each belief introduced. Establish whether certain beliefs about gender differences are based on reality. One example is that women are more caring than men. Ask participants to list other examples of characteristics that are often associated with either gender, in order to elicit a broader spectrum of belief range: women or men. Together with the participants, develop a list of such stereotypes and encourage them to think about whether or not these beliefs might influence:
- The way they feel about themselves as women
  - What they believe they are capable of
  - What goals they set for themselves
  - The jobs that men hold, and women ‘should’ hold in their community.
  - Ask if there are jobs that both men and women hold.
  - What it means to be a woman, or what characteristics are associated with men and women.

As a trainer, this step should allow for an initial understanding of where the group is in terms of their belief system, how aware they are of biases and how comfortable they are in sharing such biases with the trainer.

As the trainer, it is an essential part of this step to develop a rapport and understanding with the class and re-evaluate the depth of training according to overall willingness to accept the exercise.

In cultures with rigid gender stereotypes, participants may feel disinclined to admit that gender stereotypes can even be harmful or that different attitudes about men and women’s role can be anything but normal. The level of resistance is to be directly interpreted by the trainer.

3. Gender Stereotype exercise:

The participants had to decide whether they agreed with (yes), disagreed with (no), or had no opinion on the statements below.

The statements used are as following:

- Being a waiter is a job for men only
- Construction is a job for men only
- Being a chef is a job for men only
- Being a housewife is a job for women only

4. Stories with questions:

The exercise contains three learning stories with the questions below:

- Do you think power creates violence?
- Do you think people use power in a good or bad way?
- Who has more power: men or women?

The first session was concluded by reminding the participants how these stereotypes can affect everyone's life.

## 4.2 Session 2: Types of Violence

The second session aims to deconstruct tacit justifications of violence which silence women. This aim was achieved by speaking about different kinds of violence.

### 4.2.1 *Objectives of the session*

- Describe something which is taboo within a particular group or community, which prohibits or restricts the discussion of SGBV;
- Create a space for victims and survivors of gender-based violence to recognise and understand their struggle;
- Raise awareness between participants to understand the concept of gender-based violence;
- Recognising the distinct forms of violence and abuse;
- Create understanding of violence and other forms of abuse as a pattern of behaviour intended to establish and maintain control over family, household members, intimate partners, colleagues, individuals, etc.;
- Identify different risk factors for gender-based violence within the life of migrant women in Malta;
- Recognize behavioural warning signs of violence in participants' experience.

### 4.2.2 *Description*

The session provided information about the types of the violence to overcome the general narrow public perception of gender based violence as only a physical assault that results in visible injuries to the victim. There are several categories of abusive behaviour, each of which has its own devastating consequences. Domestic violence has incredibly harmful impacts on the life and development of migrant women in Malta. The general message of the speech was that violence is not the victim's fault. An explanation about construction of violence was given to the target. This explanation included a representation of balance of power in relationships.

1. General words about violence
2. Speak about five types of sexual and gender-based violence:

The speech concerned five kinds of violence, including sexual violence, physical violence, emotional and psychological violence, traditional but harmful practices, and socio-economic violence.

### 3. Exercises:

To give the target group an opportunity to express themselves about violence in a safe and welcoming environment. Two exercises composed this part of the session.

#### a) Exercise 1: stories of progressive levels of violence

Come up with stories and put the migrant women in the picture. Use the story to discuss, not on a personal level, but in general.

- i) Subtle: Sexual harassment on the street; catcalling (a woman walks past a construction place and the workers start to call and whistle), discrimination at work (your boss will not renew your contract because you are pregnant).
- ii) Medium: Sexual harassment at work (your male colleague is walking past you in a narrow hallway and touches your hips to push you aside), not being able to answer the phone when you want (your husband insists you to use your phone when he wants you to use it and insists that you share all phone calls and messages with him), having 'controlled' contact (your husband tells you with whom you may stay in touch and with whom you shouldn't stay in touch).
- iii) Extreme: physical domestic violence (your husband does not agree with you on an opinion and he grabs you aggressively and locks you up in the bathroom). You can make it more 'fun'; stick three pieces of papers 'ok' , 'not ok' and 'neutral' in the room and ask women to go to 'their' opinion in the room and ask why things are ok and not ok.

#### b) Exercise 2: role play (power / object / observer)

Role play about the concept of having the power over someone else. You can do it in pairs or in three (roles: object, observer, person). The person who has the power has to insist on the 'object' doing something the person in power wants her to do. The observer cannot interfere, and the 'object' has to obey.

Question at the end: how does it feel to have power? And how does it feel to obey and not say no? How does it feel to be an observer? And then you explain how this works in society as well.

### 4.3 Session 3: Legal services provided in host community

The third session aims to present women's rights and give information and means to react against gender-based violence within migrant communities.

#### 4.3.1 *Objectives of the session*

- Introduce two organisations to the target group as free legal service provider in Malta;
- Inform women of their rights;
- Inform target group to their rights related to their specific status;
- Develop good communication between the target group and these organisations.

#### 4.3.2 *Description*

The third session consisted in giving an overview of the solutions existing on the ground to those experiencing violence. Two organisations, both forming part of the Platform of Human Rights Organisations in Malta (PHROM), the first national network of NGOs striving to promote human rights. PHROM provides a national forum for human rights organisations in Malta, to develop, promote and advocate for the values of human dignity and equality.

##### 1. Legal services for women (Women's Rights Foundation)

The first step was the presentation of the women's rights provided by Lara Dimitrijevic, Director of the Women's Rights Foundation. Women's Rights Foundation (WRF) is a voluntary organisation committed to informing, educating and empowering women concerning their legal rights.

This presentation gave an overview of rights available to women and was meant to give an overview of available solutions to the target group. This included the legal services that are available for women specifically who go through gender based violence, including a brief description of the legal services provide by the foundation itself, and other services available

in Malta. The time following the presentation was dedicated to questions and discussions about different aspects tackled during the presentation.

## 2. Legal services for migrant women (ADITUS)

The second presentation was provided by the director of the Aditus Foundation, Dr. Neil Falzon. Aditus Foundation is a non-governmental organisation established in 2011 with a mission to monitor, report and ensure access to human rights in Malta. Their work promotes a society where all persons are able to access and enjoy all their fundamental human rights, and access to justice and remedies should be provided in case of violations. Their focus is primarily in Malta, but they also work towards highlighting the regional & international dimensions.

This presentation provided an introduction about the organisation and an insight of legal services that can be provided to migrant women. The time following the presentation was dedicated to questions and discussions about different aspects tackled during the presentation.

It's essential to develop an initial understanding of the approach towards women's rights in collaboration with the organisations, in order to foster collaboration and develop a mutual understanding as to what constitutes women's rights, how they can be safeguarded, and what to do in case of a breach.

Bringing additional translated material, infographics, and contact numbers for the participants to take home may be useful as a way to disseminate information. Placing additional focus on specific breaches of one's rights, such as FGM and honour killings, deprivation of employment etc., would create a more group targeted approach. Indicate and emphasize heavily that a breach of any such rights constitutes a form of violence against women.

#### 4.4 Session 4: Conclusion

The fourth session, aimed to conclude our project by completing our post-training survey and clarifying some points with the target group.

##### 4.4.1 *Objectives of the session*

Enable migrant women to understand that:

- Gender-based violence is a phenomenon deeply rooted in gender inequality, therefore it is not only link to the culture or the dynamic of a specific society;
- Gender based violence is one of the most notable human rights violations within all societies;
- Gender-based violence is violence directed against a person because of their gender;
- Both women and men experience gender-based violence but the majority of victims are women and girls;
- Using the ‘gender-based’ aspect is important as it highlights the fact that many forms of violence against women are rooted in power inequalities between women and men.

##### 4.4.2 *Description*

1. Completion of the survey – For efficacy reasons, survey questions translated/interpreted by the trainers.
2. Ask some questions as an effective way to measure the feedback and the information that the participants gained through the training;
3. Raise some points that can help to explore more techniques how to approach more migrant women specifically the survivors of gender-based violence to provide the help and the support needed.
4. End the training by thanking the participants, trainers and the organiser.

## **5 One-to-one Sessions**

Each participant attended a 2-hour individual tutorial with one of the trainers to further discuss the training sessions as well as anything they wished.



## 6 Observations and recommendations

- The training provided MWAM the opportunity to expand its skills and therefore positive outreach, by being able to deliver this training directly to the community.
- The training also enabled the team to gain experience in time management during the session, including the translation service.
- It also allowed the trainers to learn new techniques and tools for discussing any sensitive topics.
- It allowed MWAM to explore and improve techniques for creating stories and games during the session to maintain focus and enthusiasm from the participants and trainers.
- It is very important to take translations into consideration in designing the training, e.g. translation of any document, especially, if there are varied English levels within the group.
- The survey needs to be designed in a manner which is appropriate for the group undertaking the training.
- The training also allowed for some of the group to become trainers themselves, further increasing the positive impact of these sessions.

### 6.1 Facilitators observations:

#### 6.1.1 *Intercultural trainer*

“Since this was my first time training in a project about gender-based violence and also coming from the same background as the participants, this has given me the opportunity to:

- Enhance my personal training and translation techniques;
- Build trust with the participants;
- Motivate me to learn more about the subject;
- To not be biased especially because of the fragility of the topic;
- Encourage me to be comfortable with my thoughts and emotions;
- Work on bettering myself while train the survivors of gender-based violence;
- To be aware of the message that meant to be delivered when translated;
- To be aware of the impact of my emotions on the participants;

- To make use of the training to develop my skills to become a professional in this field of work in the coming future.”

### 6.1.2 *Mental health Trainer*

“As a trainer, and as a S/GBV worker, the impression that constantly comes through is one of resistance to any input in relation to violence against women. During the training, despite the expertise that was brought forward from the trainers, despite the knowledge, they were regularly contested and what constitutes a form of vulnerability to S/GBV was particularly refuted.

Barring women from work as opposed to house and child rearing duties was met with the most resistance, and even the ensuing conversation was very confrontational. This happened for a number of reasons

- Many of the participants were leading the same lifestyle, or had been leading the same lifestyle and took personal offence;
- Cultural norms that still dictate the ‘duties’ of each spouse when it comes to house management and child rearing duties;
- Misunderstanding of the scope and context in which barring women from work would happen.

To my eyes this highlighted the differences in approach when attempting to open a conversation on gender-based violence. The wider intercultural context in which a conversation on gender needs to be taken into account. Regardless of the presence of interpreters and cultural mediators, the presence of western born or western raised trainers could be seen condescending, or lack of cultural awareness. In the context of socially oppressed groups, this trainer - trainee dynamic tends to be rather sensitive unless tackled with complete openness. A very good approach was to put forward the mental health element of the aftereffects of S/GBV and with regards to key sensitive moments, to try and understand why the trainees would be resistant. It’s important to emphasize that there is no ‘right’ way to avoid violence because violence is not the fault of the victim, it’s important to encourage trainees to think about a number of different scenarios on S/GBV vulnerability and encourage them to think of what would most expose a woman to compounding after effects. Of course, frustration is inherent to all such activities when the underlying reason is not explored properly and may jeopardize the training itself if not tackled properly.”

## **7 Resources**

1. Link 1
2. Link 2