

16 Days Against Violence Campaign Donetsk, Ukraine

From November 25 to December 10, 2000, a media campaign “16 Days Against Violence in Donetsk” was conducted in the Donetsk region as part of the international action “**16 Days Against Gender Violence.**” This action was initiated by the **Donetsk Regional League of Business and Professional Women (DRLBPW)** with the financial support of the **Open Society Institute** and **Winrock International**.

The timing of the action was chosen to correspond to the following dates: **November 25** – International Day to Combat Violence Against Women, and **December 10** – International Day of Defense of Human Rights, when countries around the world celebrate the 1948 **World-Wide Declaration of Human Rights**. This document is one of the most important achievements of the United Nations and the standard for all people and countries. These dates emphasize the **symbolic link between violence against women and infringement of human rights**.

History of the Problem

Previously, violence against women was considered to be just beating or rape. If a girl or woman is systematically humiliated, threatened, forced to do something, provoked into fear or loses her dignity, is this violence or not? It seems that all is not simple. Even rape and beatings are not always considered violence against women in our community. In data from the Ukrainian Institute of Social Research, only **27%** of women surveyed considered verbal abuse to be violence, **32%** humiliation, and interestingly, only **49%** beating and **56%** rape. Even fewer men considered these actions to be violence. For example, only **50%** of men responded that an act of rape constitutes violence. Official reports indicate that women most often meet with violence in the family. More than **10,000** women, beginning with the year 1990, reported domestic violence. It is considered that only **three out of every 100 women** appeal for help from a human rights agency. Every year, violence in the family causes **100,000** days of hospitalization, **30,000** trips to the emergency room, and **40,000** appeals to doctors.

In the family, violence can include beating, sexual coercion, rape or assault, exploitation, isolation and restriction. **In society**, violence can take on even more forms. This can include oppression on a national or regional basis, mockery of a person, moral and psychological pressure, sexual solicitation or intimidation at work, in educational institutions and other places, assault, coercion into prostitution, trafficking of women, and many others.

Now, more than ever, economic difficulties strike a blow to the status of women and create the possibility of a crisis situation. More than **60%** of unemployed people registered in Ukraine and **65%** in Donetsk are women. Young girls and women are attracted to appeals in newspapers advertising quick money for work in other countries as waitresses, models, dancers, and domestic help; work presented with lovely words. A greater variety of firms, such as employment agencies, dating agencies, and tourist bureaus are being used as a pretext to promote trafficking of women. And these are profitable - girls forced into the market can bring from **2 to 8** thousand dollars. Trafficking of women has become a business which is taking its place with trafficking of narcotics and weapons.

Various educational institutions indicate that Ukrainian women need more information about the problems of violence, self-defense in threatening situations, and knowledge of their rights and responsibilities. There is a practical absence of knowledge about the reality of Ukrainian laws and international documents and application for defense of women’s rights.

The struggle against violence aimed at women, as well as the struggle with sexual slavery, infringement of human rights, and discrimination of women in the modern world needs stronger unification in the international community and the communities of every nation. International action in the 20th century concentrated its goals on conventions and declarations devoted to the prevention of these problems. In the coming year, conferences and international and national programs dealing with these problems will be developed.

The process is already starting in Ukraine. Our country ratified all international rights documents dealing with infringement of human rights. In March of 1998, legislation was enacted for the prevention of trafficking of people. On September 25, 1999, the Ministerial Department of Ukraine approved a program for the prevention of trafficking of women and children in Ukraine. As a result of these programs, governmental agencies and non-governmental organizations working primarily with women, can provide social-psychological help to victims and help to enforce their human rights. One of these non-governmental organizations is the **Donetsk Regional League of Business and Professional Women**, with its regional crisis center “**Women for Women**”, and 24-hour telephone help line.

16 Days Against Violence in Donetsk

The project “16 Days Against Violence in Donetsk” was developed in 4 stages: the preparation stage from September 1 to November 15, 2000; the advertising stage from November 15 to 25; the implementation stage from November 25 to December 10; and the ongoing evaluation stage.

In order that the problem of prevention of violence and trafficking of women could be become quickly understood by a wide-range of people, the DRLBPW issued a press release concerning the upcoming action to **67 regional newspapers and magazines, 9 television companies, 8 radio companies, 115 schools, 29 boarding schools, 26 professional schools, 62 technical schools, 32 colleges, 52 libraries, 54 Centers of Social Service for Youth, and 72 city and regional administrations.**

A 30-minute television program “**Women for Women**”, which was produced with the financial support of the Open Society Institute, focused on prevention of violence and trafficking of women and was aired four times. These problems were also highlighted in the television program “**Youth Corridor**”, the video “**In Search of Lost Happiness**”, and in the radio program “**Saturday Talk**”, airing on regional television and radio stations. Informational spots were also aired on local television and radio channels. **Total air-time devoted to this topic was 4 hours, 36 minutes on television and 2 hours, 27 minutes on radio. An estimated 2,059,800 people were reached in the Donetsk area and surrounding cities.**



During the press-club



Radio broadcasting

On December 7, 2000, a meeting of the Donetsk Press Club for market reforms was held on the topic “Prevention of Violence and Trafficking of Women—the Biggest Problem of the Present Day.” **Twenty-four** journalists from **16** mass media firms participated. This was done through the collaboration of the “Women for Women” center, DRLBPW, representatives of public health, educational and scientific institutions, and representatives of regional legal rights organizations.

Thirty-one newspapers and magazines in Donetsk and the Donetsk region addressed these problems in their pages. Headlines in these publications included: “For Life Without Violence”, “Modern Women Can Do More”, “16 Days in Defense of Women”, “Say No to Violence”, “People of Donetsk Against Violence”, and “Gender Apocalypse”. **Thirty-five articles** appeared in all. **Total circulation of the magazines—374,696 copies.**

Upon the initiative of the **DRLBPW** and with financial support from **Winrock International**, 23 informational round tables were held on the topic: “Social Partnership of Community Organizations and State Structures in Resolving the Problems of Prevention of Violence and Trafficking of Women”. **883 people** participated in these including representatives of media, representatives from various government agencies and administrations, educational institutions, medical organizations, legal rights organizations, non-governmental organizations, libraries and others. Round tables were held in **12** cities and villages in the region. They were often combined with training programs, lectures, videos and appearances by local specialists. **Four** round tables, involving **91** people were specifically held for public officials, certain educational institutions, and area journalists.



Informational round-table in Donetsk



Informational round-table in Nosyolovka

The **DRLBPW** and **Winrock International** also held 85 training programs on the topic “My Choice—Life Without Violence”, “Life Abroad: Myths and Reality”, “Women’s Human Rights”, “Women’s Leadership”, “I Will Get A Job”, and “Women’s Business—Successful Business”, in which **1,685** girls and women participated. Various courses in the “Women for Women” center were held for **134 groups** consisting of **1,604** girls and women.



Before the training



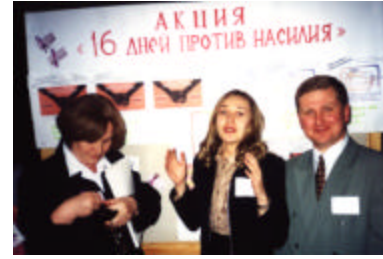
After the training

For youth, **18 interactive discussions** were organized and held on the topics “My Choice—Life Without Violence” and “Life Abroad: Myths and Reality”, in which **more than 1486** people participated.

1269 people signed the **UNESCO Manifest 2000** “In Support of World Culture Without Violence”.



Singing the UNESCO Manifest 2000



During presentation of the action on the conference “Building World Culture: Universal Values and Public Service”

A **sociological questionnaire**, financed by the Open Society Institute, addressing regional violence and problems of prevention of violence and trafficking of women was completed by **3000** respondents; 2000 residents of Donetsk and 1000 residents of the Donetsk region. 91.4% of those questioned were women. Preliminary analysis of the answers received indicates:

- ?? Violence in various forms is present in this area in a significant amount.
- ?? The prevailing mood is that people do not see themselves as a source to overcome violence.
- ?? The very strong stereotype acknowledged by society is that to discuss the problems associated with violence is not decent and not acceptable. This stereotype is stronger in small cities and rural populations.
- ?? People have great difficulty realizing and admitting that they are victims; it is easier to admit violence in regard to friends.
- ?? Self-esteem in people is rather low, especially in women.
- ?? Violence is considered to be only beating, rape or assault; that is, a physical manifestation. Other forms of psychological violence are to a large extent not considered violence in general or considered not to be important.
- ?? Only a small number of institutions (state and non-governmental organizations) exist to deal with how to resolve these problems.

The action was further supported by:

- ?? **40 community schools**
- ?? **9 boarding schools**
- ?? **5 technical schools**
- ?? **7 colleges**
- ?? **8 libraries**

In support of the action, these educational institutions organized:

- ☞ Signing of Manifest 2000 “In Support of World Culture Without Violence”
- ☞ Poster design competitions
- ☞ Composition competitions on the topic “How I See the World Without Violence”
- ☞ Conversations, lectures and class time
- ☞ Showing of videos “Victim”, “In Search of Lost Happiness”, and “AIDS—Problem of the 20th Century”
- ☞ Literature exhibitions in the libraries
- ☞ Press-conferences, parent conferences, round tables, quizzes, and brain-storming, dedicated to defense against violence and information about human rights in general
- ☞ First inter-collegiate festival-competition involving singing and poetry.

139 volunteers of the League distributed **2000 posters and pamphlets** and about **10,000 press-releases** all over Donetsk city and the region. **Twenty-seven cities and villages** also supported the campaign.



During the informational campaign in the city of Donetsk

Conclusions

The first Donetsk campaign against gender violence:

- ☞☞Increased the extent of information about different social phrases for various groups of the population, media, authoritative bodies, leaders of educational institutions, legal rights organizations, institutions of public health, non-governmental organizations, and most of all—ordinary people;
- ☞☞Told the reality of the problem of violence against women in the Donetsk region;
- ☞☞Altered the outlook of people regarding the problem of gender violence;
- ☞☞Increased the number who appear, at least in principle, to be against gender violence;
- ☞☞Strengthened connections of media, non-governmental organizations and governmental structures in resolving problems of violence against women;
- ☞☞Increased the authority of and confidence in the Donetsk Regional League of Business and Professional Women;
- ☞☞Raised the popularity of social services provided by the League.

The project was a significant and meaningful event to thousands of people. But the problem is ongoing, and therefore the action serves further as a basis for continuing promotion of the subject of activism against gender violence, an activity that will need to be constantly addressed in the future.

Attention colleagues!

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