

Achievements and Impact of the Project “Life Without Fear”

1. The Crisis Centre “Ekaterina”’s Perspective

The report by the Amnesty International Russian Federation: **Nowhere to turn to: Violence against women in the family** (14/12/2005)

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/EUR46/056/2005/en/dom-EUR460562005en.pdf>, states that existing Criminal Justice System in Russia does not provide an adequate protection for women victims of domestic violence. According to the report Justices of Peace have poor awareness of domestic violence. The court systems lack mechanisms of providing support for victims and for prevention of this crime, resulting in limited opportunities for victims to get justices. An alleged perpetrator of violence against women in the family, charged with a criminal offence, has the right to free legal representation, the victim, in the form of a private complainant (“private charge” cases), usually does not get free legal advice.

Our Russian-British project “Protecting the Rights of Women and Children Experiencing Domestic Violence: Supporting Women through the court system” began in April 2006. At this time everything in the Amnesty International Report was a true reflection of real situation. Now we observe are significant changes/improvements to the situation in Sverdlovsk Area and in the regions where the Coalition of Crisis Centre of the Ural-Siberian Region operates.

1. First Domestic Violence training programmes for Russian Justices of Peace were developed including training manuals “Life Without Fear” for judges, advocates and other professionals who deal with domestic violence issues as part of their duties.
2. First time in Russia 220 judges (mainly Justices of Peace) and 127 advocates (mainly members of the Sverdlovsk Regional Guild of Lawyers) have been trained using new DV programmes. Court statistics for the last few years was above all expectations.
3. First time ever in Russia a regional conference on domestic violence was held with the support of Regional Government and it was held in the Government Offices.
 - First time the conference on DV was attended by representatives of the all Criminal Justice System agencies, including prosecutors.
 - First time conference was organised jointly by government and non-government organisations.
 - The conference was truly multi-agency, there was input and speeches from all law enforcement agencies, The Regional Court, Ministry of Social Protection of Sverdlovsk Are, Regional Council who deal with prevention of all types of crime, NGOs from the whole regional and those who are members of the Coalition of the Crisis Centres of the Ural Siberian Region.
 - The conference included high profile participants from United Kingdom with lots of experience in the field, who demonstrated government approach to domestic violence in Britain and also described the work of the voluntary sector and multi-agency approach adopted in UK.

- A conference booklet containing all presentations was published on completion of the conference. It was delivered to CJS agencies of the region, The Regional Court, members of the Coalition of the Crisis Centres of the Ural-Siberian Region and British partners. The booklet contains a resolution for the future work on this problem adopted by all agencies and organizations which took part in the conference.

4. As part of the project the Coalition of the Crisis Centres of the Ural-Siberian Region further developed and now has 24 members organizations from 6 areas (oblasts) of Urals and Western Siberia – district covering population of over 10m people. The project helped to deliver training for newly formed crisis centres. The lessons of the projects were distributed to all members of the coalition. More than 270 staff members of the crisis centers attended the seminars, training sessions and conferences organized within the project. Some of them had an opportunity to share knowledge directly with British partners.

5. First time in Russia the Research Booklet containing different pieces of research on Domestic Violence “Domestic Violence: Monitoring and Analysis on the example of Sverdlovsk Area, Russia”. The research was developed and lead by the voluntary organization, the Crisis Center “Ekaterina” with the help of the volunteers and experts - great supporters in the fight against domestic violence and protecting the rights of victims. The major part of the research booklet was compiled as part of the project “Protecting rights of women and children experiencing domestic violence. Supporting women through the court system”. The Crisis Centre “Ekaterian” is grateful for help and support of our British colleagues and partners – staff of the Haven Wolverhampton and the Big Lottery Fund (UK).

Evaluation of the partnership work

We work with The Haven Wolverhampton for over 10 years, since our organisation was set up. In the beginning the partnership work was funding by KnowHow Fund, later by DFID UK, then by the BLF (Big Lottery Fund). Now we can truly recognise that the Crisis Centre “Ekaterina” and our Urals region (there are 89 regions in Russia) are ahead of other Russian regions in addressing domestic violence. This is largely due to our luck that The Haven is our partner and supporter. We supported each other even when we did not have any funding for joint work. We set goals for our work progress and slowly and patiently progress towards them. We learn from The Haven and then implement the new knowledge in Russia adapting to our conditions. Same model was used when we started working with Police, then with Judges, etc. The idea of a Coalition of the Crisis centres also was brought from UK and now we are working on a future model – creation of the Multi Agency Forum on Domestic Violence in Sverdlovsk Area. However we still need to learn a lot from our British partners before we can set it up.

Lessons for the future

- Reduce the research part of the project (less projects, but to more detailed pieces of work using better thought through methodologies and methods).
- Learn English language, especially the Russian project manager needs this skills

By Ludmila Ermakova (February 2009)

2. Achievements of the project from the perspective of the Sverdlovsk Regional Court

1. Thanks to the seminars and training sessions on domestic violence the awareness of judges of the problem was raised as well as their understanding of the issue. The feedback questionnaires which were completed at the end of each training sessions demonstrated that judges were interested not only in the court practices of processing cases of this category but also in psychological aspects of the domestic violence problem especially concerning violence against children, information about support services available, and also international experience in this area.

The majority of participants commented that these seminars should be continued and should include representatives of different agencies, who work with victims of domestic violence.

2. First time in Russia two detailed analyses of the court practice with relation to cases of domestic violence were carried out (200 cases of domestic violence were examined and homicide review was carried out). The conclusions from these research projects are drawn from official court statistics. The results of these research were discussed by the judges during internal court seminars and meetings with the involvement of prosecutors and Police.

3. Multi-Agency work improved.: Multi-agency seminars and training sessions for judges, social workers, prosecutors, youth workers, were carried out within the premises provided by the Ministry of Social Protection of Sverdlovsk Area. The attitude of the Ministry to this problem changed significantly and despite the economic crisis they decided not just to keep all 8 hotels for women and children experiencing domestic violence, but also to increase the number of units in 2009-2010.

Because of the training professionals from different agencies were informed about the work of the court and the process of investigating cases of “private charge” and the judges were informed about how other agencies operate and specifics of the work. Especially valuable was information about social work agencies and details of the social and psychological support provided by them. Now victims can have better access to information on how they can get psychological, social, medical and legal support etc.

4. The practice of processing the “private charge” cases changed – the number of cases closed without going to court reduced including those on the ground of amicable reconciliation. This means that in more charges were made and more perpetrators were brought to justice. This is the most important result and the one we can vividly demonstrated using the analysis of the court statistics (see below).

However this improvement occurred as a result not only training but also the consistent position of the court to improve practice of processing of these type of cases.

Court Statistics

Criminal Cases processed by Justices of Peace in Sverdlovsk Oblast from year 2004 to year 2008

	№		2004 г.	2005 г.	2006 г.	2007 г.	2008 г.
Criminal cases of all categories	1	Total number of all criminal cases completed	13 864	16 869	19 054	20 055	20 212
	2	Total number of uncompleted criminal cases (closed) out of above	8 436	7 482	6 500	5 900	5 383
	3	% from total	60,8%	44,4%	34,1%	29,4%	26,6%
“Private Charge” Cases out of Total	4	Total number of “Private Charge” Cases completed	7 366	8 125	7 883	8 293	7 930
	5	Total number of uncompleted “Private Charge” cases (closed) out of above	6026	5 681	5 068	4 709	3 926
	6	% from total	81,8%	70,0%	64,3%	56,8%	49,5%
Number of people involved in “Private Charge” Cases	7	Total number of people	7983	8 756	8 617	8 987	8 755
	8	Charged	949	1 991	2 548	3 371	3 849
	9	% from total	11,9%	22,7%	29,6%	37,5%	43,9%
	10	Found not guilty	243	221	272	257	281
	11	% from total	3,0%	2,5%	3,1%	2,9%	3,2%

By Natalia Gaidardjiiskaya (January 2009)

3. Achievements of the project (Advocates' perspective)

The Sverdlovsk Regional Guild of Lawyers take part in the joint programme of the Sverdlovsk Regional Court, Sverdlovsk Regional Voluntary organisation The Crisis Centre "Ekaterina", The Governor of Sverdlovsk Area, The Government of Sverdlovsk Area and the Head Office of Internal Affairs, aimed at prevention of domestic crime and providing legal support to victims of domestic/household crime (semeino-bitovaia).

Advocates can help to resolve a conflict prior to the court, protect the rights of victims in the court and when dealing with the law enforcements agencies, and can provide support for victims within the court proceedings etc. Many women lack awareness of their legal rights, and legislations which can protect them and are scared to face the perpetrators – this is why it is essential for them to be supported and accompanied by a lawyer when attending the court hearings and appointments with the agencies.

1. Training on DV

Within the DV training programme 2006-08 ten training sessions for advocates were conducted (5 in Ekaterinburg and 4 in the towns of Sverdlovsk Area (Bogdanovich, Krasnoufimsk, Nizhni Tagil, Serov). 127 advocates and 40 assistant advocates were trained on the programme "Crime in the private and family sphere (semeino-bitovaia). Legal and Social grounds for prevention". This type of training was carried out in Russia for the first time. The aims of training were:

- Improving the advocacy practice in supporting cases of "private charge" for domestic violence offences as well as civil cases following the family breakdown.
- Finding new ways of working together with other government agencies, voluntary organizations and funds aimed at preventing of domestic abuse offences.
- Changing attitude to the advocacy services (to improve practice of providing information on requests of the advocates, introducing responsibilities of non proving information requested etc)

The training was extremely useful. Advocates received additional information on psychological issues, national and international legislation. Once guidance is received many advocates continued with their professional development by self-study on this topic. Statistics demonstrates that once trained the advocates have more clients who are women – victims of domestic violence. The help provided is more professional and based on better knowledge.

2. Developing the Training programme on DV

The Training Programme for advocates "Providing legal support on civic and criminal cases in the private and family sphere" which includes the manual was developed by Sverdlovsk Regional Court, Sverdlovsk Regional Voluntary Organisation "The Crisis Centre "Ekaterina" and the Sverdlovsk Regional Guild of Lawyers. This is the first programme of its kind in Russia.

Advocates also carried out a research into different criminal cases from the private and family sphere. The results were published by the Crisis Centre "Ekaterina". The main aim of such

research is to improve the advocacy work on the “private charge” cases as well as forming a consistent approach to this problem from the court and the advocacy services.

3. Taking part in the Conference on Domestic Violence supported by the Government of Sverdlovsk Area (October 2007)

The Sverdlovsk Regional Guild of Lawyers contributed their proposals to the resolution of the Government of Sverdlovsk Area adopted at the end of the conference. The proposals were to improve the relevant legislation on “Advocacy and Advocacy Services in Russian Federation”

Natalia Sukhareva, January 2009

4. Achievements from the perspective of The Haven Wolverhampton

1. Law enforcement agencies and decision makers have more educated and sympathetic approach to Domestic Violence.

This was achieved by sharing knowledge and best practice between two countries and by developing and delivering specialist programmes on Domestic Violence to Criminal Justice System professional and staff of the Crisis Centres in Sverdlovsk Area, Russia.

Knowledge and best practice was shared between:

- a. Women's NGOs in two countries
- b. Non- State Actors and Criminal Justice Agencies (in two countries) – Women's NGOs build links with the CJS within each country
- c. Non- State Actors and Government Agencies (in two countries) – Women's NGOs build links LA, Home and Foreign Office, Ministry of Social Protection (Russia) etc
- d. Criminal Justice professionals (judges, lawyers, Policemen) share knowledge with fellow professionals in different country.

The project helped to share knowledge and experience between professionals from the British and Russian Agencies in the sphere of prevention and prosecution of domestic violence crime and supporting victims of domestic abuse.

The agencies included:

UNITED KINGDOM:

- The Haven Wolverhampton
- WDVF – Wolverhampton Domestic Violence Forum
- CAADA - Co-Ordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse
- WOW – Women Organising in Wolverhampton network
- Home Office (Domestic Violence Team and Domestic Violence Virtual Office)
- Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Russian Section)
- Wolverhampton Council
- Wolverhampton Magistrates Court (SDVC – Specialist Domestic Violence Court)
- West Midlands Police (Domestic Violence Unit)
- Walsall Primary Care Trust
- CWASU (Child and Woman Abuse Studies Unit, Metropolitan University, London)
- University of Wolverhampton

RUSSIA:

- The Crisis Centre “Ekaterina”
- The Coalition of the Crisis Centres of the Ural-Siberian Region
- Sverdlovsk Regional Court
- Ministry of Social Protection of Sverdlovsk Area
- Local, District and Regional Police Forces
- Sverdlovsk Regional Guild of Lawyers
- Public Prosecution Service of Sverdlovsk Area

- The Sverdlovsk area Human Rights Representative
- University of Urals, Ekaterinburg

The exchange facilitated the development of improved regional and local strategies to address domestic violence in Sverdlovsk Area, Russia

2. Building capacity of NGOs in Russia and UK

- strengthen capacity of Russian NGOs so that they are more effective in supporting women experiencing domestic violence;
- NGOs are more effective at informing women about their rights, increasing their ability to understand government policies and implications on their lives;
- NGOs are more effective in local, national and international decision making processes, resulting in improved linkages, partnerships and networking between NGOs, Local Authorities and Criminal Justice System in Russia and Uzbekistan
- NGOs have better data collection system to demonstrate the needs of women
- Strong and active Coalition of the Crisis Centre of Ural-Siberian Region was developed to improve sustainability and peer-to-peer support to the individual organizations, especially newly established centres.
- Strengthen capacity of The Haven Wolverhampton in delivering training and awareness raising programmes on Domestic Violence to International audience.
- Raising profile of the voluntary sector in Russia and UK. “Ekaterina” is now acknowledged as a national expert in working with the Criminal Justice System.
- Staff from both countries commented on positive opportunities to meet colleagues from different countries with a very different cultural and social background.

The Haven’s Staff made positive remarks about their experience to IIP Auditor during her March Assessment visit to The Haven and said that they were “proud to participate”. The comments are quoted in the IIP assessment report, eg “the international projects has had a big impact on The Haven. It is reinforcing our knowledge and experience...It has strengthen local and national relationships and has also raised awareness of domestic violence”; “It is wonderful that people can come to see how The Haven works and they take back what they have learnt. We all benefit from sharing our experience”.

3. Raising awareness of Domestic Violence in Russia

- Delivering training to professionals
- Conducting research and fact finding on DV in Sverlovsk Area, Russia
- Initiating discussing between professionals on the issues related to DV
- Working with regional, local and national media. Media campaigns.

4. Piloting research and data collection into Domestic Violence in Sverdlovsk Area, Russia

- Several pieces of research were conducted with the support of regional Criminal Justice Agencies. The results were distributed to stakeholders involved. Discussion was facilitated around the research findings to develop further strategies. This hopefully should encourage further development of research into violence against women as an essential social study area in Russia and putting in place statistical data collection and analysis systems, leading to the improvement in the lives of women in the context of

sustainable development. This also supports the development of the framework and methodologies for the research into the issue in Russian.

5. The project addressed cross-cutting issues - promotion of women and children, gender equality, diversity, participation, etc.

6. Giving women the ability and confidence to make independent choices about their domestic violence case. Women being able to move forward and plan their future, improving both their own and their children's quality of life.

- There are 220 Justices of the Peace in the Sverdlovsk Oblast, who process over 8,000 DV cases annually (8,293 “private charge” (DV) cases in 2007). The research from the project demonstrates that 89% of victims are women.. 100% of Justices of the Peace in the Sverdlovsk region have been trained in DV and for three years over 20,000 women will benefit from better support in the Sverdlovsk Region, Russia.
- The Justices of the Peace are backed up by lawyers and policemen, who have also undergone training on DV as part of this project. An awareness-raising campaign targeting the general public has increased awareness of the problem of DV and lowered the tolerance of DV amongst the ordinary population of Sverdlovsk Oblast. This should result in more cases being reported and then progressing to the court. The figures above are an estimate, and the actual number of beneficiaries are expected to be greater. It is difficult to estimate the number of women who have been helped by Justices of Peace, Police, lawyers and the Crisis Centres’ staff who have taken the decision not to take their cases to court, but have selected other options in order to move on with their lives.
- Services for women and children experiencing domestic violence are improved, eg eight Crisis Centre which include hostel provision were open in Sverdlovsk Area, Russia with funding available from the Ministry of Social Protection. The number of hostel accommodation units for women and children victims of domestic violence and the number of areas providing them significantly increased during the last three years.

City	2006		2007		2008	
	Total service users	Hostel Units	Total service users	Hostel Units	Total service users	Hostel Units
Surgut	1670		2000	85	91	40
Nizhnevartovsk	1199	42	2234	73	835	70
Noiabrsk	148		116		140	140
Cheliabinsk «Sodeistvie»	606		601		632	
Kurgan			76	11	670	
Bogdanovich			127	69	133	63
Ekaterinburg «Ekaterina»	627		1231		924	
TOTAL	4245	42	6385	238	3425	313

5. Triggered further projects and initiatives to address domestic violence

- Development of a Multi-Agency Domestic Violence Forum in Sverdlovsk Are is being discussed;
- The Haven received a donation of £2,000 from to support this area of work following publicity in UK. It was decided to carry out a small pilot project on working with Medical System to encourage better support for women victims of domestic violence who refer to A&E departments in Ekaterinburg.
- Information and resource base developed can be used to replicate project's experiences at international, national and regional levels.
- The best practices identified under this Project are expected to inform global humanitarian organisations and help them mainstream women's rights and fight against gender based violence and gender inequality more effectively as well as provide a foundation for continued research and development of this sector.

By Elvira Wilson (February 2009)