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Theme Paper on

“Creating Safety in Times of Crises / Domestic Violence”

Uluslararası Çocuk Merkezi Derneđi  
(=International Children’s Center ICC)

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## - CREATING SAFETY IN TIMES OF CRISES / DOMESTIC VIOLENCE -

*Article I of the United Nations Declaration on Violence against Women defines violence against women as: "Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivations of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life".*

UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, 20 December 1993

Violence against women and girls (VAW/G) is most often perpetrated by partners, family members, and acquaintances. VAW/G is inextricably linked to social, economic, and legal inequity as a consequence of gender. VAW/G is an abuse of human rights and a major public health issue.

**Intimate partner violence** refers to behavior by an intimate partner or ex-partner that causes physical, sexual or psychological harm, including physical aggression, sexual coercion, and psychological abuse and controlling behaviors.

**Sexual violence** is any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, or other act directed against a person's sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting. It includes rape, defined as the physically forced or otherwise coerced penetration of the vulva or anus with a penis, other body part or object

**Family Violence** is an abuse of the intimate, trusting and safe relationship that a family should provide. Many women are subjected to violence and abuse from their husbands, partners or in some case other family members. One in five women will be affected by family violence at some time during their life. It is much more than physical abuse. It includes



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behavior that is threatening or controlling and makes you feel fearful for your own or another's safety and includes:

- emotional abuse (such as manipulation, isolation, put-downs, mind games),
- financial abuse,
- sexual abuse,
- threats of violence and revenge,
- property damage, smashing belongings,
- harming pets.

### **Risk factors for both intimate partner and sexual violence**

- lower levels of education (perpetration of sexual violence and experience of sexual violence);
- exposure to child maltreatment (perpetration and experience);
- witnessing family violence (perpetration and experience);
- antisocial personality disorder (perpetration);
- harmful use of alcohol (perpetration and experience);
- having multiple partners or suspected by their partners of infidelity (perpetration); and attitudes that are accepting of violence and gender inequality (perpetration and experience).

### **Risk Factors specifically associated with intimate partner violence**

- past history of violence;
- marital discord and dissatisfaction;
- difficulties in communicating between partners.

### **Factors specifically associated with sexual violence perpetration**

- Factors specifically associated with sexual violence perpetration include:
- beliefs in family honour and sexual purity;
- ideologies of male sexual entitlement; and
- weak legal sanctions for sexual violence.



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## FACTS ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

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- According to a 2013 global review of available data, 35 per cent of women worldwide have experienced either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence. However, some national violence studies show that up to 70 per cent of women have experienced physical and/or sexual violence in their lifetime from an intimate partner
- In Australia, Canada, Israel, South Africa and the United States, intimate partner violence accounts for between 40 and 70 per cent of female murder victims
- More than 64 million girls worldwide are child brides, with 46 per cent of women aged 20–24 in South Asia and 41 per cent in West and Central Africa reporting that they married before the age of 18. Child marriage resulting in early and unwanted pregnancies poses life-threatening risks for adolescent girls; worldwide, pregnancy-related complications are the leading cause of death for 15-to-19-year-old girls
- Approximately 140 million girls and women in the world have suffered female genital
- Trafficking ensnares millions of women and girls in modern-day slavery. Women and girls represent 55 per cent of the estimated 20.9 million victims of forced labour worldwide, and 98 per cent of the estimated 4.5 million forced into sexual exploitation
- Between 40 and 50 per cent of women in European Union countries experience unwanted sexual advances, physical contact or other forms of sexual harassment at work
- Women in urban areas are twice as likely as men to experience violence, particularly in developing countries
- Women are already two to four times more likely than men to become infected with HIV during intercourse. Forced sex or rape increases this risk by limiting condom use and causing physical injuries
- 603 MILLION women live in countries where domestic violence is not yet considered a crime.
- Up to 7 IN 10 WOMEN in the world report having experienced physical and/or sexual violence at some point in their lifetime.



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- Worldwide, up to 50% of sexual assaults are committed against girls UNDER THE AGE OF 16.
- As many as 1 IN 4 WOMEN experience physical or sexual violence during pregnancy

## THE HIGH COST OF VIOLENCE

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- Annual costs of intimate partner violence have been calculated at USD 5.8 billion in the United States in 2003 and GBP 22.9 billion in England and Wales in 2004
- A 2009 study in Australia estimated the cost of violence against women and children at AUD 13.6 billion per year

### PHYSICAL HEALTH COSTS

- The health consequences of sexual violence are numerous and varied, and include physical and psychological effects, both in short-term and in the long-term
- Victims are powerless to negotiate for safe sex placing them at risk of unwanted pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases and HIV
- Individuals who have experienced violence may suffer a range of physical injuries, genital and non-genital, or in extreme cases, death. Death can result either from the act of violence itself, or from acts of retribution (punishment for reporting the crime) or from suicide
- Sexual assault victims are at an increased risk from: unwanted pregnancy, unsafe abortion, STIs, including HIV/AIDS, sexual dysfunction, infertility, pelvic pain and pelvic inflammatory disease and others, including genital injuries

### MENTAL HEALTH COSTS

- Most significantly perhaps, violence and sexual abuse can have devastating long-term psychological effects influencing and radically altering a person's entire life course
- Victims often report feelings of guilt and anger
- Anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder and sleep disturbances have been associated with those who experience violence



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- Reports show that teenagers that have been sexually abused and therefore feel no control over their sexuality are more likely to take sexual risks such as not using condoms or other forms of contraception
- Studies have shown a link between those who have suffered from sexual abuse and attempted suicide
- Reports have found an association between being a victim of rape with future substance abuse and violent behavior

## **SOCIAL COSTS**

- Long term effects of violence against young people can reduce their productivity in school and later in employment
- The victim can suffer from societal discrimination and rejection, even from family members and friends

## **VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN EUROPE – QUICK FACTS**

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According to the Domestic Violence against Women Report coordinated by the Directorate-General for Communication:

- While a significant minority of people (27%) across the European Union believe that domestic violence against women is very common in their country, a majority of respondents (51%) say that this kind of violence is fairly common<sup>15</sup>.
- Only a small cross-section of European society thinks that domestic violence is either not very common (17%) or not at all common (1%), with 4% saying they do not know.
- An overwhelming majority (84%) of EU respondents say that violence against women is unacceptable and should always be punishable by law<sup>16</sup>.
- A noticeable minority (12%) believe that this kind of violence is unacceptable but should not always be punishable by law, while a very small fringe thinks that domestic violence is acceptable in certain circumstances (2%) or in all circumstances (1%).
- During their lives, 25.4% of women in the European region experience physical and/or sexual violence by intimate partners, and 5.2% experience sexual violence from people who are not their partner.



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- Between 40 and 50 percent of women in European Union countries experience unwanted sexual advances, physical contact or other forms of sexual harassment at work.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

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- Increase data collection and research into violence against women and girls in the community
- Promote gender equality through addressing cultural and social customs that have been associated with gender based violence such as early female marriage
- Increase awareness about sexual violence in the community
- Increase knowledge, life-skills, and awareness about healthy relationships to youth in schools and out of schools
- Governments should implement policy to protect victims of violence
- Ensure that young people who are victims of violence are able to access appropriate services, such as youth friendly counseling, social, psychological and medical services

*Having open and honest discussions about what violence is, in a safe environment, can have a massive impact in stopping violence*

Sangam World Centre Leader

## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SAFETY

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- Talk with people you trust
- Consider what you might do to increase safety
- Memorize the numbers you might need to use in an emergency,
- Plan how you would escape if you needed to.
- Consider talking with your children about safety.
- Prepare an emergency bag.



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## YOUR THREE STEP PLAN TO STAY SAFE

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### Step One -Plan

- Make family members or friends aware of your plans, times of arrival and return.
- For example, if you are going out for an evening to socialize with friends or on a date, give details of where you are going and your arrival time.
- Plan your journey or night out from start to finish.
- Try not use any taxi that you have not booked from a licensed operator. Always check taxi company details and the ID of the driver, if you are unsure. Taxi drivers are obliged to give this information to passengers.
- If you are travelling alone in a taxi, sit in the rear and use your mobile phone to let people know where you are and ask the driver for his or her taxi licence number to give to the person you are calling.

### Step Two - Communication

- Arrange times to contact the people you have made aware of your plans.
- Make sure that someone knows where you are going and what time you will be home.
- For example, let people know that you have arrived safely and give a time when you will be ringing again to let them know you are OK , and also, if you have made any changes to your plans.
- When going to a pub, club or party avoid going alone. Friends can watch out for each other.
- Consider very carefully whether you should leave the pub, club or party with someone you have just met.
- Telephone someone if you decide to go elsewhere.

### Step Three - Be aware of your own safety or the safety of friends

- Stay aware of what is going on around you and away from situations that you do not feel comfortable with.
- Drug assisted rape can happen, make it difficult for anyone to spike your drink by:
  - > Having a nominated drinks-watcher – a member of your group who does not drink or will have decided not to drink alcohol on this occasion
  - > Never accept a drink from anyone you do not completely trust
  - > Do not share or exchange drinks



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- > Don't leave your drink unattended, even when going to the toilet
- > If you begin to feel really drunk after only a drink or two seek help from a trusted friend or a member of the club or pub management
- > Sexual predators will seek out a possible victim if they appear alone, sexual predators do not like groups, groups provide too many witnesses
- > You must be sure you have absolute trust in the person you seek help from no matter how long you have known them
- > It is important to get to a place of safety as soon as possible.

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## WHAT MOTHER CENTERS CAN DO TO PREVENT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

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According to the outcomes of the discussions held in the partnership countries, it was noted that, apart from Turkey, talks on domestic violence is a taboo and women consider it as a very private situation in their lives. It is of vital importance that people should be informed about the problem through awareness raising activities. Mother Centers have a great role in families' lives. In order to prevent domestic violence and/or help victims of violence, mother centers should take necessary steps such as: Awareness Raising: Notes/posters on boards, brochures around the mother center

- Paying importance to confidentiality
- Arrange talks in teams about experiences
- Including network of mother centers to reach more people: Having informal discussions in the network to share experiences and raise awareness
- Listening what every individual ask for
- Raising capacity of the Mother Center volunteers and paid workers on helping victims



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