

## **Focus groups organized by DASM within the “Time for Change: Evidence based research for new practice approaches” activity in “The Other Side of the Story: Perpetrators in Change” (OSSPC) project**

The Social and Medical Services Directorate of Cluj-Napoca (DASM), partner in the consortium that implements "The Other Side of the Story: Perpetrators in Change" (OSSPC) project, organized, between 4-6 November 2020, three online focus groups with 30 participants, specialists in the field of domestic violence and in that of working with perpetrators.

The focus groups aimed to assess the need for programs for specialists to work with perpetrators to reduce the perpetuation of domestic violence in Romania, to understand the circumstances in which these programs operate, and to share good practice models and methods of working with perpetrators.

During the discussions, the following aspects were highlighted:

- ❖ **the need to develop and increase the number of prevention programs** (early education programs in schools on topics related to violence, bullying and preparation for couple life; increasing media involvement in changing the mentality on the phenomenon of domestic violence, decreasing tolerance regarding domestic violence, focusing on informing the community about existing solutions and services);
- ❖ **the need to approach the issue of domestic violence from a dual perspective, both from the victim and from the perpetrator** (increasing the number of centres for victims of domestic violence and of sheltered apartments, setting up centres for working with perpetrators in each city, creating new positions in the organizational structures of public institutions, hiring staff and training specialists in the field of working with perpetrators, developing training programs in the field of domestic violence and of working with the perpetrators, developing clear procedures in working with perpetrators and integrated interventions of the specialists involved, working in multidisciplinary teams);
- ❖ **the need to increase the responsibility of the main actors** (teachers/educators, doctors, priests, the police, social-work staff) **in recognizing/identifying and reporting, as early as possible, situations of abuse/domestic violence, strengthening collaboration protocols between various public and private institutions** (police, court, psychiatry, social services, nurseries/ kindergartens/schools, doctor's offices, day care centres for children, etc.) **and the operationalization of existing services** (mobile emergency response teams and/or monitoring the compliance with protection orders with the support of electronic brackets);

- ❖ **the existence of some legislative gaps** (lack of gradual punishments applied to perpetrators, the optional and accessory character of the disposition, by the court, of the obligation of perpetrators to attend a program of psychological counselling, the existence of some inconsistencies in the intervention in situations of child abuse and in the legal provisions regarding the situations of sexual acts with minors).

The focus groups organized by DASM had as participants representatives of: *The Department for Crime Analysis and prevention* (The Cluj County Police Inspectorate); *The Police, The Prosecutor's Office attached to the Cluj Court*; *The Cluj Probation Service*; *Vivad Association* and *The Romanian Mediators Institution* (Cluj-Napoca); *The research and prevention center in domestic and social violence* (Babeş-Bolyai University); *The counseling center for preventing and combating domestic violence* („Comunitatea VeDe” Project, ADI-ZMC); *Adult Case Management Department, Domestic Violence, Elderly Assistance* (DGASPC Cluj -The County General Directorate of Social work and Child protection); *The Emergency shelter for victims of domestic violence* (DGASPC Cluj); *The County intervention center for abused children* (DGASPC Cluj), *The Center for preventing and combating violence in families* (DASM Cluj-Napoca), *The Child and family protection department* (DASM Cluj-Napoca); *The Assistance center for family perpetrators* (Cugir); *The Assistance center for family perpetrators “O nouă şansă”*, (DGASMB Bucureşti); *The Complex of Services for Victims of Domestic Violence and Perpetrators* (DAS Timişoara), *The Assistance center for the perpetrator* (DGASPC Bucureşti, sector 5), *The Aiud Prison*; *Transcena Association* (Braşov); *The counselling center for perpetrators* (Baia Mare) and a psychotherapist, volunteer collaborator of DASM Cluj-Napoca.

***The aim of the OSSPC project is to prevent further domestic violence and change violent behavioral patterns by increasing the capacity of frontline workers that will further teach perpetrators of domestic violence to adopt non-violent behavior in interpersonal relationships and understand the impact of domestic violence on the them, their family and community.***

The project is being implemented between 1.05.2020-30.04.2022 by a consortium consisting of: The Association for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in the Family (Cyprus) as **coordinator** and their **partners**, Bournemouth University (UK), Centro di Ascolto Uomini Maltrattanti Onlus- (Italy), The Union of Women Associations of Heraklion Prefecture (Greece), European Knowledge Spot (Greece) and The Social and Medical Services Directorate of Cluj-Napoca (Romania).

For additional information regarding the project activities, you can contact us at the e-mail address:  
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