



Empower Newsletter

Issue 1, April 2016

Welcome to the 1st EMPOWER Newsletter!

In this issue, you will discover our project, who we are and what we do and you will find out more about key European organisations supporting vulnerable women.

Did you know?



- 1 in 4 women across Europe experience domestic violence over their lifetimes
- 6-10% of women suffer domestic violence in a given year (Council of Europe, 2002).
- 68% of human trafficking victims are women (2013, Eurostat).

To support women across Europe who have faced these issues in the past to improve their employability and entrepreneurship skills, the European Commission has funded the project EMPOWER.

1. Tjebke, Patricia & Thoennes, Nancy. National Institute of Justice and the Center of Disease Control and Prevention. "Batter, Abuse and Consequences of Intimate Partner Violence: Findings from the National Violence Against Women Survey", 2000. 2. Bureau of Justice Statistics Crime Data Brief. "Intimate Partner Violence, 1985-2001". February 2003. 3. Tjebke, Patricia & Thoennes, Nancy (2008). "Stalking in America." National Institute for Justice. 4. Tjebke, Patricia & Thoennes, Nancy (1998). "Stalking in America." National Institute for Justice.

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Our mission:

Equip Support Workers working with vulnerable women with the soft skills training necessary to pass these skills onto women in order to increase their employability and entrepreneurship opportunities.

Helping women to **gain employment and financial independence** is a key step towards preventing victims from becoming stuck in a circle of violence and abuse. Unfortunately, Support Workers often feel ill-equipped to provide the necessary training particularly in building skills for entrepreneurship/employability.

In answer to this, **partners in UK, Greece, Iceland and Lithuania** have come together in **EMPOWER** to build a new strengths and skills-based training and coaching programme for both vulnerable women and support workers, to improve the lives of women across Europe.

The following skills have been identified as essential for practitioners (paid Support Workers and Volunteers) in order to empower the vulnerable women and get them ready for employment or even to start their own small businesses (Power to Change Report, 2008):

- **Group management skills**, including the ability to plan and facilitate group sessions effectively;

- **Communication skills**, including clear verbal delivery and positive body language;
- **Active listening skills**, and the ability to respond empathetically to the group members;
- The **ability to challenge participants**, where relevant and necessary, in a non-confrontational but assertive manner;
- **Conflict-management and emotional intelligence**;
- An **understanding of professional boundaries** and the facilitator's limitations within the group.

Additionally, women also need to develop an array of soft skills such as (but not limited to!) **confidence, assertiveness, resilience and entrepreneurial thinking**.

Via the EMPOWER Training Programme (training knowledge, skills and abilities in tools and methods for increasing confidence and awareness of strengths for employability) and **EMPOWER Circles Programmes** (action learning and increased self-reflection for success), **EMPOWER** will provide both support workers and vulnerable women themselves with these skills.

Meet the European Partnership behind EMPOWER

The project will be delivered by partners from four European countries (UK, Greece, Iceland and Lithuania), covering a wide range of expertise and experience related to our aims.

Specifically, the consortium of partners consists of two NGOs in social care (**KMOP** and **SIF**), an SME (**Inova**) and a governmental organisation specialised in social issues (**VMST**). All partners have already had a fruitful cooperation in proposing and implementing several other projects on local, regional, national and international levels.



What we have been up to:



This February, Inova organised the 1st partner meeting in Sheffield. This meeting was the chance for partners to get to know each other, define the project aims and set everything in motion. The role of each organisation in the project was discussed and objectives and deadlines for the next 32 months were agreed upon.

Partners have already begun to work on a research phase which will provide opportunities for women and support workers in each country to provide feedback and input on the development of our training materials. If you are interested in finding out about how you can have your say, please contact your country coordinator or take part in our online survey [here](#) <<insert

hyperlink>>

Focus on 4 European Institutions

UK - Snowdrop

The Snowdrop Project, based in Sheffield, is the first charity in the UK to provide long-term in community support for survivors of trafficking after they leave a safe house. They implement models of best practice and share this knowledge with other agencies and individuals, locally, nationally and internationally. Empowerment is the essential value behind every action of the Snowdrop Project. Through their work they provide one to one support for survivors of trafficking, community events to help reduce social isolation, renovate houses for the survivors and raise awareness of the issues surrounding trafficking and after care. For their tremendous efforts in helping survivors, they were awarded Marsh Award for Outstanding Contribution to the fight against Human Trafficking in 2013.

More information [here](#)



Lithuania - Women's Activity Centre of Marijampole County

Marijampole Country Women's Activity Centre (MCWAC) is a non-governmental organisation situated in Marijampole city in the south-western part of Lithuania active in prevention of domestic violence and representing needs of women living in the city as well in the nearby settlements. Since its establishment in 1996 the Centre communicates an important message to vulnerable women which states that thinking women should not remain silent and therefore, it aims to improve the quality of women's life through everyday activities. The centre provides vulnerable women support, information, trainings and mentoring, as well psychological and legal consultations. In 2012 as a part of the implementation of the new Law on Protection against Domestic Violence (adopted in 2011) MCWAC became a specialized help and assistance centre for victims of domestic violence and intimate partner violence which means that the Centre receives information from police officers about violence cases through phone calls, e-mails or directly from the domestic violence victims and offers them help to overcome difficult situations by clarifying the situation, informing about available assistance, creating individual support plans, providing judicial and psychological assistance, organizing other institutional assistance, mediation/ providing medical assistance to victims.

More information [here](#)



Island - Red Cross

Since 2005 the Red Cross in Iceland has been involved in various immigrant projects, the biggest ones being a mentor project for immigrant women and people receiving refugee status after asylum treatment and a personal support partners project for quota refugees. All the projects involve volunteers that they pair up with individuals to assist them in adapting to Icelandic society, to break down social isolation and give them support in daily life. In recent years the Red Cross has undertaken more and more challenging projects as the number of vulnerable women seeking to join is growing.

More information [here](#)



Greece - Counseling Centre for Abused Women of the Municipality of Serres

The Counseling Centre for Abused Women of the Municipality of Serres, is part of a network of local-level structures under the supervision of the General Secretariat for Gender Equality with aim to prevent and combat violence against women, which consists of counseling centers for women and shelters for women and their children. The Counseling Center in Serres is addressed to women who have suffered any form of abuse (physical, psychological, verbal, sexual, economic violence, victims of rape, prostitution or trafficking), as well as to women who suffer multiple kinds of discrimination (migrants, refugees, unemployed, women with disabilities etc.) It provides comprehensive psychosocial support, legal and employment counseling. Where appropriate, it provides assistance in dealing with authorities (police, hospital, prosecutor etc.). Moreover, it provides information to citizens on issues of equality, rights and gender-based violence. In order to meet the needs of women efficiently, it has developed a network of partners through networking activities. In the context of its mandate towards the prevention any kind of discriminations against women, it implements awareness-raising campaigns in the local community, such as experiential learning programs for students, teachers and parents. Services are provided free of charge and on a confidential basis.

More information [here](#)

www.empowerwomen.eu

Connect with us



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