



## Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

Office of the Secretary General

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**Symposium & Launch of the Publication:  
Bringing Security Home: Combating Violence against Women in the OSCE region.  
A Compilation of Good Practices**

**8 June 2009, 11 a.m., Ratsaal**

**Presentation by Jamila Seftaoui, Senior Adviser on Gender Issues**

Distinguished guests, dear colleagues,

I am pleased to introduce to you today our publication *Bringing Security Home* at the culmination of a year-long project to compile and describe some of the most innovative practices to combat violence against women. I want to begin by thanking Austria, Finland, France, Germany and Greece for their generous support to this project. A support that they know necessary against violence against women: which is a devastating crime not only for individuals but a factor that impedes a country's development in any number of spheres, that negates fundamental human rights, impairs economic and social progress, and that, both: engenders and is an indicator of deeply rooted inequality, instability, discrimination and insecurity.

As mentioned this morning by the SG and the representative of the Greek Chairmanship, addressing violence against women is fundamental to the OSCE mandate. Both, the OSCE commitments - urging participating States to eliminate violence against women, and our mandate as the Gender Section, to ensure technical knowledge and assistance to various OSCE actors in these endeavours and for achieving gender equality, - provided us with the impetus to launch this project.

The interest in preparing the reference book *Bringing Security Home* stems on the one hand from the recognition that despite decades of work to eradicate violence against women, this

crime persists in alarming proportions in every country of the world, thus any new effort bearing the promise to counter this crime is badly needed. And on the other hand the fact that knowledge about what strategies and approaches have proved to be effective against violence against women, (this knowledge) is rare, difficult to assess and rather scattered.

In developing the project, we had to consider the following challenges:

**First**, after reviewing progress by participating States, it became clear that despite a great deal of activity around violence against women, there are very few comprehensive descriptions of how specific interventions were developed or implemented. Many donor organizations report on projects they have supported, but such reports are not usually explicit about the overarching strategies underpinning the projects or significant lessons learned. NGOs seldom have resources dedicated to the promotion of their work to a wide audience. And periodic State reports on progress towards fulfilling human rights obligations usually speak in broad terms, often about national plans and strategies, without going into detail of implementation and local initiatives.

**Second**, there have been decades of work around the world dedicated to eradicating violence against women, which we know has brought many positive results. Yet, on the whole, we cannot say that women are significantly safer today- either in their homes or in the community, during conflict or peacetime. This then raises the question: is it useful to speak about “good practices” or ”successes”?

Answers to these very questions arose during the Gender Section’s expert seminar, held in Dushanbe in October 2008. The seminar encouraged interaction between organizations working directly on projects to enhance protection for victims, to change public awareness of the consequences of gender-based violence or to improve the legal system response. Most importantly, the event made clear that the experts invited are eager to learn from one another of new projects, are actively engaged in the process of information exchange and are seeking to understand what makes some approaches successful and to adapt them to local contexts.

We should not think of the problem of violence against women as insurmountable. But we should also be realists and not expect to see radical shifts in global trends. Instead, efforts should be focused on a continuous chipping away at the myriad causes of violence against

women, using a range of tactics. One of the strategic ways forward is to document concrete effective projects and promote their replication.

The compilation which I present today, is thus, designed as a tool to assist a wide range of actors in participating States, OSCE field operations and beyond. The compilation is not a template for program design but is intended as a resource that can spark new ideas among those who are developing anti-violence programs. The publication includes guidance on what makes certain interventions effective and provides sufficiently detailed information to aid implementers in adapting such activities to their own countries. The numerous examples contained in this resource, should serve as an inspiration to anyone working in this field.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The scope of the compilation is wide. **First**, it addresses all forms of violence against women, from those occurring in the home, such as domestic violence, to those in the community, such as trafficking in women and girls. The compilation gives particular attention to violence committed in situations of conflict and concedes that various forms of violence are interconnected. While tailored interventions might be difficult to replicate, we believe that macro-level strategies that are effective for some forms of violence may be adaptable to other contexts.

**Second**, the compilation is organized under the broad topics of Prevention, Protection and Prosecution, with each section divided into several sub-categories. The range of good practices and resources that are highlighted in the book is considerable. There are over 95 case studies and resources listed, and one can find examples of projects that work with children, with police officers, journalists or with medical professionals; others that show how anti-violence campaigns have been successfully launched on international flights, in hairdressing salons, at football matches or in the workplace, to name just a few. Some of the documented projects operated with considerable funding; others relied on volunteer work or were carried out as a part of routine professional responsibilities. Countries from both the Northern as well as the Southern Hemisphere added much to the body of effective interventions that are reflected in this resource.

The list continues.... but it is perhaps more useful to point out several common threads running through the good practices. Successful initiatives are **innovative**. While relying on

evidence about the causes and consequences of violence, they don't hesitate to address the problem from new angles. Good practices are those **implemented by multiple partners, across disciplines**. And they **involve women** from the outset, as stakeholders in the communities and as empowered voices for change. Many innovations have also been made in the **active and conscious involvement of men** in projects against violence against women, and a similar trend can be seen in projects that address and involve **young people**.

I would like to give you just a taste of the types of OSCE-supported and some other projects that are described in the compilation illustrating the diversity of approaches to gender based violence across the OSCE and beyond:

- In Kazakhstan, the Feminist League, an NGO, developed with OSCE support a successful campaign targeting policy makers. Using a short animated film on equal rights and opportunities, and on various discriminations, the campaign illustrates that a society that discriminates against women cannot function. Screenings were held for parliamentarians as part of a larger strategy to lobby for new legislation including on violence against women. Because they are so simple in form and virtually wordless, the cartoons have been used successfully in other Central Asian countries.
- Projects in Kyrgyzstan and Kosovo both aim to improve protection of and services for women victims of violence. The OSCE field office in Osh is supporting work with rural Kyrgyz women to develop over 20 self-support groups for victims of domestic violence. These groups assist survivors to become agents of change in their own lives, to access community resources and to interact with local authorities.
- An example of a good resource is the Gender Resource Package for Peacekeeping Operations that was developed by the UN Peacekeeping Best Practices Unit and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. It is a guide that acknowledges the differing impact of violence in armed conflicts on women and on men and demonstrates the importance that peacekeepers are not only aware of, but and do not reinforce, past discrimination and social inequities against women. The guide highlights key gender issues in each functional area of peacekeeping operations and significantly directs attention to gender based violence as an area of critical concern for all peacekeeping

personnel, civilian or military, UN political missions and NGO partners working in conflict and post conflict settings.

- In Kosovo, a working group made up of representatives from local Ministries, the police, international organizations, NGOs and shelter providers collaborated to develop standard operating procedures for the assistance of victims of trafficking, ultimately signing an agreement of cooperation. As a result of this project, coordination among service providers as well as the quality of services offered to victims of trafficking has notably improved in Kosovo.
- Projects addressing the prosecution of violence against women have focused on improving police response to cases of domestic violence, such as an OSCE/ODIHR project in the South Caucasus and Ukraine. A program carried out in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Ukraine exposes law enforcement to good practices from the OSCE region, including response models from the Austrian police, and facilitates cooperation between police and local NGOs in each country.
- In Albania, the Women's Access to Justice Project aimed to educate government officials, law enforcement and the judiciary about newly adopted legal remedies for domestic violence and to improve their abilities to enforce the law. Particular attention was given to training programs and the creation of written guidance for judges on the application of the law. Today, such manuals have become standard in the judicial practice and are part of the curriculum for new magistrates.

There are many more compelling examples in the reference book *Bringing Security Home*, including projects that address the impact of rape and sexual assault committed in the context of armed conflicts, that strive to protect women from sexual harassment and which target young people with messages on preventing dating violence. I invite you to explore the compilation yourselves keeping in mind that we never aimed to be exhaustive. This work is, in fact, in many ways a **work in progress**, especially with regard to good practices combating violence against women in armed conflicts. The evidence is: only in recent years there is a trend to address systematic violence against women as a **weapon of war** and there are only **few** and only **poorly documented** successes on the ground.

As I mentioned, the creation of this resource is intended to offer knowledge about and provoke discussion of good practices across a range of strategies for addressing violence against women. We view the compilation as being of great use to OSCE gender focal points, in particular. We also hope that it will be taken up by other personnel across the OSCE, working on such issues as human rights, democratization, anti-trafficking, rule of law, policing, military reform... Violence against women is a complex problem that requires a cross-sector approach. This compilation demonstrates the need for additional “mainstreaming” of the topic of violence against women across sectors and disciplines.

Of course, the compilation is also intended for a broader audience in the participating States—one that includes policy makers, law enforcement bodies, legal professionals, social service agencies, educators, journalists, unions, the private sector, donors and, critically, civil society organizations. We hope that this resource will open dialogue and lead to joint implementation of new initiatives.

It is my genuine belief that the time has come to multiply efforts by all members of the OSCE family to eliminate gender based violence that is hindering the stability and prosperity of many societies in the OSCE area.

That’s why I am pleased and thankful when I see here, today, many representatives of our participating States, our gender focal points across regions and institutions, representatives of some of our host countries, ODIHR, the Parliamentary Assembly, and many colleagues from within and outside the OSCE.

I have great hope that this compilation will serve as a stimulus for new partnerships and “twinning” projects that build upon the strengths of the various partners to generate further successes.

Thank you