



METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH TO ASSESS GOOD PRACTICES ON PREVENTION AND PROTECTION FROM DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

The following approach has been developed within EIGE's study on "collection of methods, tools and good practices in the field of domestic violence (as described by area d of Beijing Platform for Action)".

The study lasted 12 months, throughout 2012.

The development of the approach comes after a wide consultation process among experts and stakeholders, providing information and experiences on prevention and protection from domestic violence in EU and Croatia.

The consultation process contributed also to build a database of methods and tools, containing 750 tools on awareness-raising, gender training and victims' support services.

The operational process directed to identify promising practices entails different steps that range from general criteria of good design and efficiency – related to the specific practice at stake – to criteria directly connected with the field of domestic violence. Some key elements of **Domestic Violence (DV)** promising practices are common to different field of action (training, awareness raising, victims' support services) others refer to the specificities of each area of intervention (see the diagram at the end of this paragraph).

The following steps represent a provisional path to be followed to go through the difficult task of assessing practices. The following elements fit in the general EIGE criteria of promising practices mentioned above.

How to use the list of DV criteria/elements

The list of criteria/elements presented below is a tool offered to make a first general assessment of a practice implemented in the area of domestic violence. What we propose is a first level general assessment that helps to draw the broad picture. Because of the wide range of methods and tools we have to consider, it was not possible to go deeper in details. Depending on the development of the sector, which the practice at stake belong to, however, each method or tool of intervention might refer to more specific criteria of assessment. As it happens with Chinese boxes, when we open the first one we can find another one, and another one, etc.. For example, "multi-agency" is a feature of good-practice. When we find a multi-agency approach in training or victims' support scheme, or perpetrators' programs, we might think of it as relevant element/criteria. However, that multi-agency work in itself might be developed in very different ways. Multi-agency training is thoroughly defined in training manuals that envisage the topic; multi-agency forum manuals might give specific list of elements that identity specific feature of promising practice in building this type of forum, etc. More specific criteria/elements might be found in the dedicated literature.

It is important to highlight that the possibility of assessing a practice rely on internal and external elements of knowledge:

- Internal: to assess a practice we need documentation on the practice in itself, especially analysis already directed to identify and describe the key features of the practice; we need monitoring results to assess the level of performance obtained; etc...
- External: to assess a practice we need context analysis that is analysis directed to identify the external conditions on which the practice implicitly or explicitly rely; we need evaluation studies to assess the impact on beneficiaries and target persons etc.

This means that we can have valuable and successful experiences that we cannot assess because of the lack of documentation available. This is one of the reasons why, monitoring systems and evaluation tools are themselves a feature of a promising practice.

The “**First step. Promising practices**” represents the identification of the basic elements that, according to EIGE methodology should be present in order to consider a practice as a promising practice or practice with potentials. The first two elements – works well and transferability – are general criteria of good design and efficiency that refer to the specific practice at stake (training, awareness raising campaign, specific method or tool of victim support services or perpetrators programs). The third points out the attention on the importance of the potentiality of the practice to be a learning tool that may improve capacity building among stakeholders. The last ones stress the importance for a practice of being embedded in a wider domestic violence mainstreaming strategy that can guarantee a structured approach and continuity in time and in possible financing.

In order to see if the methods and tools under analysis accomplish to the first step basic elements, we shall proceed using the proposed *DV specific promising practice common criteria (second step)* and *DV promising practices specific elements (third step)* for the three field of intervention (awareness campaign, training and support services including those for perpetrators).

Considering the huge variety of practices to be analyzed, it is crucial to consider the suggested criteria/elements as inspirational concepts that need to be specified in relation with each type of practice. For example, the concept or principle of “holding men accountable of violence” might entail different meanings, depending on the characteristics of the practice to be assessed. In a training curriculum it might imply a general approach to domestic violence that clearly states perpetrators’ responsibility for the violence they use; it might also imply the provision of specific skills (through exercises and contents) on how to make perpetrators accountable in everyday professionals’ work; etc.; in an awareness raising campaign it might imply messages specifically directed to perpetrators and victims, stating that violence is a perpetrators’ problem and that perpetrators need to address it; it might imply the provision of information on the perpetrators programs available in the community, etc.

The first 5 criteria of the “**Second step. DV specific promising practice common criteria**” are basic fundamental features that need to be assessed directly or indirectly, implicitly or explicitly, in every promising practice, because they are at the core of the message and approach embraced by the International and European Community in the field. The assessment relies especially on contents analysis directed to identify the approaches and messages chosen in the design and implementation of the practice. The last 6 to

9 “common criteria” are important features of a promising practice, but they should not be necessarily present in all practices. They identify relevant aspects that have been mentioned and highlighted in the scientific literature and studies available.

As already stated, the “**Third step. DV promising practices specific elements**” has been drawn considering the criteria/elements specific to each relevant field of intervention: training, awareness raising campaign, perpetrators programs and victims’ support services. The last mentioned field of intervention however – victims’ support services – is tricky because it involves many different types of methods and tools: from monitoring tools to risk assessment protocols, to manuals directed to teach how to build up specialized services for different groups of women victims of domestic violence, etc.. Generally speaking, and especially with regards to this last group of criteria, not all of the mentioned criteria/elements might be used in the assessment of a certain type of practice. Some of them refer to specific type of intervention (e.g. one stop centre), others to general characteristics of a certain type of intervention (free of charge service, safety oriented practice, monitoring system, etc.).

In this step, we thus have to verify how many of the specific criteria/elements the practice meets: the higher the number of specific criteria /elements a practice meets, the more it might be considered a promising practice. The best use of the list is obtained in comparing the rate of the same type of practice (e.g. different protocols all directed to manage high risk victims groups; different training manuals for police forces specialized training; etc.).

To this end a useful tool is a synthesis assessment grid (see below), where the practices are on the left side first column (one per each line); the criteria are on the right side: one per each column. The grid helps us to see at once the number and type of criteria/elements meet by each considered practice. If more than one practice meets the same number of elements/criteria, it is important to consider *innovation* and *variation in type* within the same field of intervention as further elements to be considered. Of course, the grid should be replicated for each of the considered field of intervention (awareness raising, training, support services).

N	PRACTICE CODE	GENERAL CRITERIA/ELEMENTS									SPECIFIC CRITERIA/ELEMENTS								
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1																			
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The figure below graphically systematizes the proposed methodological framework. Then, in explanatory note on criteria, the list all the criteria/elements to be considered in all the three proposed Steps are presented.

DV METHOD AND TOOLS PROMISING PRACTICE CRITERIA/ELEMENTS

BOX 1 - BASIC ELEMENTS FOR PROMISING PRACTICE

1. Works well
 2. Transferable
 3. Learning potential
 4. Embedded within a wider DV mainstreaming strategy
- Effective to eliminate DV:
prevent violence, stop/change perpetrators, support victims

Box 2 - DV SPECIFIC PROMISING PRACTICE COMMON CRITERIA

1. Strong basis in human rights and gender analysis
2. Clear, appropriate, comprehensive definitions of domestic violence
 3. Women/victim centered approach
4. Hold men/perpetrators accountable for the violence they use
 5. Equality issues and anti-discriminatory practice
6. Recognition of women/victim's and men/perpetrators diversity
 7. Multiagency approach
 8. Monitoring and Evaluation
9. On-going financing/fundraising planning

BOX 3 DV AWARENESS RAISING CAMPAIGNS' SPECIFIC ELEMENTS

1. Campaign planning grounded in evidence
2. Campaign strategy
3. Campaign implementation
4. Strong communications strategy
5. Addressing men and boys as perpetrators
6. Contact numbers for survivors / perpetrators
7. Promoting leadership and guidance by the women's movement
8. Mobilizing communities
9. Multi-sector approaches and multi-level approaches

BOX 4 DV TRAINING SPECIFIC ELEMENTS

1. Well-developed strategy
2. Appropriate length and appropriate time frame
3. Balance of methods
4. Ongoing training
5. Multi levels training
6. Multi agency training
7. Extended training
8. Vocational training in formal curriculum
9. Survivors involvement
10. Specialists working with victims' involvement
11. Experts on specific issues involvement

BOX 5 VICTIMS' SUPPORT SERVICES SPECIFIC ELEMENTS

1. Women's self-determination
2. Believing, sensitive approach
3. Comprehensive tailored information and support free of charge
4. Confidentiality / anonymity
5. Screening
6. Safety oriented practice
7. Involvement of survivors and their representatives
8. Diverse services
9. Crisis / long-term advocacy
10. Proactive support
11. Guidance and Supervision
12. Policy and Guidelines
13. Codes of conduct / protocols
14. Administrative data collection
15. High risk victims' intervention
16. Multiagency / coordinated responses

Protocols
Administrative data collection
(Monitoring and evaluation)

BOX 6 PERPETRATORS' PROGRAMS SPECIFIC ELEMENTS

1. To hold perpetrators accountable and to work to stop violence
2. Belief in people change
3. Priority to women and children safety
4. Partner contact and support
5. Guidance and Supervision
6. Risk assessment
Treat men with respect
7. Policy and Guidelines
8. Protocols
9. Collaboration with victim support services
10. Multiagency / community approach
11. Administrative data collection (Monitoring and evaluation)

EXPLANATORY NOTE ON CRITERIA

FIRST STEP. PROMISING PRACTICES

1) It “works well”

The practice is a finished experience that shows a substantial achievement. Depending on the field of action, it fulfills general criteria of effectiveness.

2.) It is transferable

Key features of the practice can be reproduced in other contexts: the context in which it has been applied is described; conditions of success are identified; the mechanisms that produce the outcomes are defined.

3.) It has learning potential

The practice generates valuable lessons and/or innovative examples that are of relevance also in other contexts. It helps to think and act in appropriate ways; it enhances a process of capacity building among relevant stakeholders.

4.) It is embedded within a wider domestic violence mainstreaming strategy

The practice is not a sporadic, isolated event, but a segment of an overall strategy directed to tackle domestic violence at the national level.

The overall result of the fulfillment of these criteria is that the practice has proved to be effective to eliminate DV, that is to prevent violence, stop/change perpetrators, support victims.

SECOND STEP. DV SPECIFIC PROMISING PRACTICE COMMON CRITERIA

1.) Strong basis in human rights and gender analysis

Any practice on DV must be grounded in the understanding that DV is a human rights violation rooted in, and contributing to power imbalances between women and men.

2.) Clear, appropriate, comprehensive definitions of domestic violence

Definitions need to include different types of abuse (e.g. physical, emotional, sexual etc.); to recognize diversity of experience; to recognize the wide- ranging effects of domestic violence and the fact that it may have impacts on children.

3.) Women/victim centered approach

Women victims' needs, empowerment, autonomy and self-determination should be at the core of any practice approach and philosophy. Women should be provided with a supportive environment that treats them with dignity, respect and sensitivity, and supports them to re-gain control of their lives.

4.) Hold men/perpetrators accountable for the violence they use

Perpetrators should be considered as the only responsible of violence and should be made accountable of it; to engage perpetrators in combating violence against women is also an important. Any information delivered should be grounded on evidence.

5.) Equality issues and anti-discriminatory approach and practice

Differences amongst victims and amongst perpetrators need to be recognized and addressed to avoid discrimination and to implement effective equal treatment.

6.) Recognition of women/victim's and men/perpetrators diversity

The recognition of needs and problems of specific groups of women victims and perpetrators – sex orientation, age, disabilities, ethnic background, etc. – need to be recognised and addressed in policy, guidance, and practices.

7.) Multiagency approach

The co-ordination and the integration of the practice so that agencies work to the same brief and adopt a consistent approach.

8.) Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring tracks implementation, while evaluation analyses the data and findings tracked to assess the effectiveness of the practice. Effectiveness need to be judged especially in terms of beneficiaries' views; of improved provision, consistency of response, and enhanced safety for abused women and children.

9.) On-going financing/fundraising planning

The development of a plan and strategy for proper resourcing and funding is crucial to guarantee continuity.

THIRD STEP. DV PROMISING PRACTICES SPECIFIC ELEMENTS FOR THE FIELDS OF INTERVENTION

DV AWARENESS RAISING CAMPAIGN

1.) Campaign planning grounded in evidence

Planning determines what to do. A deliberate, participatory planning process is needed. Formative research is required and analysis to define the problem, assess the situation (including risks and opportunities), identify the stakeholders, and develop a plan that illustrates the approach to best achieve the campaign goal.

2.) Campaign strategy

Strategy determines how to do it. It represents the course of action that should be taken to meet the campaign goal. It lays out the outcomes and types of actions that should be carried out (by whom, how and when), and the target audiences that should be reached (by whom, how and when).

3.) Campaign implementation

Implementation means translating the campaign strategy into concrete actions and activities. It involves action planning, monitoring, determining campaign leadership and management structures, how to work together in alliances, and manage tension.

4.) *Strong communications strategy*

Communication is the very essence of campaigning, and a decisive element in any successful campaign on DV. Effective campaign communication is multi-pronged, combining different techniques and tools to reach and influence target audiences.

5.) *Addressing men and boys as perpetrators*

Effective DV campaigns include and target not only women and girls as potential or actual victims, but also men and boys as potential or actual perpetrators.

6.) *Contact numbers for survivors / perpetrators*

DV campaign needs to ensure up-to-date list of addresses and telephone numbers where survivors/perpetrators can be referred to, and regularly share information with service providers as the campaign progresses.

7.) *Promoting leadership and guidance by the women's movement*

Campaigns should draw on the experience of the women's movement and promote women's leadership so as to contribute to social transformation towards DV elimination and gender equality.

8.) *Mobilizing communities*

Combine public advertisements (e.g. posters) and community mobilization through local leadership promotion has been proved to succeed in prompting increased use of services by DV survivors.

9.) *Multi-sector approaches and multi-level approaches*

An effective campaign needs to reach all sectors relevant to its themes and goals, and intervene at multiple levels so as to mobilize a wide range of individuals, local groups, government institutions and other decision-makers for change.

DV TRAINING

1.) *Well-developed strategy*

A well-developed training strategy requires both training within individual agencies and on a multi-agency basis. It should provide different level of training: from awareness-raising to specialised training. It should also recognise the role of refuges, women's support groups and advocacy services.

2.) *Appropriate length and appropriate time frame*

Depending on the type of training, appropriate time should be guarantee to participants to process the material, ask for clarification, or state their misunderstandings so that the trainer or other participants can provide missing information.

3.) *Balance of methods*

Training curriculum should have a balance between theoretical input, interactive exercises and time for discussion and exchange.

4.) On-going training

Programme of domestic violence training instead of isolated one-day or two-day course: a rolling, on-going programme which recognises turn-over of staff and the need for follow-up is needed.

5.) Multi levels training

To guarantee different levels of training, from awareness-raising to specialist courses. Awareness raising training is the first step to introduce DV general main topics; specialist courses enable staff to develop deeper and more specialised knowledge.

6.) Multi agency training

Training for mixed groups of professionals (e.g. police, social workers, judges, health professionals) to enhance integrated responses and common principles of “promising practices”.

7.) Extended training

Training large numbers of staff (e.g. using 'training the trainers' techniques) in order to move towards the mainstreaming of domestic violence responses and in recognition that significant numbers of employees will be in contact with domestic violence survivors or perpetrators.

8.) Vocational training in formal curriculum

DV training as part of mandatory professional curriculum (e.g. doctors and nurses' courses, police courses, lawyers courses, judges courses) guarantee on-going training, the recognition of the relevance of the subject.

9.) Survivors involvement

The involvement at some level of women survivors of violence to advice on content, to design materials or to deliver some of the training.

10.) Specialists working with victims involvement

The expertise of specialist workers providing front line services to women and children is an important part of training provision. They can provide victims / survivors points of views, needs and problems.

11.) Experts on specific issues involvement

Specialised training needs experts contribution on specific issues, e.g. legal rights and intervention; professionals from the same trainees professional sectors need to be involved (physicians, police, judges, etc.).

SUPPORT SERVICES

1.) Women's self-determination and empowerment

Women should be provided with options and possibilities, advice and support, but decisions should not be taken for them. Their permission and agreement is important where multi-agency co-ordination and joint working involve work on individual cases.

2.) Believing, sensitive approach

Listening is a crucial principle. Women's narratives, feelings and experiences need to be validated and treated with respect.

3.) *Comprehensive tailored information and support*

The support must be appropriate and tailored to the specific needs of service users; this tends to be best attained when services are run by independent women's NGOs and supported by governments.

4.) *Confidential and anonymity*

Confidentiality and anonymity are important factors in enabling women to seek help. Where there are legal limits on confidentiality (such as if the service user is a minor, or if adult women disclose they are harming a child) these limits should be made clear from the beginning.

5.) *Screening*

Systematic routine screening is vital to detect DV victims in general services like emergency rooms departments or general social services. It includes routinely asking difficult questions that need to be not invasive and respectful both in contents and attitudes. How and when to ask about domestic violence is a difficult and emotive issue.

6.) *Safety oriented practice*

Interventions should seek to enhance victim safety. Of crucial importance are risk assessment tools and practices and practical safety planning that guarantee that immediate safety needs of women and their children are met.

7.) *Involvement of survivors and of their representatives*

It is important that survivors' views about services for women and children are sought, including finding out if they have been helped to feel safe and have been assisted by services offered.

8.) *Diverse services*

Services should build staff teams and resources that increase access for socially excluded women. They should also mainstream specialist support into services for hard-to-reach groups such as recent migrants' women with disabilities; lesbian women; older women.

9.) *Crisis and long-term advocacy*

Comprehensive and intensive support need to be provided both in crisis and over longer periods of time.

10.) *Proactive support*

Once a victim establishes contact, the service should take responsibility for keeping in touch and offer on-going support.

11.) *Guidance and/or supervision*

Due to the sensitiveness of the topic, staff needs to be adequately supported by managers and supervisors.

12.) *Policy and Guidelines*

Specific domestic violence policies and good practice guidelines are important to inform and standardise good practice. They need to be based on the principle of improving the safety of women and children experiencing violence.

13) Codes of conduct and protocols

Codes of conduct and protocols are methods necessary to translate general principles of intervention into concrete responses. They regulate the response of a particular sector or of a multi-agency panel and have proven to be effective. They can function as “laws” internal to a particular institution. They guarantee common standards in intervention.

14.) Monitoring and administrative data collection

It is vital that all agencies monitor for domestic violence and co-ordinate monitoring strategies so that a statistical picture can be built up, both within individual agencies and across a locality.

15.) High risk victims' detection and intervention

Risk assessment tools aiming at identifying high risk victims and high risk model of intervention have proven to be crucial to avoid violence escalation and lethal violence.

16.) Multi agency / coordinated responses

The coordination of local services, of statutory and voluntary agencies, greatly improves the success of the responses to domestic violence, to keep victims and children safe, and to hold perpetrators to account.

PERPETRATORS' PROGRAMS

1.) To hold perpetrators accountable and to work to stop violence

Perpetrator programmes should hold men they work with accountable for the violence they use and emphasize the need to take on responsibility for their violent behaviors and its consequences. The work aims to stop violence and enhance the safety of victims of domestic violence. The goal should be explicit for both facilitators and men they work with.

2.) To believe in people change and to treat men with respect

Perpetrator programmes are based on the belief in the ability of people to change. It is essential that practitioners treat perpetrators with respect and hope, as persons of intrinsic worth.

3.) Priority to women and children safety

Perpetrators programmes cannot be implemented where specific victim support services do not exist. If these are not offered the work may actually increase the danger to women. They should be funded by additional sources and not at the expense of the victim support services.

4.) Partner contact and support

To increase the partner's safety, perpetrator programs have to assure that men's partners are informed about the goals and the contents of the program, about its limitations (e.g. no guarantee for non-violence), and about the possibilities to receive support and safety planning themselves. Information provided by the partner should be included in risk assessment and evaluation of the perpetrator.

5.) Guidance and supervision

There are specific stresses in working with perpetrators. Programs must build in provision for appropriate supervision / consultancy aside from line management with appropriate external supervisors, who are accountable to the programs and to the principles of the program.

6.) Risk assessment

Systematic risk assessment should be implemented. Identifying men with a high risk of being violent enables facilitators to initiate appropriate measures for victims' safety and provides important information on special treatment needs.

7.) Policy and Guidelines

Policies and guidelines need to apply to violent perpetrators, to their partner's and children. Issues covered may include staff safety procedures, information for service users and detailed practical guidelines for front line workers.

8.) Protocols

As for victims' support services, codes of conduct and protocols are methods necessary to translate general principles of intervention into concrete responses. They regulate the response of a particular sector or of multi-agency panel and have proven effective. They can function as "laws" internal to a particular institution.

9.) Collaboration with victim support services

To cooperate closely with services for women victims and their children should be implemented by including representatives from women's support services as experts in steering committees and advisory boards of perpetrator programmes.

10.) Multiagency / community approach

To effectively deal with domestic violence, perpetrator programmes should be an integrated part of an intervention system and actively participate in inter-agency alliances and networks. They should not be run in isolation.

11.) Monitoring and evaluation

Documentation and evaluation of the work should be integral parts of each programme. There are additional reasons why it is of central importance. If programmes are less than effective and abused women are given false hope, threats to their safety, and to the safety of their children, may result. Evaluation can help to guard against this. Projects should have effective procedures for monitoring the quality of their services which prioritise measuring ways in which the safety and quality of life of women and children are increased. It remains the survivors' rather than the perpetrators' voices which are most essential to hear. Partner report has been shown to be the most reliable measure of success and an essential component of such evaluations.