

Special communication campaign in 2010 on violence against women (“Grande Cause Nationale 2010. Lutte contre les violences faites aux femmes”)

France

2010

## A year-long campaign against violence

### Summary

Each year since 1977, the French government has nominated one social issue, proposed by an NGO, to receive special state support. The NGO selected can collect donations from the public, and also receives an allocation of free airtime on the national media. In 2010 that issue – the *Grande Cause Nationale* – was violence against women.

To capitalise on this special time-limited status, a coalition of 25 associations put together a year-long campaign. It used the full range of media channels: film, TV, radio, posters, press, seminars, conferences and public debate.

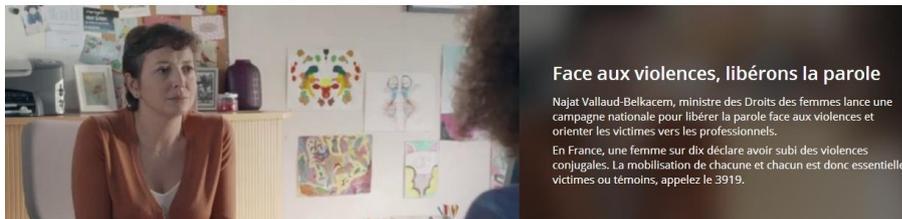
The key message of the campaign was that victims of domestic violence should ring the helpline 3919, and the message evidently got through, because the number of calls doubled during campaign periods.

The campaign was accompanied by a new law (of 9<sup>th</sup> July 2010) which strengthened the protection of victims and children.

### The Great National Cause



EFFACER LES TRACES DE VOTRE PASSAGE  
QUITTER RAPIDEMENT CE SITE



The policy approach to violence against women in France has steadily followed the growing social awareness of the phenomenon. Since 2004, it has been translated into global three-year ‘Plans to combat violence

against women’. Describing and analysing the adaptation of the legal and policy framework helps to understand the changes in public priorities. At first, the approach to violence against women was a legal one, focusing on the definition and punishment of sexual violence, from rape (1980) to sexual harassment (1992). Legal measures then focused on violence within the couple, considering it as an aggravating circumstance (1994), on strengthening sanctions and on preventing repeat offending (2004-2006). Four triennial plans have been adopted, covering the period from 2005 until 2016.

Information campaigns and awareness policies, targeting the general public and professionals, have been a feature of all three plans, and victims were added to the list in the third plan. Then in 2010, the Prime Minister nominated violence towards women as the



Grande Cause Nationale, a status which enables non-profit organisations to make free broadcasts on public radio and television and to collect funds from the public.

This gave 25 associations working on violence against women the opportunity to pool their forces to form a collective which submitted a bid for this privileged status. They were successful. The access this gave them to free media time was of particular importance for the members of the collective, which lack communication departments or budgets

### **Film, web, social media, press, posters and public debate**

The campaign they put together had the simple long-term objective of reducing domestic violence. Its immediate aim was to raise awareness among the public, perpetrators and victims that violence against women is not acceptable. More specifically it wanted to make violence against women visible, to address inequalities between women men and social gender relations between girls and boys, to promote support structures for women, and to strengthen support for associations involved in the fight against violence across France.

Benefiting from the diversity of the collective's member associations, the campaign adopted a multi-sector and multi-level approach which covered all areas of society and all occupational categories. The associations in the collective carried out extensive consultations to define violence and the way the public understands it.

The actions followed a logical sequence. Starting in January 2010, they comprised media campaigns on specific topics, a year-long programme of seminars and conferences, discussions around the country based on the film *Dominance Masculine* (Male Domination) by Patric Jean, local initiatives, and a closing research seminar and celebration evening. The campaign benefited from the support of film-makers and photographers who developed communication tools for free.

Media channels used included television, cinema and radio spots, radio interviews on 120 stations, publications, a film, public events, and a website. The key message to be got across was the national helpline number 3919.

A 30-second TV spot was broadcast three times in prime time (before or after the news) first for the launch of the campaign in January, as a reminder in second half of the year and again at the close of the campaign. In addition to its entitlement of 12 free slots on public channels, the collective negotiated additional airtime on private channels. Videos were published on the site of the 2010 Great National Cause and on YouTube and Dailymotion.

The internet was brought into play through the "Stop cycles of violence" website, which presented videos and testimonies from victims and associations, as well as social network accounts on Facebook and Twitter.

Three posters with the phrase *Petite vous rêviez sûrement d'un Prince Charmant, pas d'un homme qui vous frappe le soir en rentrant* (As a little girl you dreamt of a Prince Charming, not a man who hits you back home).

These were buttressed by press campaigns through the year, seminars and conferences organised by the associations in the collective, and local public debate around the film *Male Domination*.

### **Better protection for victims and children**



As part of the 2010 campaign, the government ran information campaigns on the national helpline number 3919, and extending its scope to cover all types of gender-based violence. Along with this it improved information for victims through the website [www.stop-violences-femmes.gouv.fr](http://www.stop-violences-femmes.gouv.fr) to help them to quickly find sources of support.

It also passed the law of 9 July 2010, which improves protection for children (by regulating parental power, contributions to household expenses and the use of the family home) and also improves victim protection by enabling the eviction of offenders from the home, the issue of protection orders for victims of domestic violence, and the recognition of psychological violence.

Government action has continued since the end of 2010. New national plans have been adopted for 2011-13 and 2014-16, and the website has been kept updated. Most visibly, information and awareness campaigns are held each year. On 25th November 2011 the theme was "Denounce hidden violence" and on 8th March 2012 "The World's Best Mum". Each 25th November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, is marked by panel discussions, press articles, videos and TV spots.

### **Political will is the key factor**

The campaign's message evidently got through to victims, because evaluation of the 3919 helpline number, which receives 80,000 calls a year, noted that the number of calls doubled during campaign periods. It was noteworthy that the greatest number of calls came from Paris, Rhône-Alpes and PACA (Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur), a fact which may be explained by victims having better information, but at the same time also suggests an explosion of violence.

The campaign's success rests on strong political will and involvement, a strong communication strategy, the active involvement of media professionals and the press, and a multi-level approach that involved many different stakeholders. Of these, the key factor in ensuring a coherent and sustained policy against gender-based violence is political will.

The main obstacles it faced are that many women are still ashamed to denounce violence, and that shrinking victim support organisations are having to cope with cuts in their budgets.

### **Contact:**

Ministère des Affaires Sociales et de la Santé (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health)  
14, avenue Duquesne  
75350 PARIS 07 SP  
France  
Tel +33 01 40 56 60 00

### **Further information:**

Website: <http://www.social-sante.gouv.fr/>

Plans to combat violence against women: <http://femmes.gouv.fr/dossiers/lutte-contre-les-violences/les-plans-de-lutte-contre-les-violences-faites-aux-femmes/>

*La Domination Masculine*: film trailer: <http://www.ladominationmasculine.net/home.html>

### **NB image copyright**

Image from ministry website: <http://www.stop-violences-femmes.gouv.fr/>