https://www.eeagender.org/good-practices/How-prevent-gender-based-violence/womens-rights-are-human-rights/

“Women's rights are human rights”

"The biggest success in the project has been the positive feedback from pupils in primary and secondary schools," writes project manager Natalia Kotulakova.



The main goal of the project is to strengthen gender equality through workshops and talks for primary school children and secondary school pupils, mostly from the marginalised Roma communities. (Photo: Mrs. Vrzdiakova)

The project aims to enhance women’s and girls’ ability to change perspectives about the role of women, mothers and female employees, including those in the Roma community.

Slow progress towards equality in Slovakia

The gender equality index, published by Eurostat in 2018, states that Slovakia was the only EU country where the situation had worsened over the past 10 years.

"Slovakia remains a country where women´s role in the family and in society is still based on gender stereotypes, and the progress towards the equal treatment of women is generally slow," explains Natalia Kotulakova, from the Ministry of Investment, Regional Development and Informatization of the Slovak Republic, in an email.

Despite laws to ensure non-discrimination and equal treatment, statistics show that the gender differences are the most evident in the labour market and in the unequal distribution of childcare and household chores.

"There is still strong support for the traditional division of duties between women and men in family life, especially in the conservative parts of Slovakia. Many women not only face pay inequality but also have a higher risk of social poverty," writes Kotulakova.

> The poverty of women in marginalised Roma communities makes them too dependent on their partners and community

"According to the project promoter "Woman in need", the partial findings indicate that gender-based violence is more prevalent in Roma communities than the general population of women. However, the poverty of women in marginalised Roma communities makes them too dependent on their partners and community," Kotulakova explains.

"Women in marginalised Roma communities are rarely expected to work and girls very often don't complete their primary education. In the past, there were also cases of women being sold or forced into marriage."

The main goal of the project is to strengthen gender equality through workshops and talks for primary school children and secondary school pupils aged 14–19, mostly from the marginalised Roma communities.

"This age group has been consciously chosen because the youngsters will just be starting to enter their first relationships and will bring various gender stereotypes with them. It is therefore important to provide them with useful information about gender equality," writes Kotulakova.

"Get out of the circle of violence"

The project promoter, civic association "Woman in need," have two major information campaigns in the project.

"The first, a social-media campaign called “women´s rights are human rights”, focuses on women ´s rights, gender stereotypes, raising awareness, and spreading information about preventative measures in the area of gender equality," explains Kotulakova.

Educational video spots are produced as part of the campaign.

"These videos challenge traditionally held views about the roles of women, daughters, mothers and employees in society".

Woman in need works closely with Radio Roma and the Romata news agency to produce materials and guides for the Roma community target groups.

The second campaign, “16 days of activism against violence against women”, was organised in 2022. This campaign aimed to strengthen respect for women’s human rights in Slovakia and improve access to protection and support services for women experiencing violence.



The exhibition “get out of the circle of violence” featured twelve life-sized female figurines that depicted true stories of women who suffered domestic abuse. (Photo: Woman in need)

During the campaign, the exhibition “get out of the circle of violence” featured twelve life-sized female figurines that depicted true stories of women who suffered domestic abuse, including some who died, to alert passers-by about the dangers women face on a daily basis.

"This second campaign also served to motivate women who are still silently suffering to escape their violent and toxic relationships and seek help," Kotulakova explains, and adds:

"During this campaign, people were encouraged to take pictures while holding a board that read, ‘Let´s say no to violence against women.’ Such active expressions help to reduce the tolerance of such violence in society. They encourage people not to be indifferent, to engage and take action,

and to help women who experience violence, and their children, find compassion and support in their neighbourhood and community."

Collaborative partners

The project partner MyMamy is an NGO that has the primary goal of helping all women and children who experience violence. MyMamy aims to raise awareness about domestic violence and has launched many campaigns and organised various educational activities in order to break the taboos surrounding domestic abuse."

"They offer crisis intervention, legal and psychological counselling and temporary accommodation for the victims of domestic violence. They also organise support groups and provide short-term childcare for women seeking help."

The project promoter also initiated a collaboration with Theatrical Nitra, an association that helped them produce and promote video spots and, with the sheltered workshop, produce promotional badges for the campaigns.

"What pitfalls and successes have there been in this project?"

"The project's biggest success has been the positive feedback from primary and secondary school pupils during the talks on gender equality."

"When promoting talks in schools, the collaboration with the coordinator of child protection against violence has helped tremendously," Kotulakova explains.

In what way has the SYNERGY Network been an important tool for combating domestic and gender-based violence?"

The SYNERGY Network is a unique project that connects people from different countries and shares their professional knowledge, best practices and policies for combating domestic and gender-based violence."

"The network encourages discussion among professionals in order to find innovative solutions," Kotulakova explains.

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