



# PROJECT CHRONICLES

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COMBATING  
GENDER-BASED  
VIOLENCE IN THE  
SOUTH CAUCASUS  
PROJECT/ARMENIA

FUNDED BY:  
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## 2009 16 Days of Activism Campaign in Armenia:

*Focus on male participation  
In combating GBV*

On November 25, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, UN agencies and projects officially launched "16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence" campaign in Armenia.

The same day, 16 Days of Activism Campaign Opening press conference took place at the UN Conference Hall. The event featured speakers representing Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs of Armenia (responsible partner and leading state authority in the field of promoting gender equality and equity in Armenia), UNFPA as the UN coordinating agency for 16 Days of Activism Campaign of the year 2009, and UNDPI.



During the press conference a calendar of more than 60 events, envisioned within the Campaign, was distributed to the audience. The planned activities focused on the cultural and national aspects of violence against women, including domestic violence, trafficking and HIV/AIDS twin pandemics, men's participation and role in combating GBV and the importance of the youth involvement. The calendar envisaged different activities, such as: conferences, press conferences, public hearings, PSA airings, film screenings, meetings and seminars with NGOs, CBOs, students and local government representatives to take place in Yerevan and other 10 marzes.

This year's campaign focused on the importance of male involvement in combating gender-based violence (GBV), as well as on the say men can have and the role they can play in combating violence against women. The project invited the young athlete, 2009 European Champion in Greco-Roman Style wrestling, Arsen Julfalakyan, to become 2009 White Ribbon Ambassador in Armenia in order to highlight the importance of men's involvement in anti-GBV movement. The athlete condemned violence against women by clearly stating: "A Strong Man Will Never Abuse a Woman". This statement, directed in the first place to the male population of Armenia, has become the leading message of the campaign and events organized by UNFPA CGBV project in Armenia.



The athlete's image and his message were portrayed in a set of visual products used as ultimate awareness raising tools during the campaign. A PSA, two large outdoor banners and hundreds of posters were produced by UNFPA CGBV project in cooperation with "Internews" NGO and "Altera" Ltd. Other information and visual

materials produced by the project for the campaign included: information brochures and posters on 16 Days of Activism campaign and GBV, HIV/AIDS and Trafficking; the White Ribbon Campaign leaflets and posters.

The launching of the campaign was widely covered by print, electronic, radio and TV media. The PSA on men against violence was broadcasted on LCD screens in Yerevan metro stations 20 times a day and aired on major (AR TV, H1, H2, Yerkir Media, and Yerevan) and regional TV channels of Armenia.

Series of thematic TV airings focusing on violence against women, male participation in anti-GBV movement and gender equality issues were broadcasted throughout Armenia. A number

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of national and regional TV channels aired interviews on 16 Days of Activism Campaign and reflected on the situation with GBV in Armenia, among these:

1. *Presentation of the campaign made on public television H1 channel during everyday "Good Morning Armenia" program.*
2. *A special issue of TV programme, "Social Dialogue" aired on the Second Armenian national Channel (H2). It was dedicated to 16 Days of Activism campaign and main GBV issues in Armenia and featured participation of UNFPA CGBV project as well as representative of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs of Armenia.*
3. *Interview on Yerkir Media TV with participation of UNFPA CGBV project; it focused on the role of awareness raising campaigns in combating GBV and presented analytical review of articles on GBV published in local newspapers.*
4. *Interviews with UNFPA CGBV project on violence against women phenomena and 16 days campaign in Armenia were aired on AR TV, as well as on regional TV channels including "Vanadzor" TV (Lori marz), Gyumri "Tsayg" TV (Shirak marz), "Ijevan" TV (Tavush marz), "Kyavar" TV (Gegharkunik marz).*
5. *A special issue of the radio youth programme "Lun se" broadcasted on the National Radio of Armenia featured interview with UNFPA CGBV project. It touched on the topics of 16 Days of Activism campaign, its origins, GBV phenomena and tolerance issues and provided analytical overviews of the situation with GBV in Armenia.*
6. *Radio Liberty provided a detailed analysis of situation with GBV in Armenia and a brief overview of the 16 Days of Activism Campaign.*



Throughout the campaign the project carried out awareness raising meetings in 11 Armenian marzes, including the capital, Yerevan. During these information meetings, information materials were distributed to the audiences of participants. Meetings with youth, which also included film screenings for the target groups of youth audiences, were held in marzes. During these meetings 3 PSAs on: Domestic Violence, Men Against Violence and Equal Rights & Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (the later produced in 2008 by UNDP) were demonstrated to the target groups of youth for further discussion and sharing of concerns regarding GBV and gender equality related issues.



Other events also included information meetings for rural women, refugees and asylum seekers, LSG body representatives,

as well trainings on gender and GBV issues for local NGOs and community activists.

Within the framework of 16 Days of Activism campaign in Armenia a large number of events were organized also by other UN agencies and NGOs working in the field of GBV. Below are listed some of these events:

**On November 25** Armenian Center for National and International Studies, held a roundtable discussion to examine gender equality and the state of women rights in Armenia. "Women Resource Center" NGO organized a Peaceful March Protesting Violence Against Women and a Candle lighting ceremony with an open stage concert. "Women's Rights Center" NGO marked the start of the "16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence" campaign with participation of art performance groups (drama, national dances). "Ajakits" NGO (Gyumri city, Shirak marz) held a round table discussion on the topic of "16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence".

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**On December 1** An event devoted to the World AIDS Day was organized by the National AIDS Center in collaboration with NGOs, and support of the UN Joint Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), UNDP, UNFPA and other UN agencies. The event featured screening of the movie "Who never lived".

**On December 2** Conference and a close-up of "Youth Against Trafficking" project was organized by UNDP "Anti-trafficking Programme: Capacity Developing Support and Victims Assistance" project. The event featured participation of RoA Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Labor and Social Affairs, RoA Police, Armenian Red Cross Association, Armenian UN Association and the International Youth Bridges Association. Psychological consultancy for the victims of violence was offered by "Tatev-95" NGO operating in Yerevan.

**On December 6** Collective art exhibition and film screening on "Violence against women" was organized by "Women Resource Center" NGO. A Street action with distribution of information fliers on "White Ribbon" Campaign was organized by "Women's Right Center" NGO.

**On December 10** "The human rights protection in Armenia: achievement and challenges" conference was conducted in Yerevan. The event was jointly organized by UN CT, Ombudsman Office, OSCE, EC delegation to Armenia, and UNDP.

## Conference on:

### *"Perspectives to reach gender equality in Armenia: Political and legal aspects"*



A three-day international conference on "Perspectives to reach gender equality in Armenia: political and legal aspects" opened on December 21, 2009 in Tsakhkadzor Writers' Union House. It was jointly organized by UNFPA CGBV, the Association of Armenian Women with University Education (AAWUE), and Open Society Institute Assistance Foundation-Armenia (OSIAFA). The conference was conducted under the auspices of the RoA National Assembly, the UN Armenia and OSCE Yerevan offices.

The main purpose of the conference was to support adoption of the law "On provision of Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Women and Men" in Armenia. The draft of the RoA law "On Provision of Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Women and Men," the draft of the RoA Gender Policy Concept and its implementation strategy, as well as reports on the UN strategy and the European institutional policy in the field of gender equality were presented to the participants for further discussion and comments.

The Conference featured high level speakers, including: Ms. Arevik Petrosyan, the Vice-Chairman of the RoA National Assembly, Ms. Laylee Moshiri, the UN Resident Coordinator a.i., Ambassador Sergey Kapinos, Head of OSCE Office in Yerevan, Mr. Filaret Berikyan, Deputy Minister of the RoA Ministry of Labor and Social issues, as well as Ms. Jemma Hasratyan, the President of AAWUE. Thematic reports were presented by MPs, NGOs, representatives of the



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state institutions, political parties, as well as prominent scientists and experts from Armenia, Georgia, and Russia.

## UNFPA ARMENIA and UNHCR:

*Working together to address issues of  
Violence in refugee and asylum seekers communities*

UNFPA CGBV project is closely cooperating with various state and non-state partners in the field of promotion and protection of human rights, including women's rights. The project builds on the existing expertise and experiences in the field of combating GBV through promotion of synergies and cooperation with other foreign and international actors in Armenia, including in the first place other UN agencies such as United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees (UNHCR).

Among the main directions of the work carried out by UNHCR in Armenia are "Identification of and Response to Sexual and Gender-Based Violence amongst Refugees and Asylum Seekers" and "Promotion of Refugee Law/Capacity building". These fields offer vast cooperation opportunities to UNHCR and UNFPA, and in 2009 UNFPA CGBV project joined its efforts with UNHCR in the field of work with asylum seekers, refugees and state actors in the field.

Being aimed at increasing awareness and improving knowledge among refugees and asylum seekers on gender issues, rights and equality to combat gender-based violence as well as strengthening the capacity at both national and local levels for protecting and enforcing the rights of refugee and female asylum seekers, UNFPA Armenia Office with the financial support of UNHCR Armenia implemented the following:

- Awareness raising meetings on gender and gender-based violence issues for over 100 refugees and asylum seekers in December 2009. The meetings were organized in cooperation with ICHD NGO and conducted by trainers trained within the framework of CGBV implementation in Armenia.
- Two special events targeting groups of refugees and asylum seekers were organized within the framework of 2009 16 Days of Activism campaign in Armenia;
- A special session for refugees as a part of "victim information meetings".
- A series of capacity development trainings on gender and GBV issues for 10 representatives of State Migration Agency (SMA), 20 representatives local self-government bodies, 20 representatives of NGOs working on refugee issues;

It is also planned to invite UNHCR and SMA representatives to the newly established inter-institutional Coordination Council on GBV.

### Information Sharing Meetings:

*Effective means to promote cooperation  
With the RoA General Prosecutor's Office*

Strategy and efforts directed at creation of enabling environment for Gender-Based Violence reduction in Armenia should also focus on the establishment of cooperation and creation of professional networks between national actors in the field.

Being aimed at laying grounds for political will and support to political and legal initiatives, UNFPA CGBV project and the RoA General Prosecutor's Office jointly organized and held an Information Sharing Meeting on October 27, 2009, at the UN Conference Hall.

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The Meeting featured participation of the national gender focal points representing RoA Ministry of Labor and Social Issues, RoA Ministry of Health, RoA Police and Yerevan Municipality, representatives of the international and foreign organizations in Armenia including UNDP, UNICEF, IOM, ILO, UNHCR, OSI, Save the Children, British Council and OSCE, as well as independent experts and members of international and local NGOs.

The Meeting consisted of two parts. During the first part the RoA General Prosecutor's Office presented to the participants outcomes of the Survey on "Crimes against sexual immunity and sexual freedom", conducted by the RoA General Prosecutor's Office in 2009. The second session highlighted the effective ways and possibilities of cooperation between RA General Prosecutor's Office, international organizations and Armenian civil society.

It was agreed that the interested parties such as UN agencies, international and local organizations should be more supportive and active in cooperation with the RoA General Prosecutor's Office in the field of combating GBV.

## Capacity Building Training for Priests:

### *Piloting of the Manual on Christian Understanding of anti-GBV approaches*



In the course of Armenian history, the Church has been playing a leading role in fostering education and Christian values among Armenians. Christian religious institutions provided spiritual and ethical stewardship to families, promoted and disseminated knowledge and humanism among Armenians. On the one hand, close family bonds and dedication to family have always been considered as strong sides of Armenian society.

On the other hand, modern Armenian families face many challenges that need to be addressed in order to ensure harmonious development of society.

Today, Armenian FBOs are willingly engaging in numerous activities and events that pave the way to fulfillment of ICPD Programme of Action goals and objectives. Their participation increases trust of population towards implemented projects that among other things target combating gender-based violence (GBV), including domestic violence. Nowadays, domestic violence is identified as one of the most pressing social problems since lots of women suffer from stigma associated with this phenomenon, which prohibits reporting violence and bringing "family matters" into public.

In order to effectively address the issue of GBV in Armenian families and to promote understanding of the scope of this problem among priests who directly deliver messages to community members (women, men, and youth), UNFPA, within the framework of its CGBV project, and "Armenia Inter-Church Charitable Round Table Foundation of the World Council of Churches" (ART) FBO started a two-year cooperation, which envisages the following:

- ***Elaboration of a set of Homilies/guidelines on Christian understanding of anti-GBV approaches for the priests who will address GBV related issues during their services and at work with parishioners;***

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- *Capacity Building Trainings for priests and development of “Action plans” to be implemented in the communities they serve;*
- *Implementation of Action plans – work with parishioners and counseling for victims of violence.*

As of today, the manual prepared by the group of experts invited by the ART FBO, was finalized and piloted during capacity building training for priests that took place on November 16-20 2009, in Tsakhkadzor, Armenia. The manual was used by the trainers (Very Rev. Fr. Shahe Ananyan; Lilit Zakaryan, gender expert from the National Academy of Science; Armenuhi Kyureghyan, Vanadzor State Pedagogical Institute, Anahit Tevosyan and David Gevorgyan from Yerevan State University) to address the following topics:

1. *The Concept of Gender and main definitions*
2. *Gender-Based stereotypes*
3. *Gender socialization*
4. *Gender-Based Discrimination*
5. *Gender equality and Gender-Based Violence issues in Armenian and international legal instruments*
6. *Phenomena of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and types of GBV*
7. *Phenomena of Domestic Violence and its types;*
8. *Violence and HIV/AIDS, and*
9. *Psychological aspects of violence.*

Training sessions also included screening and discussions of a video clip on gender equality, GBV, male involvement and a short thematic film on the topic of violence against women in rural areas of Armenia.

Overall, the training provided comprehensive and complex overview on gender equality and non-violence issues and enabled the participants to elaborate individual Actions Plans to serve as guidelines in their work with the communities they serve. Participants shared a number of interesting highlights and ideas on the role of the clergy in preventing GBV through systematically implemented activities both before and after the marriage ceremonies.

Another training was devoted to project management and networking issues to help the priests to manage the implementation of their action plans and to establish information networks all around Armenia.

## Awareness Raising and Education:

### *Second stage of trainings and Information meetings launched*

Creation of enabling environment for combating GBV in Armenia requires a two-pronged approach in the field of education and awareness raising. It has to ensure capacity building and knowledge base creation for decision-makers to effectively address GBV issues on the one hand, and general awareness raising on GBV and related issues among diverse groups of population on the other.

Based on the positive experience and results of the cooperation with consortium of NGOs led by ICHD, a new phase of training component of “Combating Gender-Based Violence in Armenia” project was launched in 2009 to raise awareness on GBV among the target groups of journalists and mass media representatives, school teachers and university lecturers, high school and university students, as well as general population involving participation of more than 1200 men and women. This second phase of awareness raising activities also envisages capacity building of over 300 representatives of NGOs and local self-government bodies, health care institutions and law-enforcement structures. Activities, that among other, envisage information meetings, are implemented by ICHD and Association of Armenian Women with University Education (AAWUE).

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## Capacity Building Trainings for LSG bodies, health care institutions, RoA Police, and NGOs

Within the framework of UNFPA CGBV project, the International Centre for Human Development (ICHD) started implementation of the second stage of “Combating Gender-Based Violence in Armenia” awareness raising initiative, which envisages conducting two-day trainings on GBV for the target groups of representatives of Local Self-Government (LSG) bodies, service staff of health care institutions, RoA police, and NGOs. These trainings that address issues of securing gender equality and awareness raising tools used for combating GBV, are implemented by ICHD throughout Armenia with a purpose to create enabling environment for GBV reduction and to support Armenia in fulfilling its international obligations in this field.

During the period of October-November 2009, ICHD completed a series of two-day trainings for two target groups involving representatives of NGOs and LSG bodies. The trainings were conducted in the cities of Ashtarak (Aragatsotn marz), Yeghegnadzor (Vayots Dzor marz), Gavar (Gegharkunik marz), Armavir (Armavir marz), Sisian (Syunik marz), Ijevan (Tavush marz), and Yerevan (the capital). Overall, about 300 people participated in the trainings carried out by ICHD for the mentioned period of time.

Each training covered the following topics:

1. Gender socialization/stereotypes;
2. Gender analysis;
3. Gender-Based Discrimination;
4. Gender-Based Violence (GBV) phenomena;
5. Types of GBV;
6. Violence and HIV/AIDS;
7. Violence and drug addiction;
8. Trafficking in humans;
9. International and national instruments for combating GBV, regional and international initiatives in the field.

In the meantime, ICHD started preparatory works for conducting trainings envisaged for the target groups of health care representatives and RoA Police, which will be carried out in Yerevan, Gyumri (Shirak marz), Vanadzor (Lori marz), Artashat (Ararat marz) and Abovyan (Kotayk marz) cities.

## Information meetings on GBV: raising awareness in Yerevan and Armenian marzes

During the period of October-November 2009, AAWUE conducted series of information meetings on GBV and GBV issues in Yerevan and Armenian marzes. Overall, 12 information meetings were held in Yerevan for the target groups of university students (male and female), school and university teachers, high school students (boys and girls), political party representatives (women), groups of journalists and students studying journalism, women involved in NGOs, and young activists representing professional unions.

Overall, 62 information meetings were conducted within the mentioned period of time in the regions: cities of Echmiadzin (Armavir marz), Ashtarak and Talin (Aragatsotn marz), Artashat, Ararat and Vedi (Ararat marz), Abovyan, Charentsavan, Yeghvard, Nor



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Hachn, and Hrazdan (Kotayk marz), Sevan (Gegharkunik marz), Vayk (Vayots Dzor marz), Gyumri, Maralik, Artik, Akhuryan cities and Maisyan village (Shirak marz), Vanadzor, Alaverdi, Tashir, Stepanavan and Spitak (Lori marz), Dilijan (Tavush marz), and Kapan (Syunik marz). Information meetings targeted groups of university students (male and female), high school students (boys and girls), school and university teachers, journalists, women involved in NGOs and Women's Political Leadership School branches<sup>1</sup>, as well as women and men groups from relevant communities. (<sup>1</sup> *Political Leadership School for Women is a project of AAWUE*)

During the information meetings AAWUE trainers used two separate modules. One was designed for the target groups of high school and university students and covered the following topics:

- *Concept of gender,*
- *Differences between Sex and Gender,*
- *Gender Values and Norms,*
- *Gender Roles,*
- *Gender Stereotypes,*
- *Gender Socialization,*
- *Gender Equality,*
- *Gender-Based Discrimination,*
- *Gender-Based Violence: Causes and Manifestations. Types of GBV,*
- *Domestic Violence. Trafficking in human beings. Regional and international Initiatives for Combating GBV,*
- *International and National Legislations and Treaties on Gender Equality and Gender-Based Violence.*

The second module for adults (women and men) addressed, in addition to the above mentioned, topics of "Human Trafficking: Regional and Inter-state Initiatives to Combat GBV" and "Legal Documents, International and National Mechanisms/Tools to combat GBV".