



**SPREADING  
PROMISING  
PRACTICES**

**Annual Report  
Autonomous Women's Center  
Belgrade, 2007**

The Autonomous Women's Centre (AWC) is a non-governmental organization (NGO) founded in 1993.

Work of the AWC is based on feminist principles and theory.

The AWC offers professional support to women who survive violence, cooperates with various professional institutions and encourages strengthening of women's networks.

The AWC goal is to advocate women's human right to life without violence in the purpose of strengthening the civil society.

## CONTEXT

The most important events that defined the *political context* in 2007 were: parliamentary elections (January 2007); the constitution of new Government through a coalition agreement among political parties of “democratic orientation”(May 2007); redefinition of positions at Ministries (June 2007), which resulted in delays of the planned activities of the Government, and instead of program budgets, linear budgets were adopted again; presidential elections were announced for January 2008, and then the local and early parliamentary elections for May 2008; Serbia is in a deep economic crisis and serious danger of alienating from the EU integrations due to the proclamation of Kosovo independence.

Estimations of the *socio-economic situation* point to the slight improvement - 8.8% of the population was classified as poor. In 2007, the gross domestic product was 5,7%, and the annual inflation rate was 6,6%. However, citizens did not feel the improvement on the macroeconomic plane.

Unemployment was still very much present and dissatisfaction of those employed was expressed in strikes, especially in the public sector, health and social care and education.

Such a political and socio-economic situation *was not a good context for the implementation of reforms* and passing of strategic and legal frameworks, particularly in the field of social policy, and specifically in the field of gender equality and domestic violence, which thus became the fields of low priority. The Republic of Serbia showed considerable delay in the implementation of the gender equality policy. There is still no *National Plan for Combating Violence against Women*, a separate body that would be dealing with this issue nor has sufficient attention been generated on the international documents of the United Nations and the Council of Europe. In May 2007, Serbia defended its *Initial Report on the Status of Women* before the UN Committee, and the *Concluding Comments of the CEDAW Committee* are the groundwork for the orientation to future activities (CEDAW/C/SCG/CO/June 1, 2007).

*Reforms in important institutions include:* police, justice, social care system and the process of decentralization (budget and program), with which the local authorities will undertake more responsibilities for the social policy in the community. However, the reform processes are considerably slower than planned. There is an acceptable *legal framework* related to the protection from domestic violence, but the *implementation of laws* shows a series of shortcomings. The normative framework for initiation of changes in the social policy at the local level has also been developed, but local authorities do not use these possibilities, mainly due to the lack of capacities or out of political reasons. *The challenges* in the social and institutional context in the field of prevention and protection from domestic violence are numerous: the lack of clear state policy, standardized *protocols* on proceedings of professionals, operationalised *agreements* on cooperation among institutions; high level of *prejudices* among professionals; lack of *services* for providing support to women, financed by the state; lack of *programs for the work with perpetrators*; lack of adequate and systemic *education* for employees in public services and future professionals; domestic violence is still not a subject of systemic *research and observation*; lack of standardized *records* and valid *official data* on the scope and characteristic of the phenomenon.

## AWC'S PROGRAMS & PROJECTS

### I Good Practice Development Program in the Field of Domestic Violence (GPDP)

1) *Let's Bond the Community!* - Encourage activities of local government, public services and non-governmental organizations in building up a model of integral interventions in the domestic violence field (implementation period: January 1 2006 - December 31, 2006; donor: HIVOS, Netherlands)

2) *Domestic Violence - a Barrier to Development* - Cooperation with judicial institutions in prevention and protection from domestic violence (implementation period: October 1, 2005 - September 30, 2007; donor: Development Cooperation Ireland)

3) *Start with Yourself* - recognize violence in partner relationship (implementation period: February 1 - December 31, 2007; donor: Care International)

4) *Do you see violence against women* - participation and impact on public policies (implementation period: May 2007 - May 2008; donor: Institute for Sustainable Communities (USAID))

5) *Civil Society Contact Organizations* - target group women - for the Poverty Reduction Strategy implementation (implementation period: June 1, 2007 - June 1, 2008; donor: Team of the Vice President of the Serbian Government for PRS Implementation)



### II. Therapeutic and Legal Support for Women Victims of Violence

6) *Women for Life Without Violence* - Therapeutic and legal support for women victims of violence (implementation period: January 1, - December 31, 2007; donator: Caritas Wien, Heart and Hand Fund, Global Fund for Women, Kvinna Till Kvinna, Filia, City of Belgrade, Municipalities Savski Venac, BCIF)

7) *Coordination of the Women Against Violence Network Serbia* - (April - December 2007; funding: Kvinna till Kvinna)

### III. Women's Health Program

8) *Building bridges between gender-based violence survivors and health care providers* (implementation period: May 1, 2006 - October 31, 2007; donator: CAFOD and CIDA contribution funds)

9) *Empowering women through Self-help groups* (implementation period: December 1, 2006 - November 31, 2007; donator: UNFPI)



## I. GOOD PRACTICE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM IN THE FIELD OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE (GPDV)

### 1) *Let's Bond the Community!*

*Project goals:* Contributing to development of a sustainable model of integral social intervention in the field of domestic violence on the local level.

*Participants and beneficiaries:* 1) Representatives of local authorities in 9 municipalities in Serbia (7% Loznica and Voždovac to 15% Kragujevac); 2) Representatives of Centers for Social Welfare (26%), Police (7%), Primary Health Care workers (125), representatives of prosecutor's offices (3%), courts (2%), schools (29%), NGOs (7%) - 850 persons; 3) Public - citizens in 9 municipalities in Serbia; *The gender structure:* 86% women and 14% men.

*Activities for 2007:* 1) 35 *consultation meetings* with representatives of municipalities and CSW were held; 2) 30 one-day and 5 two-day seminars were realized; 2 seminar on action planning in the local community were organized; All the municipalities prepared their action plans for 2008;

Relevant educational material was prepared and distributed to all the participants; The information material for citizens was prepared and distributed; 3) There were 2 inter-municipal meetings organized for exchanging good practices and planning lobbying activities for key changes, 5 "good practice presentation", 13 workshops; 4) 46 *case conferences* were held in Belgrade CSW; Alternative activities were initiated in all municipalities; 5) Lobbying activities were organized: representatives of local communities were active in lobbying for allocation of budget funds for the prevention and protection services, integration of the activities in the local plans of social protection, forming coordination bodies for local policy of prevention and protection from domestic violence; 2 *public discussions* were organized: on national strategies of prevention and protection from domestic violence against women with representatives of relevant state structures and on representing and discussing achievements on local level during the period of project implementation in the field of domestic violence in comparison to national reform process; 6) Local media activities, and media activities of the members of the GPDV were organized; direct effect of increased media activity is two-three times more reports of violence in 2007.

### 2) *Domestic Violence - a Barrier to Development*

*Project goals:* To raise awareness of judiciary and governmental authorities to develop effective strategies and prevention measures for better protection of victims of domestic violence, and develop local network for combating domestic violence.

*Participants and beneficiaries:* Direct Beneficiaries (the total of around 400): a) judges (50%) and public prosecutors (12.1%), representatives of Department of Internal Affairs (17.5%), representatives of Centers for Social Welfare (18%), and other services (attorneys, representatives of local government and similar); 322 participants in public events, 206 in one-day seminars and 64 in meetings; b) women victims of domestic violence (22 women represented in court and 6 women which cases have been monitored); c) *Indirect Beneficiaries:* clients of the AWC, at the CSW, police, court; *The gender structure:* 80% women and 20% men.

*Activities for 2007:* 1) Two round tables and media presentations organized regarding results of the research *Domestic violence as criminal act: Judicial practice in Belgrade and Nis* (October 2007) in Belgrade and Nis. 2) a. Five meetings were organized with the representatives of the relevant institutions (prosecution, court, lawyers from CSW, AWC attorneys) with the intention to equalize legal practice. b.

*Meeting* of all family law judges in Belgrade (May, 2007). The idea of this meeting was to exchange "good practices" regarding actions and decisions taken by family law judges. 3) *Lobbying activities* conducted for the introduction of changes in policies and practices of institutions and further legal changes: a. *Six Working meetings* of professionals from various institutions (from judiciary, prosecution offices, police, CSW and health care services); b. *Lobbying conference*: "Austrian model of intervention in cases of DV" (participants were *key state institutions*); c. *Informational seminar* "Austrian model of intervention in cases of DV" (for representatives of all relevant institutions); d. *lobbying meeting with President of the Magistrate Court in Belgrade*; e. *Policy papers* - document with recommendations for changes and amendments to laws (9 proposals for changes to the Criminal Code, 12 recommendations for changes to the Family Law and 12 general recommendations for changes of procedures) submitted to the Ministry of Justice. At the beginning of 2008, The Ministry distributed the recommendations to all courts in Serbia for commenting; all public lobbying meetings were adequately covered by media. 4) *AWC attorneys* represented 22 women in 27 court cases in the total amount of 120 court appearances; 5) Printed and distributed planned educative, promotional and materials for lobbying.

### 3) *Start with yourself*

*Project goals*: Contribution to establishing efficient ways of prevention and protection from gender based violence of youth, through: a) increasing the level of general students' knowledge on gender based violence and gender equality issues; b) increasing motivation of students for self-organizing and participation in prevention and protection; c) increasing motivation for active participation in changing policies and procedures of educational institutions and students organizations.

*Participants and beneficiaries*: Direct Beneficiaries (the total of around 550): a) 369 university students (147 workshop participants, 12 peer educators, around 190 participants in lectures in Belgrade and Niš; 20 students completed instructive trainings); b) students' organizations (SUS, SS, ELSA, students' parliaments); c) around 200 high school students, participants of the panel discussions from Novi Sad, Čuprija, Veliko Gradište and Belgrade; *The gender structure*: (approximately) 60% women and 40% men.

*Activities*: 1) *Educational and informative activities* - a. 26 workshops held with students from 6 faculties in 4 towns in Serbia; b. two-day training for 20 peer educators who will implement the Strategy on Youth Health of RS; c. 2 lectures at the Faculty of Law in Niš and the Faculty of Political Sciences in Belgrade; d. 4 public discussions in 4 towns in Serbia for high-school students; e. the informative-educational material printed and distributed in 4 towns in Serbia; f. AWC became a member of the Y-PEER network; g. project participants participated in prize competitions on violence against women and the conference "Role of education in combating gender-based violence" (Zenica, BiH, November 2007); h. the research "Violence does not just go away" of NGO CESI from Zagreb (Croatia) was presented; 2) *Self-organizing for peer counseling* - a. 11 attendees of the training for SOS consultants had a three-month practice in AWC; b. 4 additional workshops were realized; c. 3 girls became SOS volunteers for AWC; 3) *Advocacy and lobbying actions* - a. a group of peer educators (8) interested in analyzing school curricula and textbooks for faculties formed; b. methodology for monitoring and analysis of the curricula for 4 faculties formulated; c. review of gender sensitivity in university curricula and textbooks will be created.



#### 4) *Do you see violence against women?*

*Project goals:* Increased impact of women's nongovernmental organizations on the *public policies* in the field of violence against women and domestic violence in the context of women's human rights issues.

*Participants and beneficiaries:* Direct Beneficiaries were the widest public in Serbia (it is difficult to assess the scope): a) media appearances: in 2007, AWC had 182 media appearances in local and national electronic and printed media including websites; b) the add for the campaign *16 days of activism* published in 18 printed media; 50,000 leaflets were distributed in Serbian towns; There were approximately 350 guests at the opening and around 600 people visited exhibition; in November 2007, AWC website counted 10,189 visitors, 13,547 visits and 33,837 visited pages.

*Activities:* 1) *Monitoring state activities in the Council of Europe campaign:* a. AWC translated and distributed to all of its associates from relevant ministries, state legal institutions and public services following CoE document; b. AWC participated in *The 4<sup>th</sup> regional seminar "Protection and Special Support by the Police, Health Care professionals and Social Workers for Victims of DV"* in Skopje, Macedonia, (September, 2007). 2) *National policy against domestic violence/violence against women:* a. series of lobbying activities was organized for the adoption of *Declaration against Violence against Women* at the national parliament and for the creation of the *Strategy for the protection from gender-based violence* at the national level; b. AWC participated in two parliamentary discussions on violence against women (May and November 2007) and the first national conference on violence against women organized by the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy (October 2007). c. AWC is invited to take a part in the creation of *The Violence against Women Strategy for the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina*, under the auspices of the Secretariat for work, employment and gender equality and APV Ombudsman. 3) *Organizing an international campaign 16 Days of Activism against Violence against Women* at the national level and the exhibition *Offbeat: Look and See violence Against Women*. Thirty-six (36) media in Belgrade and 35 media at the local level supported the campaign. The campaign material encompassed: 100 posters, 50.000 leaflets, video and audio ad, banner, advertisement for the newspapers and magazines, 300 catalogues for the exhibition and 200 invitations for the exhibition.

#### 5) *Civil Society Contact Organizations (CSCO)*

*Project goals:* a) establishing *continuous two-way mechanism of communication* among women's civil society organizations (CSO), Team for PRS Implementation and the Government representatives (Ministries); b) *improving knowledge and instigating active participation* of women's CSO in the process of monitoring and evaluation of activities and effects of PRS implementation and creation of annexes and comments related to state policies.

*Participants and beneficiaries:* Direct Beneficiaries are representatives of 40 women's NGOs in Serbia; 15 contact persons at Ministries of the Serbian Government; *Indirect Beneficiaries* are women in Serbia affected by the state policies, laws, programs and projects.

*Activities:* 1) *Mediating* in establishing and *facilitating* two-way communication between women's CSO and decision makers at the national level, through: creation of a database on 40 women's CSO (fields: economy/labor/employment, education, social care/domestic violence /women's and children's trafficking, health) and resource maps, distributed to all the Ministries, inclusion of women's NGOs in the local councils and the process of planning social care at the local level, inclusion in the process of annual operational planning for 2008 and 2009; 2) *Organizing educational workshops* for enhancing knowledge and skills of women's organizations in the processes of (independent) monitoring and assessment of (implementation) of state policies and strategies, as well as advocating for the processes contributing to the enhancement of the status of women; c) *gathering and analysis* of data on activities of women's



organizations in Serbia related to women's poverty, as well as on experiences in establishing cooperation with government institutions at the local and national level (from March 2008).

## KEY RESULTS ACCORDING TO PROGRAMS' STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

### Building the integral model of prevention and protection from domestic violence

The results of the mentioned activities in regards to the *successfulness of development of 6 elements of the integral model* can be summarized in the following way:

1) *Common reference framework for all services - definitions and working principles*: This element is the *basis* of the integral model, and most effort was put in developing the understanding of gender concept of domestic violence and mechanisms enrooted in it. The

“critical mass” of professionals in centers for social work, police, judiciary and local self-government has *adopted* this reference framework, resulting in *changes* in their practice. All the project participants assessed the education as professionally organized and very useful in practice. *Progress indicators* in this field are: increased number of registered violence, increased number of criminal acts, shorter prosecuting procedure, participation of victims in the process of developing the plan for protection from violence, improving the protection of victims.

2) *Policies and procedures within all services*: The GDPD Team has developed Protocol on Police Proceedings and Protocol on the Proceedings of Professionals in CSW, Agreement on Cooperation of institutions and organizations at the local level and Guidebook for Organizing Case Conferences. Their current implementation depends on the *motivation of employees* in the institutions, since they have not been adopted/recommended by decision makers (town and national level), although there have been a number of initiatives in that direction.

3) *Continuous organized exchange of information, and 4) Coordination of the prevention and protection measures*: In all the municipalities, a local, informal network of institutions and individuals was *formed*, active in the prevention and protection of domestic violence and ready to participate in the activities of establishing the model of coordinated action. In all the municipalities, the GDPD Team has signed the *agreement* on cooperation with the executives in the centers for social work and local administration. *Good cooperation* was established among CSW and police, local self-governments, pre-school institutions, schools and NGOs. Representatives of local authorities are willing to *financially support* the work of CSW and influence *raising awareness of public* in the field of domestic violence. The cooperation with judicial system is more difficult to achieve. All the municipalities have produced their *action plans* for 2008, which include further development and formalization of cooperation among the institutions.

5) *Monitoring and assessment of effects*: CSWs have their electronic records of cases of domestic violence installed, although there are difficulties in the systematic keeping of records (the lack of computers or computers not being networked, as well as the lack of computer skills and difficulties with coding). During the year, there were some new attempts to *assess the services* by beneficiaries, but this practice did not

become a continuous and institutionalized one, and more should be done in that regard in the upcoming period by explaining the direct benefit of such activities. The feedback information on beneficiaries is still best received through *revision meetings* of case conferences. Furthermore, several CSWs have introduced *self-evaluation* of their activities which has produced considerable changes but also pointed to the need for further work on establishing and stabilization of the achieved results.

6) *Information availability in the community*: Distribution of information material, the use of local media and organization of public events is the best implemented element of the “model”, resulting in increased *visibility* of the issue of domestic violence in all the municipalities and *more reported cases of violence*. All the municipalities accepted to participate in the Council of Europe campaign “Stop Domestic Violence against Women” by organizing various actions (5 municipalities used their own funds for printing posters and leaflets) and all of them participated in the campaign “16 days of activism against violence against women”.

### Creating supportive institutional and social surroundings

1) *Building capacities for horizontal transfer of the model to other municipalities*: Certain CSWs have already started (independently or in cooperation with the GPDP Team) horizontal transfer of the model at the level of *promotion activity*. The fact that the GPDP Team has *accredited its educational program*, planning the first trainings of future trainers in 2008 will help them in the future.

An important step towards development of the supportive surroundings is the *inclusion of local self-governments* in the “coordination model” and their closer affiliation with CSW. Common *action plans* for 2008 were created at seminars on *strategic and action planning*. Both municipalities (Loznica, Cuprija) that have completed local strategic planning of social policy, integrated the action plans related to domestic violence into their strategic plans. Unfortunately, the majority of the municipalities with which the GPDP works are not encompassed with the project for development of local strategies of the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy.

2) *Lobbying for the integration of the model in the national policy of prevention and protection from domestic violence*: *Local actors* of the integral model have participated in round tables, public discussions and conferences (organized by the Team or state institutions through the Team) where they had the opportunity to *influence* decision makers at the national level. The *result* of the advocacy activities in the national level is the fact that AWC has gained great reputation among decision makers but still insufficient impact on social policies and the change of legal regulations.

3) *Increasing the scope of informed and engaged reporting on domestic violence*: The GPDP Team has also initiated systematic *cooperation with the media*, trying to advocate for informed and engaged reporting in the field of domestic violence. The campaigns and public events so far, organized by AWC, created preconditions for successful cooperation. Through consultative meetings with 10 journalists and in cooperation with a media expert, the *Guidebook for Media* will be finalized. The media will certainly have an important role in developing advocacy strategy for certain initiatives.

The activities *focused on empowering future professionals in the field of domestic violence* are also important for the creation of the supportive surroundings for the integral model of prevention and protection from domestic violence - students of psychology, pedagogy, sociology, defectology, social work, law and medicine. In this way, *human resources* are developed, ready to change practices in institutions in accordance with the international and professional standards. In the future, these activities should be closely linked with other program activities.

## KEY PROJECT ACTIVITIES

## II. THERAPEUTIC AND LEGAL SUPPORT FOR WOMEN VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE

### 6) *Women for Life Without Violence*

*Project goal:* Strengthening women survivors of violence to overcome the trauma of violence, oppose violence they live in, become autonomous, find choices for their lives and demand their rights.

*Participants and beneficiaries:* 1,790 women. *The social characteristics* of the beneficiaries: disabled women - 2%, single mothers - 8%, ex psychiatric experience - 9,5%, Roma women - 8%, from villages - 7,2%, refugees/displaced - 2%, discriminated nationalities - 1%, lesbians - 1%; 75% of beneficiaries income is less than average salary in Serbia (around 200€).

*Health of beneficiaries:* The data base on 187 beneficiaries shows that 71% of women have health problems due to violence: 62% have problems with sleep; 96% feel tension, worry and nervousness; 87% feel tired all the time; 68% had blue scars on body; 33% have been physically abused during pregnancy.

*Activities:* 1) *Direct Counseling:* a. 1530 individual counseling (40 - 50 minutes direct psychological support, 8 hours, working days); b. *SOS Hotline - phone counseling* - 1670 SOS hotline services (8 hours, working days); c. *E-mail consultations* - in a first year of e-mail counseling - received 220 e-mails; d. *SOS legal hotline* (4 hours, working days) - 1250 legal phone counseling; e. *social work aid* - 24 sessions; f. *psychiatrist support* 20 sessions.

*Types of violence:* a. *violence in family & relationship* (psychological, physical, economic, sexual, stalking) - 75%; b. *sexual violence* (rape, rape attempt, sexual harassment) - 9%; *psychological problems in family relations* (alcoholism, drug addiction, conflicts) - 9%; *discrimination traumas* (sexism, racism, homophobia, poverty) - 6%.

2) *Mental health care for the counselors in the team:* implementing *Feminist ethics of care* in the counseling team protocols, which implies taking care of oneself through: monthly individual supervision with a psychotherapist, daily interventions among counselors on duty, weekly group intervention, holiday increase, café outing with colleagues, permanent therapy education, strategic planning.

### 7) *Coordination of the Women Against Violence Network Serbia*

*Project goal:* Information dissemination of local and international news on violence against women, support and data base collection for women's organisation of the Network.

*Beneficiaries:* 32 local women's organisations from 25 towns in Serbia.



## KEY PROJECT ACTIVITIES

### III. WOMEN'S HEALTH PROGRAM

#### *8) Building bridges between gender-based violence survivors and health care providers*

*Project goal:* Standardization of procedures for gender-based violence survivors in Primary Health Care Settings according to assessment of beneficiaries and providers needs

*Participants and beneficiaries:* The total number participants were 324 Primary Health Care providers (85 % female and 15% male). Direct beneficiaries were 1997 women/patients of 12 Health Centers in Belgrade and Serbia, as well as women's population in 12 municipalities in Belgrade and Serbia where the project was implemented.

*Activities in 2007:* 1. Creation and assessment of standards/protocol:

This activity started in the same time with trainings and followed the trainings in particular health settings during 18 months. Objective for this activity was to create high quality standards/protocols and to improve documenting system. The protocol content was composed according to the existing international standards and the international recommendation for good practice respecting local circumstances and cultural context. Discussion and assessment was performed by project participants, expert team and appointed member of Ministry of Health. The total number of valid filled in, analyzed and assessed forms was 1997. The analysis showed good quality and sufficient contribution for drafting and writing good practice guidelines manual. 2. Partner capacity building: a) Three additional trainings were organized in May, 2007, as the continuation of the activity performed during 2006 and due to the expressed needs by Health Center's Teams. Participants were Health Center Team members from 12 Health Centers six from Belgrade and six from towns in Serbia. The objectives for additional trainings were: 1. analysis of achieved outputs in particular setting; 2. project's implementation progress. 3. exchange of experiences; 4. readiness/capability to continue sustainable work on GBV. Health Care Providers from 10 Health Centers from Belgrade. The number of participants was 171; 144 (84.21%) female and 27 (15.79%) male. Secretariat for Health, City Assembly of Belgrade, supported trainings. b) Meeting held in City Assembly of Belgrade included Health Care Providers from 10 Health Centers from Belgrade. The objective of the meeting was to inform larger number of professionals on the good practice model in managing GBV in Health Care System. Number of attendants was 153.

*Results:* Acquired knowledge and skills during the project implementation were considered as satisfactory and can contribute to the development and improvement of services within the Health Care Sector. In the same time the cultural context and rooted gender role perception show the need for introduction of permanent education and in basic educational CV's.

3. Advocacy and Lobbying: The objectives of these activities were to: a) sensitize and motivate authorities to support the introduction of good practice model, in health sector, on national and local level, b) formal adoption of standards, and c) present results achieved. Results: Program Women's Health submitted the request and concomitant documentation to Ministry of Health for the approval of GBV documenting form in daily practice. Program Women's Health consigned the file of documents to: Committee for family and Health - Parliament of Serbia; Committee for gender equality - Parliament of Serbia; Governmental Counsel for gender equality - Ministry for Social Affairs and Secretariat for Health - City Assembly of Belgrade in order to initiate and stimulate development of strategies and policies as long-term objectives.

Ministry of Health acknowledged the GBV recording form and undertook responsibility to copy, distribute and recommend it for use in daily practice<sup>1</sup>. The form is also put into the procedure to enter the Law as the obvious legal and official document. 4. Violence against women, my professional responsibility- Manual for primary health care providers was the printed and promoted in November, 2007. This manual present and offer to the professional audience the first text of this kind was in our language. AWC created, printed and distributed following materials: a) Poster, showing the standardized procedure for women GBV survivors (2000 copies) and b) Leaflet, short information on what each institution in charge has to do and how patients can obtain their rights through the system (6000 copies).



### *9) Empowering women through Self-help groups*

*Project goal* was to empower women to: develop the lasting strength, discover inner resources of the strength, change the role of victim into the role of survivor and transform the surviving models into strength to make decisions in their lives.

*Participants:* 1) self-help groups: 123 women. 2) Lobbying and advocating: 23 women (Women's Health Program, AWC members and health care professionals) 3) Capacity building: 28 participants (3 Women's Health Program education team members and 25 professionals from Health Center - Savski venac, Belgrade).



This project was implemented last six years because self-help group concept is the precious tool to improve the quality of women's life and works toward gender equality. Involvement in self-help groups implies working to gain control over our lives and our future. It means a commitment to the rights of women. We organized self-help groups on three issues: domestic violence, breast cancer and cardiovascular diseases. Two women (for each group) were appointed to conduct the group. The process in self-help groups lasted 6 to 8 weeks. The group sessions took place once a week and lasted for two hours. Mutual activities were, also, performed: a) creating of advertisement and two pamphlets (for women with breast cancer and for other women); b) Lobbying and advocating for acceptance of the principles of self - help concept in the institutions (Institute for Oncology, Health Center Savski Venac and Sopot, other NGO's); c) Capacity building/Education of professionals on self-help group concept and establishment of self-help groups in institutional settings. Results were measured upon evaluation forms, interviews with participants and conductors rating. 85% reached the project goal, 7% needed additional support by individual counseling and 8% needed to continue the work in the group.

---

<sup>1</sup> Second Report on Implementation of depression of poverty in Serbia, Belgrade, 2007

Good Practice Development  
Program in the Field of  
Domestic Violence  
Tanja Ignjatović - *koordinatorka*  
Bobana Macanović  
Irina Ljubić  
Ivana Slavković  
Jelena Keserović  
Katarina Kaplarski  
Nataša Jovanović  
Sonja Lalić  
Vanja Macanović

Therapeutic and Legal Support  
for Women Victims of Violence  
Lepa Mladenović - *koordinatorka*  
Bojana Kostić  
Dragana Milojević  
Diana Miladinović  
Duška Jovanović  
Ivana Slavković  
Jelena Anđelovski  
Jelena Savić  
Jelena Nikolić

Ksenija Perišić  
Lepa Mladenović  
Ljerka Mezga Čurčin  
Marija Krivačić  
Marija Miličević  
Marija Stanković  
Marija Stegić  
Milena Bošković  
Milena Timotijević  
Mirjana Wagner  
Nevena Stević  
Sadija Gicić  
Sanja Kalčević  
Saša Pokrajac  
Slavoljupka Pavlović  
Tanja Drobniak  
Tijana Popivoda  
Vesna Miličević

Women's Health Program  
Stanislava Otašević - *koordinatorka*  
Biljana Smajić  
Divna Matijašević  
Lukrecija Vranješević

Sandra Begović  
Tanja Janjić  
Maja Ivančević

Board  
Bobana Macanović  
Divna Matijašević  
Dragana Vujanović  
Lepa Mladenović  
Stanislava Otašević

Office  
Donka Ćirić  
Dragana Vujanović  
Dragana Ilić  
Nada Žarković  
Marko Baštovanović  
Marko Obradović  
Slađana Radulović

In 2007 the work of the Autonomous Women's Centre was supported by the following organizations:

Balkan Community Initiatives Fund (BCIF), Belgrade;  
Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA);  
CARE International;  
Caritas, Wien;  
Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD);  
City of Belgrade;  
Development Cooperation Ireland;  
FILIA, Germany;  
Global Fund for Women, Los Angeles;  
Hands and Heart Fund, San Francisco;  
HIVOS, Netherlands;  
Institute for Sustainable Communities, USA;  
Irish Aid;  
Kvinna Till Kvinna, Stockholm;  
Municipalities Savski Venac, Belgrade;  
Poverty Reduction Strategy Team;  
Primary School St. Georgije, Uzdin;  
Pro Helvetia, Switzerland;  
Social Affairs Indjija and Paracin;  
The Council of Europe;  
UNIFEM, Belgrade;  
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP);  
United Nations Foundations for International Partnership (UNFPA)  
We are grateful to them for believing in our work

#### *Networking*

AWC is a member of the international networks:  
WAVE - European Network against Violence; NEWW -  
the Network of East-West Women; VAWW - Violence  
against Women in War Network; OBOSTRANS -  
international women's health network, observer in  
the EWL - European Women's Lobby.  
AWC initiated the establishment of *Network of  
Organizations Working with Women Survivors of  
Violence* in Serbia with 32 women's organisations.  
From 2007 AWC is **Civil Society Contact Organization**  
(target group - women) for The Poverty Reduction  
Strategy implementation.