

DETAILS

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Sixteen days of activism

"When my husband was getting drunk, he beat me continuously using whatever he had close to his hands to hit me. It became a daily habit to him."

– "Teuta," a victim of domestic violence

"I gave a birth to a baby girl. Instead of being happy I felt very sad. Perhaps my daughter would have to endure the same."

– "Fatime," a victim of domestic violence

By Edita Buçaj

One in three women worldwide could suffer violence directed at her simply because she is female. UNIFEM, the United Nations Development Fund for Women, drew attention to these tragic statistics based on international research with a campaign focusing on violence against women, launched on 25 November. One in three - this staggering figure sums up the crisis confronting women throughout the world; one in three women could be raped, beaten, coerced into sex or otherwise abused in her lifetime.

Unfortunately, Kosovo is not isolated from this global phenomenon. The two quotes above were taken from testimonies given by two women, victims of domestic violence in Kosovo. They are clear examples that violence against women is also a fact here.

At the same time, Kosovo has joined an international movement to fight violence against women, this year under the banner, "React! Violence is a crime". This was the main theme of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo's campaign running from November 25, the International Day to Eliminate Violence against Women - and December 10, International Human Rights Day.



"The family is the strongest institution in Kosovo, but domestic violence still exists in the absence of other strong social institutions. Our work is to raise awareness of the problem and encourage both men and women to fight against it," said Ambassador Pascal Fieschi, OSCE Head of Mission, launching the campaign.

With this in mind, a variety of events were held around Kosovo to discuss and debate the issue, as well as to promote healing and acceptance for women who have been victimised by violence. Training and seminars were organized to educate not only young people and students, but also professionals like teachers and police officers to empower them to respond to victims and perpetrators of violence against women.

Trainers from the OSCE Victims' Advocacy and Support Section were dispatched throughout Kosovo, carrying the message that violence against women is unacceptable in any context. They also examined different types of violent crimes against women: domestic violence, which can take the form of physical abuse, incest or personal humiliation, and violence against women that occurs outside the home, such as in cases of rape or trafficking for prostitution.

Collaborating NGOs and local media also made important contributions in this year's Kosovo-wide campaign. Efforts included live call-in shows and radio advertisements, television commercials, billboards, posters and T-shirts. In addition, white ribbons were distributed to male community leaders to be worn as a symbol of their pledge never to commit, condone or remain silent about violence against women.

The campaign led by the OSCE follows important previous efforts by the organization to compile and ensure passage this year of the regulation on "Protection against Domestic Violence". This important legal document codifies prohibitions on violence against women and also sets new standards on the ability of the authorities to protect victims. For example, the regulation allows Kosovo courts to issue protective orders for victims, making it a criminal offence for a perpetrator of violence to approach a victim's home or place of work.

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OSCE



Ambassador Pascal Fieschi,
Head of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo

Dear Details readers,

The OSCE Mission in Kosovo is completing another successful year with you. It has been a year full of challenges and I believe we have managed to overcome most of them.

Within the framework of implementing 'Standards for Kosovo', we will continue our work and together with all the people and the institutions of Kosovo to strengthen democracy and rule of law.

The year we are leaving behind was marked by a variety of events, all of

them important for Kosovo, but I want to stay out of politics for the moment and give emphasis to a single issue - human rights, which is the basis of a stable and safe society.

Human rights are first of all in peoples' minds and behaviour. They are also in institutions.

So, earlier this year, the OMiK and UNMIK Pillar I signed a memorandum of understanding, establishing Interim Secure Facilities or Safehouses for abused women and victims of trafficking.

Our Victim Advocacy and Support Unit gave its utmost contribution in drafting the Regulation on Protection against Domestic Violence 2003/12, passed on 9 May this year.

We contributed to the anti-discrimination law, which has had its first reading in the Assembly. A draft law on gender balance is also underway. Together with many partners, we hosted the Kosovo Conference to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings.

The process of designing an Action Plan as a result of this conference is moving ahead with our recommendations that will be issued soon.

We had the campaign on violence against women, to build awareness of this phenomenon and help local institutions to fight it.

Many men wore White Ribbons to show their commitment to the campaign and I hope they will act on their pledge as well.

I want to conclude this piece by restating what I said when we launched the campaign: the family is a sacred institution with the woman as its pillar.

I wish all families in Kosovo a Happy New Year with hope that the forthcoming year will be prosperous, peaceful, and better for all.

VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SPEAK OUT

"I would rather sleep in a cell than in that house"

Let us call her "Teuta". She was born in 1970 to a typical Kosovo Albanian family. Even though she got married against her will, she led a normal life during the first year of her marriage, but it did not last long. After a year and a half when she became pregnant, the beating began.

"When my husband would get drunk, he would beat me continuously using whatever he had close to his hands to hit me. It became a daily habit to him. Then when he stopped his mother and his sister were there to maltreat me. When I got married I weighed 70 kilos but I lost weight and soon I weighed only 45 kilos. I kept silent, not knowing where to complain. I had to endure a very difficult time in many ways: I was pregnant, my father was sick and I did not want to trouble him, I was concerned what the others would say and I did not believe that anybody could help me.

"As time passed, the violence against me was growing day by day, even after I gave a birth to a boy."

The husband did not only beat his wife.

"He didn't like our son at all. He began to beat the baby, accusing me that the boy was not his. Once he took him in the stable and beat him. The boy was sick and had a high temperature. I did not dare to interfere. If I said only a word my in-laws would grab me."

Teuta's aunt supported her and advised her to tell her father everything, but she did not want to burden him because of his ill health. In the meantime her husband found a mistress. As

the situation got worse, she finally decided to act.

"One day after my husband beat me I decided to go and report him at the police station. I woke up early at four o'clock, took my son and ran away. I met a policeman who knew me in the street and he called my father-in-law. He caught me in the street and beat me so badly that I could not stand up."

Teuta did not give up. She asked her aunt to let her father and the police know about what had happened.

"After three days the police came to our house several times and asked them why they beat me, but they claimed that they had not even touched me. Last time when the police came I told them I would rather sleep in a cell than in that house, but I could not leave my son. Afterwards the police helped me with some luggage and took me to a Catholic Church. One day when I was going to the Centre for Social Work to talk about my problem I met my husband who was looking for me. While he grabbed our son he pushed me away and I fell down in the mud in the middle of the street. People were looking at us with contempt, which made me feel terrible. I could barely stand up, but I went to the police station and later on they managed to bring my son back."

Teuta subsequently sought asylum in a women's shelter. These are her words, told to social workers at the shelter. Her real name and her hometown have been withheld to protect her privacy.

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**VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
SPEAK OUT**

"I thought I heard my daughter cry, but I could not return."

"Fatime" was only fifteen years old when she married a man she had never seen before. She went to live with her husband who had a big family. Soon she realised that life with him would be difficult. "I found it difficult to love him," she says. In the first days of their marriage she says she found out what kind of a man he was. "We were invited to a wedding party. In the evening he was wearing his best clothes and when he went to bed he did not take them off. I was irritated, as it did not seem normal to me. He had continued like that and it became a daily habit to him." She complained about this and then the trouble began.

"I was afraid to tell anybody what happened to me. Everyday my life was getting worse, and I did not want to have children with him. During the two first years of my marriage my friend who worked as a nurse in the hospital provided me with contraceptive pills, but later on she was transferred far away and I got pregnant. This is when the unbearable suffering started for me."

Fatime maintains that her isolation was almost as difficult to bear as the domestic violence itself.

"They stopped me from seeing my family, from going out. Everything was inaccessible for me. Anywhere I needed to go I had to be accompanied by somebody. It was worse than the physical violence. I gave a birth to a baby girl at home. They did not want to send me to a hospital, because they were afraid I would tell the others about the violence I was going through. My husband beat me even during the time I was pregnant. As a consequence of the beatings I felt a terrible pain in my ankles, and then they sent me to a medical centre. A nurse working there noticed the bruises on my body. It was the first time I told somebody about the violence my husband used against me. She promised she would help me. I gave a birth to a baby girl. Instead of being happy I felt very sad. Perhaps my daughter would have to endure the same."

Finally Fatime could not take it any more.

"When my daughter was nearly a year old I had to run away, otherwise I would have been paralysed. While I was running away through the forests it seemed to me that I heard my daughter cry. I felt sorry for her but I was on the way to my grave, and then I would be worthless to my daughter."

Fatime subsequently sought asylum in a women's shelter. These are her words, told to social workers at the shelter. Her real name and her hometown have been withheld to protect her privacy.

Trafficking as the most abominable practice

As Kosovo begins to come to terms with the horrific phenomenon of trafficking in human beings, the OSCE intensifies its training activities

By Hannah Cranston

"The trafficking of children is one of the most outrageous and abominable practices ever known," said Ljubiša Kostić, of the Centre for Social Work in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica. "Jail sentences should be much longer for traffickers of children, as these sentences will affect the actions of others," said.

This opinion is a reflection of the Kosovo-wide disgust and alarm at the growing phenomenon of trafficking in human beings. The OSCE Human Rights Victim Advocacy Support Section has organized numerous training sessions for members of Kosovo institutions and NGOs to raise awareness, identify different aspects of the problem and explore legislation related to trafficking.

One such training took place in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica on 26 and 27 November in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare. Twelve participants from the regional Centres for Social Work, the UNMIK Trafficking and Prostitution Investigation Unit and regional NGOs attended.

The three trainers were Alma Begicevic, OSCE Human Rights Officer; Ariana Qosaj-Mustafa, OSCE Human Rights Legal Advisor for Women and Children; and Mrs. Selvete Gerxhalii, gender based violence consultant in the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare seconded to the OSCE.

Smuggling vs. trafficking

The issues covered in the training included clarification of the distinction between smuggling and trafficking. It was pointed out that there is a very thin line between the two phenomena, but that even if a person consents to crossing borders for work without proper documentation, they may become vulnerable to extortion and violent force later. Once a smuggler has moved a person from one country to another, they may use their position of power to exploit that person's labour, or sell them on to traffickers.

People who have been smuggled illegally across borders are already at a disadvantage, as they have knowingly committed offences - such as travelling with false documents and illegal entry. If

they find themselves in a situation where they may be trafficked, they are in a weak bargaining position. There is only one lesson to learn from this: do not travel illegally or allow another person to procure travel documents for you.

Universal Declaration

The group taking part in the training also analysed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to examine which of the legal articles would be violated in a case of trafficking. The conclusion was that it was nearly all of them, confirming the case that trafficking is one of the most serious abuses of human rights and should therefore be highly punishable. Article 4 of the Declaration is particularly meaningful in relation to trafficking:

"No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms."

Women's position to be examined and reviewed

The existence of trafficking in Kosovo and the surrounding areas confirms the existence of slavery in Europe; an archaic and brutal practice that was made illegal in the 1800's. Governments should apply a zero tolerance approach to trafficking.

Defining the different aspects of trafficking and agreement on the human rights issues involved seem to be the easy part of this training, but legalities alone will not curb the increase in trafficking in Kosovo. In order to tackle fully the problem of trafficking, women's position in society must be examined and reviewed. Traditionalism is acceptable and sometimes highly desirable within cultures, but not when it denigrates the rights and social status of a group

continues on page 4



Participants at a training on trafficking in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica

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of citizens, in this case women. Unfortunately, stigmatisation within social and administrative structures in Kosovo occurs against women who are victims of violence perpetrated by men. Women who are victims of violence are sometimes seen to bear a mark of disgrace associated with their circumstances.

Rape can be used to endanger and compromise a woman's identity - such is the case with rape during war. When a woman's sexuality is violated during the process of trafficking, it is an individual affront to the woman, which she will need help to deal with. It is not an attack on the collective honour of a family or community and the victim should not be blamed for being assaulted. Shame is for the criminal who tricks or kidnaps a person into becoming a slave, not for the victim.

If victims feel ashamed by what has happened to them, they will not talk about their experiences. If they do not talk about their experiences their torturers cannot be identified. If the perpetrators are never identified, they will never be brought to justice and the problem will continue to grow.

How to help victims

Participants of the training were advised that there needs to be a shift of approach within communities. When a 'council of elders' or the equivalent is called to review the situation of a victim of rape or trafficking, the question asked should not be "How do we make the problem go away?" but "What do we do to help the victim?"

The focus must be on helping the victim, as they will be heavily traumatised and in need of help to return to healthy, happy and productive lives. They are also the most direct link the authorities would have to the criminals involved in trafficking. If a victim is counselled and assisted, they may be able to identify the perpetrators and act as witnesses in their trials.

One way to address the social disadvantage of women in relation to trafficking is to re-define the concept of sexual purity to create equal standards for men and women. If women were seen as equal to men in society, their actions would not be so unfairly scrutinised when considering cases of rape or abduction.

Improving the fight against trafficking

The changing scope of Kosovo society has meant that trafficking has increased and become more noticeable. With freedom of media and information comes greater coverage of issues such as trafficking: Kosovo is now at an advantage in being able to learn about more cases of trafficking and so react to this crime actively, with an informed opinion.

The training enabled better co-ordination between agencies providing services and protection to victims of trafficking. It is vital that institutions responsible have the power to deal with these issues and have the resources and knowledge with which to carry out their work.

Trafficking Creates a Serious Social Burden

According to the International Organization for Migration, between 700,000 and 2,000,000 women are subjected to trafficking annually

By Nderim Pasuli

The signs of abuse, torture, starvation and in some cases the chaining of victims are evident. The victims' reactions are followed by fear and emotions, which could paralyse them. The traumatic reaction and confusion appears when the victims' resistance is no longer possible and human defence becomes encumbered and disorganised. In these cases, the adequate and complex response of specialists and social workers is needed. At the same time, community and family support is crucial.

On 9 December 2003, the OSCE Office in Prizren, in co-operation with the Prizren Municipal Gender Office, organized a regional meeting on Counter-Trafficking. This event took place at the Prizren Municipal Assembly Hall, as a part of the two-week awareness-raising campaign on the issue of violence against women launched by the OSCE Mission in Kosovo.

The event brought together representatives from OSCE, IOM, the Special Police Unit investigating trafficking and prostitution cases 'TPIU', the Department of Justice, the Labour and Social Welfare Office, the Prizren Municipal Gender Office, the Municipal Inspector's Office and prosecutors. More than 50 participants were briefed on counter-trafficking measures being taken by relevant authorities aiming to stop this phenomenon.

"We have gathered here to possibly identify trafficking problems in the Prizren region in order to co-ordinate further steps. This is an opportunity for everybody to understand this specific instance in order to have a clearer picture of this phenomenon and to more

effectively combat trafficking," said Ms. Alma Begicević, the OSCE Human Rights Officer in Prizren.

All participants in the meeting actively discussed many problems encountered in combating trafficking and forced prostitution. Mrs. Adelina Sopi, the Municipal Gender Officer, was one of the first speakers to address the participants. "Our office has implemented a successful campaign called 'Stop Trafficking' and the idea of it was to raise young people's awareness of the negative impacts that trafficking has on society. We are committed to organize similar activities in the future as well," Mrs. Sopi said.

Ms. Diana Tudorache from IOM was also at this regional gathering, which was a good opportunity for the attendees to learn more about traumatic effects of the crime of human trafficking and its negative impact on society.

According to participants, trafficking victims are still stigmatised in Kosovo. "The reconstruction of the traumatised victims' identity is crucial for their recovery. While parents might oftentimes be supportive, the community at large should work harder to accept these victims back into society," Ms. Tudorache said.

During the meeting it became apparent that each organization represented was working independently according to its capacities and possibilities. In order to be more fruitful in combating trafficking, the participants agreed a more systematic approach and increased co-ordination are needed.



Participants listen to a victim's story of how she was trafficked

Domestic Violence in Focus

By Elisabeth Campestrini



Women from NGO 'Liria' discussing Domestic Violence in Gjilan/Gnjilane

Two main NGOs from Gjilan/Gnjilane region arranged two separate public debates on the occasion of domestic violence campaign. The first one was held on 29 November in Kamenicë/Kamenica and the second one in the Hotel Kristal in Gjilan/Gnjilane on 1 December 2003. Both debates tried to engage active professional women from all different kinds of professional backgrounds and various NGO representatives in this awareness-raising process.

Selected speakers guided the discussions, introducing their work in fighting against domestic violence. In both debates women from all ethnic backgrounds participated. Stimulated by very active speakers, both debates lead to lively discussions between the speakers and the guests.

The public debate in Kamenicë/Kamenica was organized by the Kosovo-Serbian NGO 'Kosovska Devojka'. A multiethnic group of more than 30 women discussed the effects of domestic violence on the daily life of women in the area suggested relevant steps that need to be taken. "The most interesting discussions emerged over a delicious meal, cooked by the organizer, the 'Kosovska Devojka' NGO. It was a very informal but still concentrated atmosphere, which invited many women present in the room to address their individual thoughts and concerns," said OSCE representative Sadete Ternava-Osmani.

The event in Gjilan/Gnjilane was organized by the NGO 'Liria'. All the invited participants

were active female professionals including teachers, health professionals, municipal officials and local NGO representatives. A female actor reflected on the pains of a battered woman and impressively acted out the story of such a victim, whose daughters were also forced into prostitution by their violent father.

The main part of the debate focused on informing the public about the forthcoming

establishment of 'HOPE', a Women's Centre in Gjilan/Gnjilane. HOPE is going to be a focal point for women and children, offering psychosocial counselling, legal assistance, training capacities and recreational activities for women from all ages and backgrounds. It further incorporates a safe-house (shelter) for emergency support to victims of domestic violence, offering assistance 24-hours a day and support to women and children who are suffering from an abusive relationship. The Austrian government, the municipality of Gjilan/Gnjilane and the OSCE are financing the Centre.

A number of NGO representatives also shared their experiences with women who would like to receive help, but who lack the courage to go public with their concerns out of fear of retaliation by their families. In this context, the co-ordinator of the Women's Centre in Gjilan/Gnjilane pointed out that the disruption within the family after victims have been sheltered for a while often seems worse after their return home. Still, she underlined the importance and necessity of the work within the shelter as the victims are at least temporarily released from the immediate violent situations. For the future she encouraged official structures at the central as well as municipal level to consider social housing for these women.

At the end, participants of both meetings expressed their commitment to stay engaged in the work for victims of domestic violence.



Women from NGO 'Kosovska Devojka' discussing Domestic Violence in Gjilan/Gnjilane

Discrimination is not an option

It is crucially important that the communities take the leading role in promoting gender mainstreaming

By Kreshnik Basha

The issue of discrimination has been the topic of many workshops and seminars, organised by different international and local organisations operating across Kosovo. Different ideas and experiences were exchanged in order to find a proper approach to combat this phenomenon. Various forms of discrimination against women are still an issue and need to be addressed continuously.

Main causes of discrimination

In October, the OSCE Office in Prizren, implemented a series of seminars on the 'Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Woman' (CEDAW), for the Bosniak and Turkish communities living in Prizren and Prishtinë/Priština. The workshops were implemented in close cooperation with the international Turkish NGO 'Anatolian Development Foundation'.

Well-known lawyers of these communities such as Ms. Edija Sezairi and Mr. Iskender Muzbeg facilitated the seminars. They both used a common approach during the sessions trying to explain the 'International Convention on Discrimination' by using examples from daily life affecting local communities. Mr. Arif Haliti, representative of the 'Bosniak Teachers Association' said, "The main causes of why Bosniak

women are discriminated against are tradition, economic situation and inefficient governance." In this regard, he brought up concrete examples on how living conditions influence gender issues within the Bosniak community, comparing the situation in Recane/Reçan with that of other remote villages of Župa/Zhupë Valley.

A more active role

One positive output of these sessions was the idea to establish a Bosniak women's NGO in Prizren, which as an organization would work for the promotion of gender equality. One of the participants in these sessions was also the Bosniak women's representative in the Municipal Assembly of Prizren. This was a good chance for the other participants to ask and encourage their representative for a more active role in this regard.

Sessions on the issue of discrimination were also held with representatives of the Turkish



Women from the Turkish and Bosniak communities discuss gender equality at a seminar in Prizren

Women's NGO 'Hanim Eli' from Prishtinë/Priština. "It is important to have follow-up sessions on this topic with representatives of the Turkish community that live in the municipalities not covered by this project," suggested Ms. Lirije Gas. "Having in mind that the Constitutional Framework states that this document is an integral part of applicable legislation in Kosovo, it is important for the wider community to know its content."

Networking Communities through Youth Newsletter

Networking among different Kosovo communities is a crucial aspect of civil society development

By Patrick Hoffmann

Olga, Esma and Violeta come from three different ethnic communities in Lipjan/Lipljan. Olga is a Kosovo Croat, Esma belongs to the Roma community and Violeta is a Kosovo Serb. Despite their ethnic differences, all three are co-ordinators of a youth newsletter project designed by the OSCE Democratization Department in Lipjan/Lipljan.

As it turns out, this is just one of the things they have in common.



Olga, Esma, and Violeta, co-ordinators of the youth newsletter in Lipjan/Lipljan

During their weekly editors' meetings they realised that they share many more common interests. All of them like to cook a traditional meal. They are all interested in fashion magazines and all of them feel strongly that Kosovo is their home. "There are so many common interests that we are not at all interested in spending our time fighting with each other the way we see everyday in politics," says Violeta.

Focusing on what people share in common is one of the aims of the newsletter. "It is non-political and it connects the three different communities within Lipjan/Lipljan municipality", explains Esma.

Networking is a crucial aspect of civil society development, nowhere more so than among the Croat, Serb and Roma communities in Lipjan/Lipljan municipality. By networking and sharing information, secluded communities are able to affirm their cultural identities and to share their daily con-

cerns. Preserving their own languages, traditions and cultural heritage is a necessity for these three minority communities. Being able to do so allows them to create a foundation from which they can engage in a wider dialogue and build bridges to the majority Albanian community in Lipjan/Lipljan.

By expressing ideas in a pluralistic way and adhering to the basic principles of democracy, a minority community can enjoy one of the most fundamental rights, the right of self-expression. "In the newsletter, we are talking about our life in our villages, activities which are taking place, even in other parts of Kosovo but made in Lipjan/Lipljan municipality," Olga says proudly.

"In order for the three communities to remain in Lipjan/Lipljan municipality, they need the ability to affirm their identities through the print media and to express their opinions freely on civil society issues," says Berat Reçica, the OSCE Democratization Assistant working to support the project.

The newsletter is going to be published in three languages and is the first one of its kind in Kosovo.

"An open window to the world"

Zubin Potok Mayor welcomes new Community Centre building

By Mustafa Skenderi

"We have set up this institution and it will be used to strengthen civic community work and the feeling of working as community and building a multiethnic Kosovo. Now OSCE will step aside and leave this institution in the hands of the local people".

These were the words of Ambassador Pascal Fieschi, Head of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo on the occasion of the opening of a new Community Centre building in Zubin Potok.

The Community Centre is an example of how something can be done even better for the community when both locals and internationals believe in it. It is the result of co-operation of between the municipal authorities, the OSCE and the local NGO "Centre for Co-operation and Democratization" from Zubin Potok.

The mayor of Zubin Potok, Zoran Djurović, also attended the opening ceremony. "The path to create this centre was not an easy and simple one," he said. "But the guiding idea we had enabled us, without much effort or strain, to build what we have today".

After the cultural programme, prepared by the youngest members of the local folk group "Mokra Gora", letters of appreciation were presented to everyone who participated and helped in every way to build the new Community Centre. Finally Ambassador Fieschi officially opened the Centre and proclaimed that

work could begin.

Mrs Slavka Milosavljević, manager of the Community Centre and head of the NGO Centre for Co-operation and Democratization, did not hesitate to show her enthusiasm for the new Community Centre and the possibilities it offers.

"This kindness, we could only have dreamed about," Mrs. Milosavljević said. "This has opened a window to the world. I think that with the Internet connection we will have, it will give an opportunity to our youth and students to communicate with the world. This building is open to all inhabitants of Zubin Potok and its surroundings."

In addition, English lessons and computer classes will be organized at the new Community Centre. And by the end of this year, OSCE will hand over the management to the locals, as part of the process of handing over all community centres in Kosovo over to local supervision.



Ambassador Pascal Fieschi at the opening ceremony of the new Community Centre in Zubin Potok

Enhancing Police Response to Domestic Violence

By Hannah Cranston

Activism to fight Violence against Women is not just about spreading information to the public, it is also about improving the ability of the police and relevant authorities to deal with this issue.

During the OSCE's domestic violence cam-

paign that took place during the "16 Days of Activism", from 25 November to 10 December, the OSCE Victim Advocacy and Support Section in Prishtinë/Priština launched a project entitled "Enhancing Police Response to Domestic Violence".



Kosovo Police Service officers learning more about their role in fighting Domestic Violence at a training in Lipjan/Lipljan

The project involved the training of KPS officers on the new UNMIK Regulation 2003/12 'On Protection Against Domestic Violence'. The OSCE, the UNMIK Police Domestic Violence Unit and the KPS Regional Domestic Violence Coordinator were all involved in the project.

The training informed police officers of their obligations under the new Domestic Violence Regulation and their powers in this area and to improve their effectiveness in fighting this phenomenon.

The launch of the project began on 24 November at Lipjan/Lipljan Police Station where the participants all received small, 100-page blank notebooks, with laminated cards inserted containing key provisions from the Domestic Violence regulation. All KPS and UNMIK police officers received copies of the notebooks in their respective languages and attended a 30-minute briefing the responsibilities of officers under the new regulation. It is hoped that KPS officers will carry these pocket-sized notebooks with them and to refer to them if a situation requires it.

The project continued after Lipjan/Lipljan and so far notebooks have been distributed and training carried out at Prishtinë/Priština Central Police Station, Obiliq/Obilić station, Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje station and Gllgovc/Glogovac station. The remaining stations in Prishtinë/Priština region will receive the briefing and the notebooks before the end of 2003. The materials and briefings will be distributed throughout the rest of Kosovo in January and February 2004.

Kosovo Assembly reporters on study visit to Slovenia

A politicized and subjective reporting of events, uneven representation of the views of the whole spectrum of political parties, as well as inexperienced journalists covering the Assembly's activities is a common practice.

By *Lizabeta Paloka*

In its endeavor to strengthen both the Kosovo Assembly and the media, OSCE Mission in Kosovo organized a study visit of Kosovo print and broadcast journalists to Slovenia. Two journalists from RTK and Bota Sot, the editor-in-chief of RTK and an OMiK Media Training representative attended this visit.

Subjective reporting

In the beginning of October, the group under the guidance of Ms. Ljerka Bizilj from RTV Slovenia, produced a 25-minute program on the work of the Kosovo Assembly. She discovered that there is a politicized and subjective reporting of events, uneven representation of the views of the whole spectrum of political parties, as well as inexperienced journalists covering the Assembly's activities. "The crew I worked with, which gathered journalists of print and broadcast media, lacks team spirit and overall knowledge of how similar reporting is done in other countries," said Ms. Bizilj.

During the study visit, the Kosovo group met with the General Director and Deputy Director of RTV SLO for international relations, who is also member of the RTK board. This was a good chance for the Kosovo team to exchange experiences and ideas with the experts of TV Slovenia and to explore possibilities for co-operation. The Slovenian side expressed a readiness and willingness to help Kosovo reporters with journalism training courses and exchanges of experience.

'Lotus Notes' system

The Kosovo journalists also visited the Slovene Assembly where they were introduced to the 'Lotus Notes' computer system that connects the Assembly with about 400 accredited Slovene print and broadcast journalists. "This program allows the Information Unit of the Slovene National Assembly to automatically make new reports, events or results from any parliamentary session available on an Intranet," explained Ms. Karmen Uglesic, Deputy Head of the Information Department.

"We gained a lot of knowledge from this experience about the way TV Slovenia is structured, its programming scheme and the way debates are organized in the Assembly

or in the Government," said Idriz Morina, a journalist from the Kosovo daily newspaper 'Bota Sot'. "We were informed about the role that the Slovene media play in these cases, and the most interesting part for us all was the introduction to the functioning of the Information Unit of the Slovene Assembly and the 'Lotus Notes'." This is a powerful tool that is in the interest of both the media and public opinion, something our Assembly and Government lack," stated Mr. Morina.

Development of technical infrastructure required

According to Jelena Djurdjic of RTK, the aims of the visit were to get more acquainted with the way the Slovene Parliament functions and the way journalists report from parliament, as well as to see the co-operation between the journalists and the parliament's information unit. "I had the honour to briefly attend one of the parliament sessions, but the problems the Slovene Parliament

faces are completely different compared to those that the Kosovo Assembly Members are preoccupied with," she said.

Mr. Zekë Sinanaj, a RTK journalist, was impressed. A fully developed technical infrastructure is in place in the Assembly hall, he said, allowing live coverage of the proceedings to such an extent that when a deputy takes the floor to speak, cameras automatically focus their lenses on the speaker and start recording.

He added that the information offered by the Slovene Assembly and Government to the print and broadcast media is fast and professional. This enables Slovene journalists to perform their work professionally and inform the public in a timely way. "It would be very good if similar methods could be applied in the Kosovo Assembly. Its premises are under reconstruction, so we expect they will also improve their technical equipment. This would be a great help to the journalists who cover Assembly sessions", Mr. Sinanaj concluded.



Local journalists and members of the OSCE Media Development Team, during their visit to Slovenia

Young people get involved in grass-roots efforts to fight domestic violence

By Haris Kurti



Pictures made by a young participant of the Domestic & Dating Violence training, displayed at the Municipal Hall in Mitrovicë/Mitrovia

Over the last month, the OSCE Office in Mitrovicë/Mitrovia has organized several different activities in order to mark 25 November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. The activities consisted of both training and awareness-raising events.

Most of the members of the Human Rights Club in Mitrovicë/Mitrovia are students from the local secondary schools and are between 16 and 18 years old. The OSCE Victim Advocacy Support Section (VASS) provided the students from the club with a three-day training session on Dating and Domestic Violence. Two of the trainers were staff members of the OSCE Human Rights Department based in Mitrovicë/Mitrovia and the third was a KPS officer who acts as the Regional Domestic Violence Coordinator.

The first of the three training sessions focused on the definition of domestic violence. The teenagers were told that not all victims of abuse suffer bruises. They learned that jealousy from a boyfriend or excessive possessiveness by brothers are also signs that may indicate dating or domestic violence.

The second session focused on the legal aspects of the issue. The KPS officer conducting this part of the training explained the provisions foreseen by the Regulation on Protection from Domestic Violence, highlighting the rights of the victims, protection afforded to them under the law and what this means for both the individual and the family.

During the third session the students were informed about the existing services available

to assist and support victims, as well as to rehabilitate the perpetrators of domestic violence. It was made clear to the students that violent family members also need help in dealing with their problems.

One 17-year-old girl who was involved in the training said: "It has been really useful. Before, my friends and I had some problems with boys, but now we know how to say 'NO' so they understand!"

At the end of the training, participants were asked to produce drawings as a way of expressing their

feelings on the issues discussed during the training. The drawings were then displayed in an exhibition in the Mitrovicë/Mitrovia Municipal Hall. The opening of the exhibition was followed by a small inaugural ceremony where Ganimete Hasani, the Municipal Gender Officer, gave some small gifts to the students.

The exhibition lasted from 24 November through 10 December (International Human Rights Day).

The Human Rights Club activists were also involved in the dissemination of awareness-raising posters around Mitrovicë/Mitrovia town.



A young participant shows the prize he won for Best Picture

OSCE Reports on Parallel Structures

After the end of the NATO campaign in 1999, the Kosovo Serbs that remained in Kosovo did not immediately recognise the newly established UNMIK administration.

By Olja Stojanović

For years, security concerns made it difficult for Kosovo Serbs and other minorities to travel outside their enclaves. Those living in the predominantly Kosovo Serb municipalities in the north rarely travelled through the rest of Kosovo. In these enclaves and in the northern municipalities, the Serbian administration, courts, schools, hospitals and police, directly answering to Belgrade, have been maintained.

In a thorough report released by the OSCE in October 2003, parallel structures are defined as "bodies that have been or still are operational in Kosovo after 10 June 1999 and that are not mandated for under U.N. Security Council resolution 1244 (UNSC)".

The OSCE reports points out that "parallel systems continue to have a substantial impact on society".

Functioning of the parallel structures is especially visible in the educational system, health care, judiciary and security services.

According to the same OSCE report, "Two systems of education have arisen in Kosovo partly because of mutual mistrust between Kosovo Serbs and Albanians." All schools located either in Kosovo Serb enclaves, or in the municipalities where the Kosovo Serb community represents the majority, use the curriculum of the Serbian Ministry of Education and Sports (SMES). The SMES provides schools with textbooks, diplomas and stamps and pays teachers' salaries. Today, there is no recognition by the Serbian-run schools of certificates or diplomas issued by Kosovo schools, and vice versa.

Mistrust has also led to the development of a parallel health care system in Kosovo, separate from the healthcare system run by the Kosovo Provisional Institutions of Self-Government (PISG). The OSCE has identified a number of healthcare facilities that are exclusively run by the Serbian Ministry of Health. There is no co-operation and no information sharing between the two systems.

Regarding security, the OSCE investigation found that the Serbian Ministry of Internal Affairs (MUP) has several offices located throughout Kosovo. Their activities include

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administering passports, driver's licences, identification cards and vehicle registration plates.

In order to decrease and eradicate parallel structures in Kosovo, the OSCE has made a number of recommendations for developing a strategy. These recommendations can be divided into three categories: recommendations to reduce the demand for parallel services and to improve the services offered by UNMIK and the PISG, thus gaining public confidence; recommendations to reduce the supply of parallel services by negotiating with the suppliers to curtail those activities; and finally recommendations to take enforceable measures against parallel structures.

Carsten Weber, the director of the OSCE Human Rights and Rule of Law department, presented the report to the public, declaring, "The OSCE does not tolerate the existence of parallel structures." At the same time he pointed out that more needs to be done to decrease the need for using parallel systems in Kosovo.



Sven Lindholm, OSCE Acting Spokesperson, and Carsten Weber, Director of the Human Rights and Rule of Law Department, during a press conference on parallel structures

Youth Education on Democracy

"Tolerance is a personal decision, which comes out of a belief that each person is precious. I believe that diversity is a force. It is also clear to me that ignorance, lack of sensitivity and blind confidence can convert diversity into a source of prejudices and discrimination. Let us help to preserve diversity as a source of power, and create a better environment for everyone."

- Declaration on Tolerance -

By Salih Elshani

The last half-century has been a difficult period in Kosovo's political history. As a consequence of Communist party domination and the years of conflict in the 1990s, people and in particular the young did not have the chance to experience the real values of democracy.

Moreover, there was a lack of political education not only among the young people but

among some adult members of political parties as well, which created an atmosphere of hatred and intolerance. Most members of political parties considered their political party opponents not as their competitors, but as their worst enemies. This has also had an impact on the behavior of young people in Kosovo.

Taking into account the fact the majority of Kosovo's population is relatively young, a project was designed and implemented in Suharekë/Suva Reka municipality this year to offer young people basic training about democracy. During six days of intensive training entitled 'Youth Education on Democracy', subjects like peaceful resolution of conflicts, tolerance, democratic institutions, peace and human rights were discussed.

It was impressive to hear how youth perceived and presented their views of democracy and to hear about their visions for the future. Establishment of trust among different ethnic, religious, political and gender groups, and promoting the idea that all conflicts, no matter of what kind, can be solved through peaceful means, were primary goals of the project.

Through this seminar students were offered a chance to get an education which could be used in their everyday life and spread further to their families, friends and relatives.

The tolerance issue so much discussed as a prerequisite for the advancement of Kosovo society seemed to be regarded as the main subject during this seminar, which at the end initiated an adoption of the declaration for tolerance.



Youth in Suharekë/Suva Reka learn about democracy in practice

Flow of information and the institutions

In the Western world, public institutions understand that a proper flow of information is important in establishing a good relationship between the institution, including elected or appointed officials, and the citizens being served.

By Bernard Vrban

Information is always a “two way street”. Unfortunately, Kosovo’s legacy is that of the former Yugoslavia in which the government and its agencies told the public only what the rulers deemed necessary. This can be seen in the philosophical “foundations” of the on which Yugoslavia’s Information Law was based.

Visit to Sarajevo and Mostar

Today, the International Community and its partners in Kosovo are trying to build more open and transparent institutions. The OSCE’s field presence allows it to work directly with local municipal partners towards this goal. It was with this goal in mind that the OSCE’s Democratization Department organised a trip from 19-22 October of Municipal Information Officers (MIO), also known as Spokespersons or Press Officers, from Kosovo to Bosnia and Herzegovina. The intent was also to allow for an exchange of experiences with counterparts from the City of Mostar and the municipality of Sarajevo Centar.

Initially five participants were chosen from the municipalities of Prishtinë/Priština, Pejë/Peć, Prizren, Gjilan/Gnjilane, and Leposaviq/

Freedom of Access to Information Law

The Kosovo delegation met with their counterparts from the City of Mostar and Sarajevo Centar. One day was spent in each of the municipalities. Discussions centred on the work that the MIOs were doing and some of the difficulties encountered in the job. Tools such as web sites, municipal bulletins, press conferences and media appearances were discussed, as well as relationships within the municipal structures themselves. The Sarajevo Centar experience was particularly positive given that the municipal representatives, including the mayor, described in detail how they had dealt with the responsibilities arising from the Freedom of Access to Information Law. (As a result of this law, the public institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina have to be far more accountable and responsible. Any citizen can request various sorts of information from the municipality, to which the institution must respond within a legally specified time limit, or face consequences.) This law, which was drafted with the help of the OSCE Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina, was introduced to the local actors here in Kosovo with very few changes.

Building of a new relationship

The participating MIOs will now invite their colleagues from Kosovo that were not on the trip to Mostar and Sarajevo Centar to an information sharing briefing, so that they in turn can pass along some of what was seen and heard in Bosnia and Herzegovina. They will also discuss the trip with local print journalists, showing that they understand the importance of maintaining good relations with the media.

There will be further follow-up with the MIOs and others in Kosovo’s municipalities who deal with the media periodically. The MIOs themselves have been asked to inform the OSCE how the latter can best assist them in fulfilling their daily tasks. One of the tentative plans is to invite OSCE staff to discuss points such as interview techniques, “brand marketing” and website design/content.

Together with local partners, the OSCE will continue to assist building a new philosophy in Kosovo in terms of the relationship between public institutions and the public itself. Working with the MIOs is only one way in which this is being put into action.



A view over Sarajevo

**VIOLENCE IS A CRIME
DON'T TURN YOUR BACK**



STOP VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN