

Aksion
Plus



Strehëza për gra
dhe vajza të
abuzuara

In this issue:

- 1 Anger management program
- 2 Domestic Violence Program and Professional Trainings for women
- 3 Probation Service is giving me respect (*true history*)

Network for the implementation of alternative sentence

Newsletter 3, 2010.

MAIN ACTIVITIES IN THE FRAMEWORK OF ALTERNATIVE SENTENCE PROJECT

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The main focus of this National Network is to help offenders benefit from the new law about the implementation of alternative measures, accompanying these measures with integration, vocational and rehabilitation programs. Network through its activities is helping the consolidation of democratization of punishment system in Albania and increasing the participation of civil society coalitions in execution of penal sentences.

During the third quarter of the first year of this project, activities as trainings, meetings, and seminars helped to increase the skills of member organizations of Network in the field of Human Rights and also they enhance



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► cooperation among NGOS-s, members and non-members of Network and other stakeholders in the issues that are covered by this project.

Network for Community Services for Offenders promotes social inclusion of

offenders in the communities they belong and through their participation in community programs improves their personal and social skills. Also the Network advocates for the effectiveness of alternative measures and to raise the knowledge of the community about positive offenders' efforts during the sentencing period.

1-Anger management program

This program includes Violence Prevention in vulnerable groups; Feelings; Six Different Styles of Expressing Anger; Skills to Problem – Solve Anger Situations; Anger Management Steps.

The program includes 12 steps and it was designed and implemented in this way: Firstly the offenders were invited to take part in the program delivering information about it and then they followed in 12 sessions. The program was implemented by the project psychologist. At the beginning offenders reported two episodes of anger per week during the initial stages of program but they reduced while the program was implemented.

The program included education regarding the experiences to anger and then they made development of anger management skills with elements of understanding of the aggression cycle, understanding “angry thinking” and developing assertiveness skills.

Then offenders were expected to monitor situations and events that trigger anger or negative emotions and utilize appropriate coping skills for addressing the cognitive processes and emotions relating to their anger. Counseling was provided for them on individual basis under the program one-2-one counseling. The long-term process of this anger management program was conducted with the training of the therapists' staff to continue the program with the offenders in each local office.



Together with the therapist and the psychologist and probation staff were assisted to ask their clients to complete an “anger autobiography”, complete a victim impact worksheet, to write an apology letter and to prepare a prevention plan for future similar situations.

Additionally, participants were part of anger/ emotion monitoring including identification and use of coping skills to address their anger emotions.

The trainings of anger management with the project staff and probation staff has also these components, including relaxation training, social skills training and cognitive restructuring, and that these various components may have differential effects on the different dimensions of anger.

2. Domestic Violence Program and Professional Trainings for women

'Shelter for women and girls' in Tirana is a social service center for victims of domestic violence. It offers services, mainly psychosocial support, counseling and referrals for all women and girls at risk.

Women that committed crimes, because of a long history of abuse, are also subject to receive support from Shelter.

The philosophy of Shelter activity is led by the principal of women empowerment. Strong and powerful women can protect themselves from any kind of abuse and prevent any antisocial and criminal behavior.

Educated, emancipated, employed and independent women can face difficulties in quite healthy ways.

It is for these reasons that Shelter organized training courses with victims of domestic violence and women trying to reintegrate themselves in the society after a period of imprisonment. Courses were provided to 10 women that were also under the supervision of the Probation Service.

The training courses aimed at empowering women socially and professionally.



The topics of the training sessions were as following:

- Albanian legislation on women's rights;
- Albanian social services focused to women and girls at risk;
- Skills for a better communication in the family and outside it;
- Better parenting skills;
- Needed skills for long and sustainable jobs.

For the last topic, trainings were organized in several sessions aiming at offering skills needed for maiden, baby sitter, cleaner and cook, and care taker for adult and old people.

These training courses have served women to:

- be informed to protect themselves and their families;
- be informed how do social services serve in the country and where to refer in case of need;
- be informed on what is needed to know to be employed as a maiden;
- be informed on what is needed to know to be employed as cleaner and cook at home or in businesses;
- be informed on what is needed to know about problems of adult and old people.

The training courses had a greater impact on women as they were in a group and understood that they are not alone and are not the only ones having problems.



▶ ONE-TO-ONE COUNSELLING

Development of a new behaviour program (one-to-one counselling) is realized in the first six months of the project beginning. A contracted expert was appointed to develop the program and the modules of the implementation from the project start. The results of the implementation of this program were: the program is in the first beginning with the aim to have an impact

in behavior of minors during their everyday life in prison and with a final aim in reducing recidivism, but as it is still in the beginning of the project we still have no data on the recidivism issues. The treated group made changes in the expected direction but still the changes were not very big, and still it is needed to continue working in these issues. The program included also organizing training and coaching 4 project therapists to provide one-to-one counselling program to offenders.

3. Probation Service is giving me respect

(true history)

He gives the impression of a good boy, at least in the first conversation. Despite of this he doesn't hide his bad attitude, because according to him the most important thing is leaving this attitude behind. N.D is 33 years old and since 12 years suffers the narcotics addiction. But this is not his only problem, because he also broke the law. This the main reason that now he is in Probation, which he considers as an effective alternative regarding his situation. Although he emphasize that has been just a victim of a unresolved dispute. According to him Probation Service makes him feel respectful and useful, because he never quit his job.



E.B: You are one of the drug users on Probation; can you give us the reasons of why you are here?

I've been charged for stealing a mobile phone. In fact I brought it and I talked with all my people close to me. The police accused me even I brought it in the street. The Prosecutor asked for a two years of detention. I couldn't prove the contrary. In order to avoid the isolation, fortunately I accepted the Probation Service that give us the possibility to feel as respectful citizens. Probation staff is real support for us. I try hard to fulfill their conditions, because I don't want to abuse with

such a good opportunity.

E.B: You sustain on your innocence and think you're lucky being on Probation Service and its obligations?

I agree with you, but you have to know that the drug users are not credible. In couldn't prove my innocence and under this conditions I could ended in prison. Prison is terrible and certainly I don't wish to anyone. That's why I appreciate as alternative Probation Service and its benefits.

E.B: What do you do in your free time?

I work all the time. We have a small family bussiness. If Probation Service won't exists, think yourself how I will find my self hopeless in jail. This is a good chance that's why I respect it, because I know that is my own interest.