



Ensuring a society for all ages:

Promoting quality of life and active ageing

UNECE 2012 Ministerial Conference, Vienna, Austria

Project Title: The right to life without violence in old age

The Project description

The project is aimed at alleviating all forms of neglect, abuse and violence against older women and men in the Kyrgyz Republic by: (1) protecting older people, with specific attention to older women, against domestic violence, neglect and abuse through strengthened support services, increased civil society representation and greater public awareness; (2) enhancing civil society participation in the promotion and protection of the rights of older victims of domestic violence and abuse. 26 Older People's Groups were the main target groups in the project to bring positive change of attitudes and behavior conducive to domestic violence and elder abuse in their communities. The project is implemented in partnership with Association of Crises Centers comprising of 13 crises centers throughout Kyrgyzstan.

At civil society level: The action has increased capacities of the Crisis Centres in public awareness raising, advocacy, policy development and service delivery, also strengthened cooperation among community-based groups, national NGOs and other stakeholders for greater cohesion in working on domestic violence.

At community and family level: The action strengthened capacities of older people's groups to undertake initiatives to tackle elder abuse in their own communities and context. Domestic violence and elder abuse prevention mechanisms have been strengthened through mobilizing existing mechanisms such as traditional aksakal courts (courts of older people), women's committees etc. and Older People's Groups).

Activities to develop intergenerational links resulted in a deeper understanding among youth the importance of contribution of older people to society and necessity to help vulnerable people. For example, young people have been organizing permanent volunteer groups to help older people with everyday life (such as collecting wood, garden care). In some villages they organized debates in schools where students expressed their opinion about the need to support and help older people.

Older people are more respected and given attention and care (e.g. during 1st October, 16 days campaign against violence against women) and the fact that older people started to participate in activities has changed attitude towards them.

“People started to realize that they will become old at some point in their lives. And one should take action today to improve older people's lives”

“We felt that we are not forgotten,” Kalipa Turdugulova, 76 years old, from Kirovka village.

At national level: The action is planning to make an input into a shadow report to the CEDAW and organize public hearings during final conference in September 2012. Government will be aware of the scope of domestic violence and elder abuse and initiate changes both in practice and policy to reduce rates of both.

Why is it considered a good practice: Project has broken the silence around elder abuse. It ensured that the most vulnerable older people received equitable protection and age-appropriate services. Older people's problems became visible and started to be resolved by local authorities. The project collected direct evidence on prevalence of elder abuse in order to inform policy and programming debates on protection of the rights for citizens of all ages.

Timeline/duration of the project: 18 March 2011 – 18 September 2012 (18 months)

Lessons learnt: Those OPGs, which consisted of representatives of Court of aksakals, social workers, school teachers turned out as more successful than other groups. OPGs proved to be an effective community response system to domestic violence and elder abuse as they are respected and trusted by others. In the inception phase, proper explanatory works with target beneficiaries and careful information dissemination activities are essential in further successful continuation of the project.

Relevance for the UNECE region: Elder abuse is pervasive in ECE region. It is a growing concern. With the ageing population in the Region the numbers of older people experiencing domestic violence are likely to increase. The project was designed to address situation around elder abuse and meet the needs of older people.

Location of the project: throughout Kyrgyzstan

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