



„STOP DOMESTIC VIOLENCE” PROJECT

THE SUMMARY OF THE PROJECT IN MODLIBORZYCE MUNICIPALITY

„STOP DOMESTIC VIOLENCE” project submitted by the Mayor of Modliborzyce last year was ranked as one of the few in the lead of the highest rating programmes under Programme PL14 “Prevention of domestic and gender based violence”. The project was given the green light and as a result funding under the Norway Financial Mechanism 2009-2014

The above mentioned project envisaged a broad range of preventive actions aimed at different age groups – starting from children and teenagers, through professionals and pensioners – those who are lonely in their homes and the ones who are socially active.

REPLACING AGRESSION – ACTIVITIES IN SCHOOLS

Children of school age were offered preventive activities. Activities took place in three schools in Modliborzyce, Wierzchowiska Drugie and Stojeszyn Pierwszy.

The series of activities and meetings created the opportunity for school children to gain the skills to recognise their own feelings, cope with negative feeling and learn to be assertive.

The activities were not a usual classes, *„they were workshops devoted to developing interests and leisure activities and the aim of those workshops was to reduce aggression amongst children (...), give them ideas what to do during leisure time, this is why we offered them creativity workshops, activities during which children can share their own ideas which quite often are very spontaneous, funny and creative (...) generate a lot of fresh and original ideas and what is even more important those ideas are not judged by me and I also ensure they are not judged by other children”* says Katarzyna Nowak – psychologist leading the workshops.

Beside the workshops with the psychologist children were offered sessions with physiotherapist who examined children looking for body posture defects and gave advice on how to prevent and correct them.

AMATEUR YOUTH GROUPS

Summer time is a harvest time. Children living in the countryside are very often left alone at home with their own ideas, very often not approved by parents, of what to do during that leisure time.



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Sometimes children go near the farm machines without being aware of the dangers. This prompted the idea to organise 5 summer groups. While working with children we focused on educating through developing various skills in amateur youth groups. During our workshops children find out how to release negative emotions and come into contact with their peers.

We also made parents aware of their children’s needs. The activities took place during summer in 2014 and 2015. They were met with a very positive response from families and local community and also people from other neighbouring municipalities.

„Janko the Musician from Modliborzyce” is the motto of the **musical group** which took part in regular group activities in Wierzchowiska Drugie and also in a three day long away classes run in three groups of instruments simultaneously: trumpet, saxophone and percussion. Children presented acquired skills at the market in Józefów impressing local authorities and local community. We were able to admire them in our town during harvest celebrations and patriotic celebrations.

We focused on educating through sport in our two sports groups. Children learnt about healthy competition, team work and responsibilities. Children were able to implement their ideas, feel the taste of the success and victory by participating in sport competitions as well as draw conclusions from the failures.

Very interesting and unusual way of preventive work to shape anti-violence attitudes was used in **the literary reading group**. *„By the means of an interesting book, mini workshops and art classes children could „visit” four countries: Japan, Italy, United States and Poland. The book was the main source of knowledge in terms of culture, history and interesting facts about the four countries and also provided culinary guidance and information. These activities provided lots of knowledge and lots of fun for all participants”* says Wanda Trójczak who runs the workshops.

Feelings and emotions can also be expressed through dance. It is a very effective way of relieving stress and replacing violence. This method was used in the summer group named „**Little ballerina**” where dance was the main activity. Parents took part in organising these multigenerational integrating meetings.

SELF-HELP GROUPS

The next task is the development of therapeutic influence aimed at people directly or indirectly affected by domestic violence. This is why we set up 2 self-help groups. One of the groups is for



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professional women. Apart from specialized knowledge the participants had the opportunity to exchange experiences and get encouragement to make changes in their lives. We pointed out that domestic violence causes an ongoing stress, it means living with constant pressure which has got a negative impact on the body and mind. This is why the workshops focused on mitigating stress, relaxation and taught how to deal stressful situations and developing professional, educational and welfare skills.

Pensioners is the second self-help group. We believe it was crucial to inform seniors about their rights and how to enforce them. We pointed out the importance of the ability to say „no” in situations where there is a pressure from the members of the family and ability to be able to express their needs and feelings. During the autumn-winter period we organised the so called „neighbourhood help” for seniors, neglected and lonely people and those who needed help. We offered help with household chores such as cleaning, shopping and cooking. However, the most popular were physiotherapy and relaxation training. The series of meetings increased faith in their own abilities, and strengthened the position and the image of seniors in the community. Many of the seniors became community leaders ready to help others, support and advise on where to find help. It is a wonderful and grateful group, withdraw and inactive not so long ago and now it is thriving, imaginative and initiating activities.

SPECIALIZED GUIDES

The development of Specialized Guides is the next task including acting aid aimed at people being subject to domestic violence and to the abusers as well as community leaders and people active in the area of preventing domestic violence. Thanks to the resources from the Norway fund we were able to systematize the work done so far by the Specialist Advice Centre (PPS) and improve the quality of the services by offering free individual consultations with multidisciplinary specialists including: family counselling, legal advice, educational, social and mental health counselling and social counselling.

It is very significant that by implementation of the project „**Stop Domestic Violence**” we improved the social infrastructure by adapting and modernising Specialist Advice Centre building. We also equipped social facilities in the place where seniors meet.

The culmination of the above mentioned project activities was a seminar summarising topics which were very interesting for the participants. The subject for discussion was „*The impact of complex*



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trauma on the development and functioning of the family members”, especially the image of the child who is sexually abused, delivered by dr Elżbieta Trubiłowcz. Dr Iwona Ulfik-Jaworska highlighted the dangers of the cyber violence by showing how damaging it is for our children and what consequences it can have on their adult lives. Andrzej Trzeciński, MA, brought us closer to the subject of violence against disabled and seniors which is a subject not commonly discussed in the society.

These types of meetings are an effective way of promoting the idea of life without violence, promoting family values and ways of dealing with critical situations.