



Transnational partner meeting
November 2-4, 2011, Sofia

PROJECT PROGRESS REPORT - SOFIA



JUST/2009/DAP3/AG/1374 -30-CE-0386233/00-27 "ICEBERG-COMMUNITY EMBRACE" Project. With financial support from the EU's DAPHNE III Programme. This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

Preliminary meetings



To establish cooperation at the local level, we've held the following meetings:

- Meeting with the Deputy Mayor of Sofia Municipality, responsible for the Municipal Police
- Meeting with the Director of Sofia's Police Directorate
- Meeting with the Head of the Social Assistance Service of Sofia Municipality

As a result, a local coalition has been established with the participation of representatives of the municipal administration, NGOs, representatives of student communities, and representatives of the police.



Identified of social partners



Profile of the local coalition members:

- police officer
- social worker
- member of the municipal council
- representative of the student community
- municipal officer
- lawyer

Local coalition training



Two training sessions for the local coalition members have been carried out, covering the following topics:

- *Legislative framework for the prevention and fight against gender based violence*
- *Getting acquainted with the practice of the police in cases of domestic violence and gender violence*
- *Psychologists presenting their experience in working with victims of gender violence*
- *Psychologists sharing their experience in working with people, who have committed gender based crimes*

Coalition experience



In cooperation with the Centre for Prevention of Law-Breaking at Sofia Municipality, an analysis of all victims of gender violence registered in the Centre has been carried out. Ten of these cases representing a variety of situations have been selected to be presented at the current meeting.

Constant observations have been carried out over the selected cases. Personalized empowerment programs have been developed for the victims in order to prevent future violence and overcome the consequences of the aggression they have suffered.

During the lifespan of the Iceberg project, the favourable / unfavourable developments in each case will be observed.

Specific measures



Together with the Sofia Centre for Prevention of Law-Breaking and other coalition members, we have been working on the following:

- Assistance and support to victims of domestic violence and trafficking.
- Creating conditions for cooperation with NGOs to provide reception facilities on schedule.
- Information campaigns, seminars, and training sessions with relevant experts.
- Attracting media to publicize the ongoing activities.
- Preparation of manuals and brochures with a preventative focus.
- Providing information about the legal rights of victims of gender-based violence.
- Assistance and legal advice.
- When necessary, referral for placement in "crisis center" for immediate support and protection.

Coalition experience promotion



We have carried out a wide range of dissemination activities, promoting the project at the local, national, and international levels:

- Presentation of the project at a seminar “Lobbying in the European Institutions” held in Sofia on 21st February 2011
- Presentation of the project at a Seminar on Bulgarian-Macedonian Municipal Cooperation, carried out on 29th March 2011
- Presentation of the project at the Public Political Forum “Lobbying in the European Institutions” /Part 2/ on 29th April 2011
- Presentation of the project at the Sixth International Conference “The European City – Municipal Governance” held in Sunny Beach on 3rd September, 2011.

At the above mentioned events, the project has been promoted to ministers, municipal officials, members of the national and the EU Parliaments, university professors, journalists, etc.

Coalition experience evaluation



- The project is very well accepted by the majority of victims of gender violence to whom it has been presented.
- The participation of representatives of Sofia Police Directorate, Sofia Municipality, the judicial authorities, and non-governmental organizations in the local coalition is a good precondition for the implementation of the project, attributing to it more weight and respect at the local level.
- The main difficulty met is in the work with gender violence victims. Their psychological instability, despair about the specific personal situation, and mistrust in the power of justice and ethics in our society make them incredulous and unwilling to be better helped by our team of experts. These problems are not directly linked to the project implementation, but they accompany this type of social activities. The patience and high professionalism of our social workers have helped in overcoming this negative effect.