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OAK
FOUNDATION

THE TRUST LINE

0 8008 8008

5 years of activity

**A retrospective on domestic violence
phenomenon**



Analytical Report 2009-2014

Drafted and edited by: The International Women Rights Protection and Promotion Center „La Strada”

This Report is published within the project „Consolidation of legal and social protection of victims of domestic violence, especially women and girls, in the Republic of Moldova”, with the financial support of the US Embassy in Moldova and the project „Enabling women and children to live without violence: consolidation of public awareness and support measures” with the financial support of the International Organization for Migration, Mission to Moldova.

The Analytical Report „Trust Line **0 8008 8008**: 5 years of activity. A retrospective on domestic violence phenomenon”, represents the results of the activity of the Trust Line **0 8008 8008** of the International Women Rights Protection and Promotion Center „La Strada” during **2009-2014**.

Opinions and information present in this publication express authors’ viewpoints assumed by the International Women Rights Protection and Promotion Center „La Strada” and does not mandatorily reflect donors’ position.

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“Nova Imprim” SRL

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Note on the edition

Any act of violence against any person, whether a woman, man or child, is an assault on dignity, which, in consequence, leads to the devaluation of that person's potential and abilities. When violence is directed against family members, it is even worse. These were actually the premises on the basis of which had been conceived the Trust Line (TL) 0 8008 8008, a national telephone service, oriented towards the prevention of domestic violence and the provision of psychological assistance to the victims of this phenomenon.

Being launched in November 2009, The Trust Line is operating for 5 years now, a period during which it succeeded to assert itself as an important link in the national assistance system in this field and continues to be a reliable confident of domestic violence victims. This service is intended not only for domestic violence victims, but to the community members and professional groups in the field as well, being free of charge on the entire territory of the Republic of Moldova, available 24/7, from landline and cellphone. The qualified staff is providing counselling and consulting in all domestic violence cases.

Along the 5 years of activity, the TL extended its area of services from consulting and primary psychological counselling, information and orientation on domestic violence cases till the facilitation of the access of beneficiaries to other existent specialized services in the field, primary legal counselling (obtaining a Protection Order), mediation services, etc. From 2011, domestic violence victims can beneficiate of specialized legal aid, provided by the lawyer of the International Center "La Strada". Through its anonymous and confidential character, the TL created an atmosphere in which women can confess and discuss their violence experiences, previously hidden and private, can beneficiate of a dialogue based on acceptance and understanding, on emotional and informative support for overcoming the crisis situation.

From the launch of the free Trust Line and up till the end of 2014 had been recorded over 7.800 phone calls and 480 interventions had been made for facilitating the settlement of 212 cases. The information gathered daily directly from the beneficiaries represents an important basis for the annual development of activity reports, three of which had been published in 2010, 2011 and 2013. Being at its fourth edition, this Report contains a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the domestic violence phenomenon, its dynamics in the Republic of Moldova for the last five years. The information contained in the Report is objective, based on the confessions of domestic violence victims and on the experience of consultants and lawyers providing assistance to this specific category of beneficiaries.

The Report shows a complex picture of domestic violence phenomenon through the light of phone calls of TL beneficiaries. Thus, *Chapter I* reflects an overview of the phone calls received on the Trust Line. In Chapter II is reflected the domestic violence phenomenon, with an emphasis put on the profile of violence subjects, the aspects of its expression and the specifics of beneficiaries with a high-level of vulnerability. *Chapter III* includes information on the types of assistance requested by beneficiaries. *Chapter IV* describes in details the legal assistance service provided by the lawyer of the International Center “La Strada”. Although it seems to be part of the chapter *Assistance requested by beneficiaries*, we have decided to dedicate it a separate chapter, namely due to the fact that this type of assistance is very complex, involving direct contact with the beneficiaries, fact which leaves no room for misinterpretations or subjective interpretations. *Chapter V* has been dedicated completely to the multidisciplinary approach of domestic violence cases within the National Referral System (NRS), as well as the role played by different state actors, authorized to settle such cases. First of all, it is about professional groups operating in the sphere of law protection bodies and those from the social sphere.

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Also here are described the difficulties encountered by beneficiaries in the attempt to break the circle of violence or encountered by professional groups in their interventions. The Report ends with a set of *Conclusions and recommendations* addressed to the public and especially to competent structures vested with duties of prevention and combating of domestic violence, as well as decision-making factors.

The experts of the International Center “La Strada” express their belief that the correct information about intervention methods in violence cases, the planning of assistance provided to women and children, the increase of possibilities of providing assistance to domestic violence victims, the promotion of a realistic expectation towards the national-level protection system in the field shall contribute to the future decrease of domestic violence phenomenon.

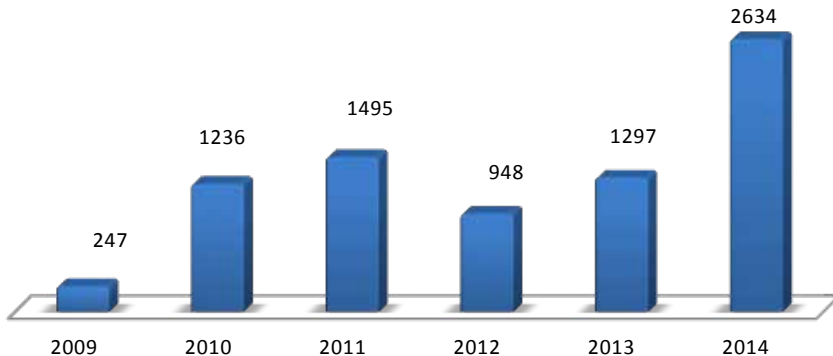
I. Characteristics of phone calls received on the Trust Line

1.1. Phone calls' dynamics and general characteristics

In five years of activity of the Trust Line service, its consultants received **7.857 phone calls** both from the entire territory of the Republic of Moldova and from abroad (see Figure 1). Phone calls records allow us to make an analysis of the domestic violence phenomenon from the perspective of characteristic traits of domestic violence subjects, the specifics of its expression depending on age, occupation, marital status of the victim/aggressor, the needs and difficulties encountered by people in the attempt to settle domestic violence situations (DV).

The comparative analysis of incoming phone calls shows that the dynamics is increasing, in 2014 being recorded a maximum number of **2.634** phone calls. The smallest number had been recorded in 2009 - **247** phone calls – and this is normal, taking into account the fact that the service had been launched at the end of the year. In 2010, 2011 and 2013 had been recorded annually in average a relatively equal number of phone calls, the difference being insignificant. However, the years of 2012 and 2014 stand out by the minimum and maximum number of phone calls recorded in one year, figures which have a direct connection with the service promotion campaigns. Thus, if in 2012 had been recorded the smallest number of phone calls – **948** – the reason being the lack of a promotion campaign, in 2014, namely due to the continuous promotion, had been recorded 2.634 phone calls.

Figure 1. Phone calls dynamics per yers



We should outline the fact that out of those **7.857** phone calls, **1.724** had been repeated, the subject of **5.395** phone calls of the total number has been the subject of domestic violence, **1.584** of them being repeated. At the category **Others** had been recorded **2.462** phone calls. We should also mention that those **5.395** phone calls the subject of which was domestic violence reflect **3.816** new cases of domestic violence, in **2.835** of them being initiated legal proceedings (the request comes directly from the victim, asking for TL consultants' help), **849** being presumed cases (the request of intervening in a domestic violence case comes from a community member of a representative of professional groups) and **132** – presumed cases that evolved in a file, excluding repeated phone calls (initially, we had been contacted by a community member and further, directly by the victim of domestic violence). Thus, out of the total number of phone calls reflecting cases of domestic violence, **4.026** phone calls had been received from victims, 81 phone calls – from aggressors, **1.152** phone calls - from community members and **136** phone calls from professional groups (see Table 1).

I. Characteristics of phone calls received on the Trust Line

Table 1. Categories of phone calls received through the intermediary of the Trust Line 0 8008 8008 in November 2009 - December 2014.

YEAR	Phone calls from victims/ <i>DV cases</i>	Phone calls from aggressors/ <i>DV cases</i>	Phone calls/notices from community members about cases of domestic violence / <i>DV cases</i>	Phone calls/notices from professional groups about cases of domestic violence / <i>DV cases</i>	Others	TOTAL NUMBER OF PHONE CALLS / <i>NEW DV CASES</i>
Year 2009	149/122	1/1	45/41	-	52	247/164
Year 2010	721/499	19/9	187/162	9/7	300	1236/677
Year 2011	699/558	16/11	236/199	16/16	528	1495/784
Year 2012	467/282	9/4	157/123	23/13	292	948/422
Year 2013	652/415	10/5	190/142	36/12	409	1297/574
Year 2014	1338/873	26/21	337/277	52/24	881	2634/1195
Total 2009-2014	4026/2749	81/51	1152/944	136/72	2462	7857/3816

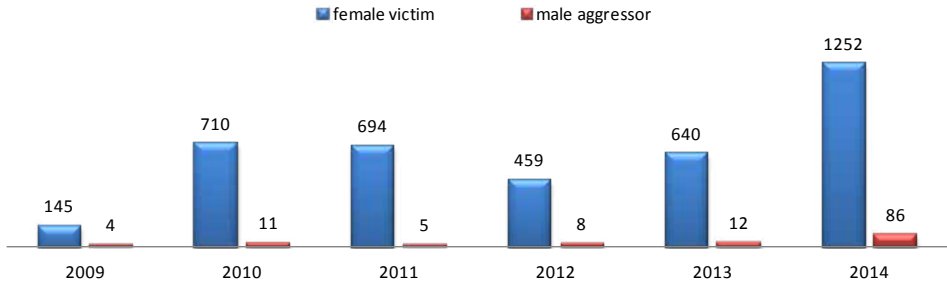
Note: The new DV case is recorded/found only in the category of phone calls whom this phone call had been initially received from.

1.2. Categories of phone calls recorded through the Trust Line

1.2.1. Phone calls from victims

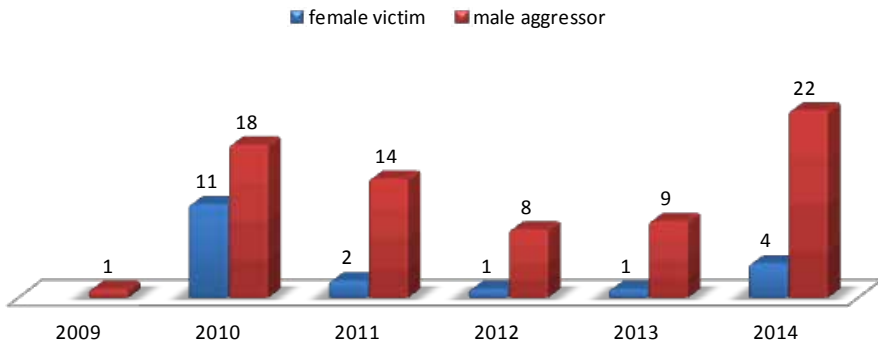
In five years of activity, TL consultants provided necessary counselling to **4.026** victims of DV. Regardless of age, geographic area or social status, all claimed to have the same problems, being subject to various forms of violence. We should outline the fact that although the majority of the total number of victims who called are female victims, however **126** phone calls had been received from **male victims** (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Phone calls dynamics depending on victim's gender



În perioada vizată au fost înregistrate **81** de apeluri din partea In the reference period had been recorded **81** phone calls from the part of aggressors, regarding **51** cases of domestic violence. Except **9** cases, where the aggressor is a woman, in the rest of the cases, aggressors are men (*see Figure 3*). At the same time, **40** aggressors called from villages and 34 from cities, the biggest weight falling once again to the capital of the country, from where had been received **22** phone calls. **5** phone calls could not be identified.

Figure 3. Phone calls dynamics depending on the aggressor's gender

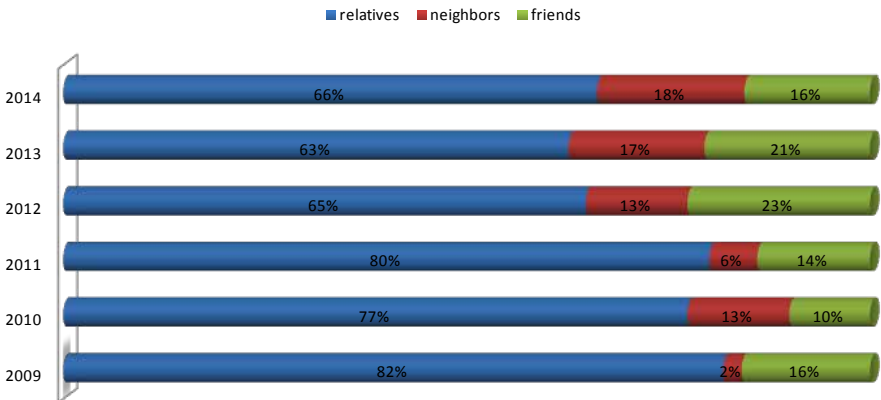


I.2.3. Phone calls/notices from community members

In the reference period had been received **1.152** phone calls from community members, out of which:

- **815** phone calls – requests/notices from the relatives of domestic violence victims;
- **186** phone calls – requests/notices from friends;
- **152** phone calls – requests/notices from neighbors (*see Figure 4*).

Figure 4. Community members who inform about cases of domestic violence

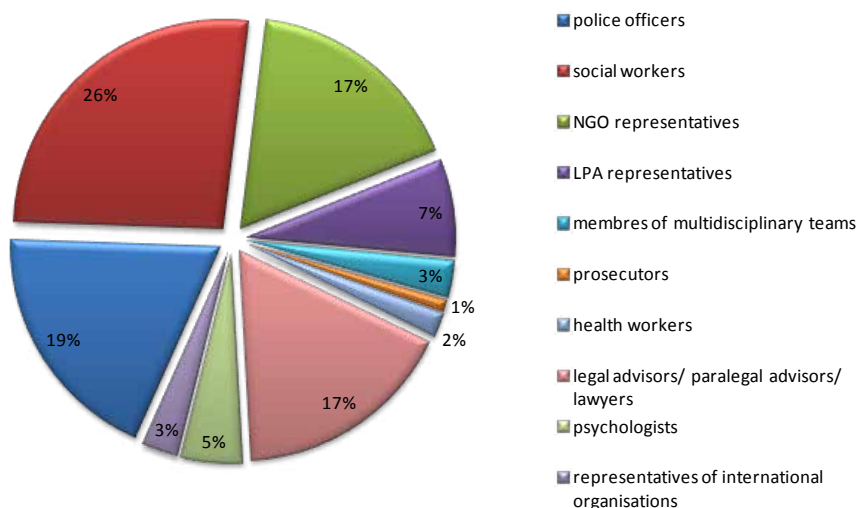


As a rule, they inform about cases of domestic violence in extended families, requesting for information and guidance in DV situations. If in some of the cases these people assume responsibility for the victims, being proactive and acting on their behalf, in others they ask the consultants for a direct intervention, callers assuming only the role of informing a case or another of domestic violence. In other cases, guidance is requested for trying to convince their relatives to break the circle of violence.

I.2.4. Phone calls/notices from professional groups

In the reference period, from professional groups had been recorded **136** phone calls, which reflect **72** cases of domestic violence. These phone calls come from various professional categories from several regions of the republic, predominantly from district centers and Chisinau municipality. Mostly, it is about ***police officers, social workers, managers of NGOs, representatives of local public authorities, members of multidisciplinary teams, prosecutors, medical workers, legal advisors/paralegal advisors, psychologists, etc.*** (see Figure 5).

Figure 5. Phone calls from professional groups



As a rule, they request for information/guidance in cases of violence and/or direct consultants' intervention. At the same time, some of them ask for information about the existent maternity centers or placement centers in their region or even the support of the International Center "La Strada" in the placement of violence victims in specialized centers.

Another type of phone calls from this category of callers are informative phone calls about concrete cases of domestic violence, previously re-directed by the Trust Line consultants for examination.

I.2.5. Informative/collaboration phone calls

In the reference period had been received **409** informative phone calls, as follows:

- **272** phone calls – information about the Trust Line service;
- **43** phone calls – collaboration requests from potential partners;
- **30** phone calls – representatives of educational institutions or NGOs require the organization of advocacy seminars;
- **24** phone calls – cooperation requests from mass media;
- **14** phone calls – information about domestic violence phenomenon;
- **13** phone calls – information about the International Center „La Strada“;
- **7** phone calls – information about the existent services in the field of domestic violence, other than those provided by the International Center „La Strada“;
- **6** phone calls – beneficiaries' feedback regarding the Trust Line services.

I.2.6. Others

In the reference period had been recorded 2.462 phone calls falling within the category Others, which represent a little over 30 % of the total number of phone calls. Here are included the phone calls in which beneficiaries asked for help and information regarding problems which have no connection with the domestic violence phenomenon, such as the access to justice in different situations, discontent regarding various aspects of the social life, etc.

Thus, the most requested information from this category referred to:

- access to justice in different situations – **186** requests;
- material aid – **153** requests;
- compensations/allowances – **140** requests;
- information and guidance in the existent services from other fields – **140** requests;
- expression of discontent towards different aspects of life – **137** phone calls;
- alcoholism treatment – **108** requests;
- violence among foreign citizens – **72** informed cases.

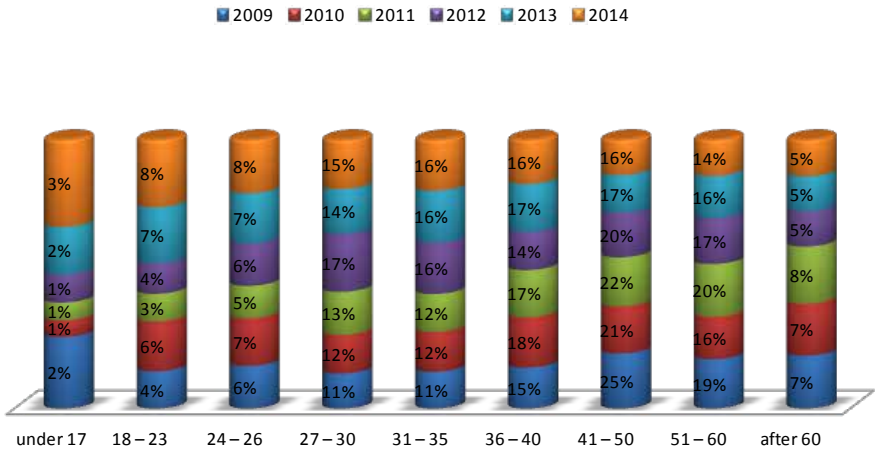
I.3. General framework of phone calls received on the Trust Line

I.3.1. Characteristics of phone calls from the perspective of callers' demographic indexes

I.3.1.1. Distribution of phone calls depending on callers' age

Analyzed through the light of callers' age, the situation is, all in all, relatively homogenous in all years of activity, as presented in *Figure 6*. Most frequently, the age of TL callers is from 41 to 60 years (from 16% up to 25%, depending on the year), followed by people aged 27 – 40 (from 11% up to 18%). More seldom are calling people aged 18 – 26, as well as people over 60 years old (varying between 4% and 8%), and the smallest number of calls is recorded from young individuals under 17 years old (1-3% from the overall number of phone calls).

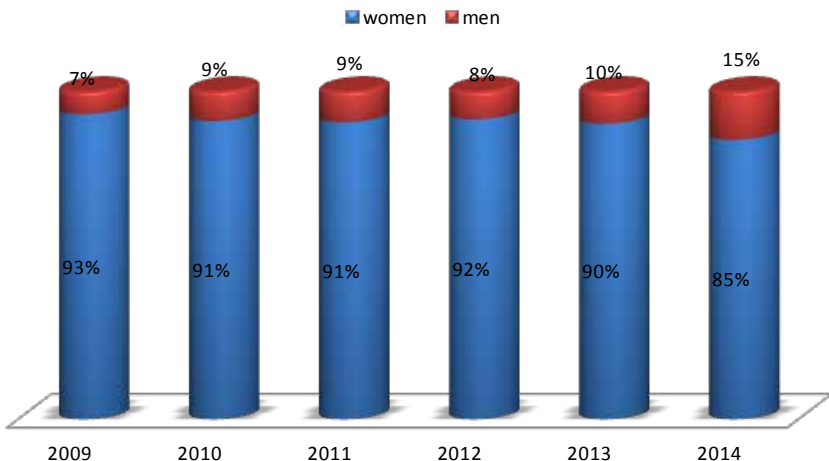
Figure 6. Phone calls dynamics depending on callers'age



1.3.1.2. Distribution of phone calls depending on callers' gender

The majority of callers are women, however, we can perceive a percent increase of the number of men who called in the period 2013 - 2014 (Figure 7).

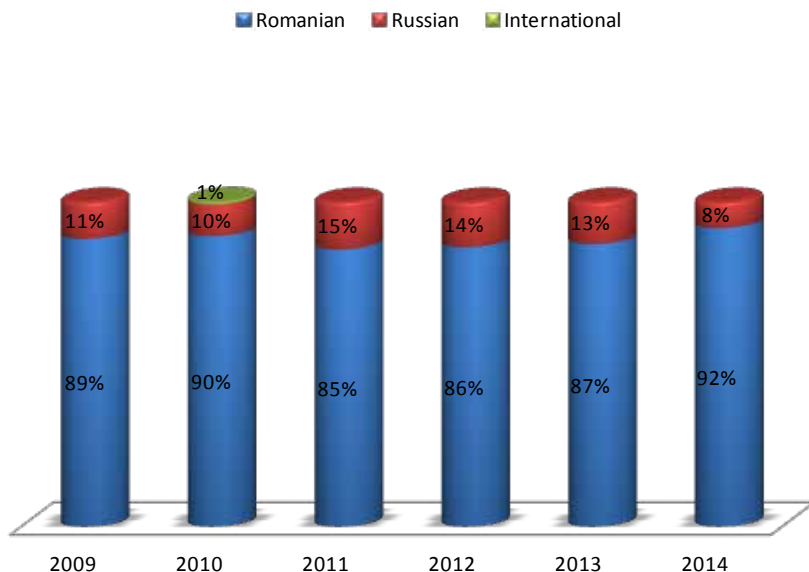
Figure 7. Phone calls dynamics depending on callers'gender



1.3.1.3. Distribution of phone calls depending on the language spoken by callers

From the overall number of received calls, in average, 90% of callers speak Romanian, the rest being Russian speakers. Only in 2010, at the Trust Line called people speaking a foreign language (other than Russian), representing 1% of the overall number of callers (*Figure 8*).

Figure 8. Phone calls dynamics depending on the spoken language

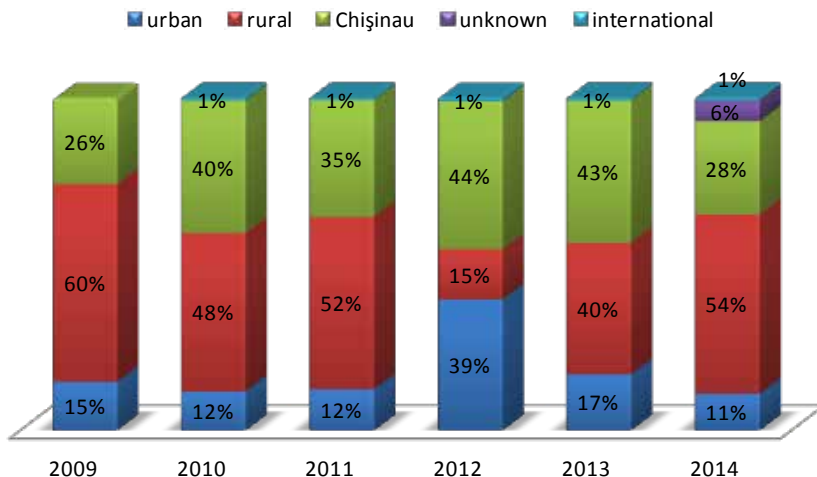


1.3.2. Geography of phone calls received on the Trust Line

As regards the distribution of phone calls according to the urban/rural principle, the situation is different for all five years of activity; therefore, it is rather difficult to define a general tendency. Thus, there had been recorded phone calls from all the regions of the country, but accounting for urban – *Chisinau* parameters, during all the reference years, this percentage exceeds the rural one (*see Figure 9*). However, this fact does not mean that domestic violence

is more likely to take place in the city than in the village – it is rather about a good information of those who live in urban localities.

Figure 9. Phone calls dynamics depending on the region

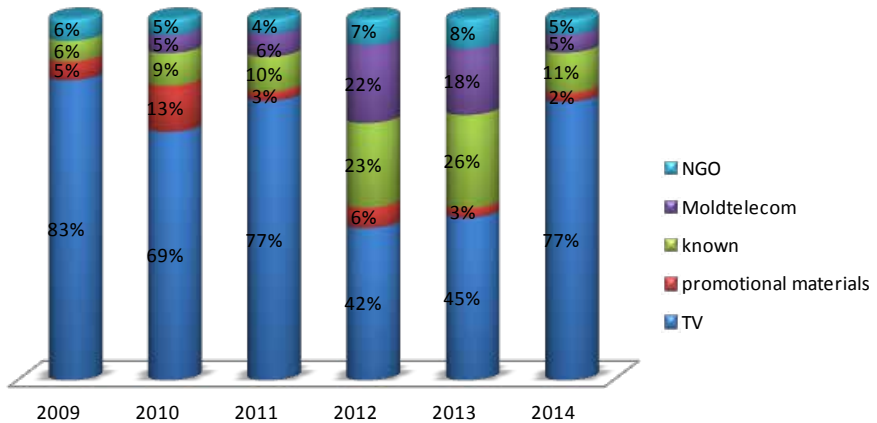


1.3.3. Distribution of phone calls according to the source of learning about the Trust Line

The Trust Line is promoting its services through the intermediary of various sources that have a distinct impact on different categories of callers, depending on age, region and occupation. Thus, the television, acquaintances, Moldtelecom information services, the Internet, promotional materials are sources with the greatest impact on the population. There had been also recorded phone calls where the source had not been identified.

Thus, the main source of learning about the service during the entire period had been TV channels (*see Figure 10*). Mostly, it is about the three social advertisements at several TV channels, launched by the International Center „La Strada” within the service promotion campaigns.

Figure 10. Phone calls dynamics depending on the source of learning about the service



Once with the extension of the Trust Line activity period increased the number of callers who called on the recommendation of relatives of friends, acquaintances being the second important source. At the same time, the last three years has been determined an increase of the number of beneficiaries who found out about the Trust Line from Moldtelecom information services 1188 and 1189.

The last two years of activity, although has been recorded an increase of the number of beneficiaries who found out about the existence of the Trust Line from the Internet, especially from the thematic webpages opened on social networking sites (www.facebook.com/telefonuldeincredere and www.odnoklassniki.ru/violenta.in.familie), the number of recorded cases is very small. However, the virtual space is an important source when speaking about the prevention of this phenomenon.

II. Domestic violence phenomenon through the light of the Trust Line

2.1. Profile of domestic violence subjects

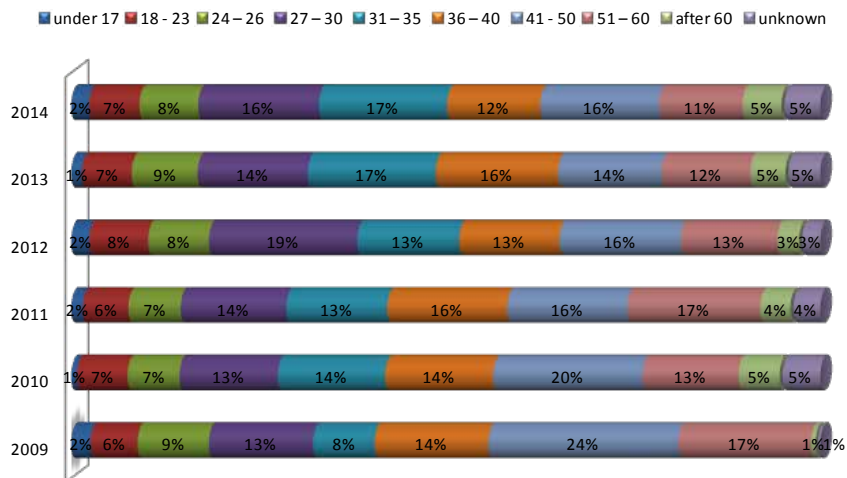
Taking into account that the Trust Line **0 8008 8008** is a service intended to ensure beneficiary's anonymity and confidentiality in the discussions with the caller, the consultant does not insist on disclosing certain confidential data. Moreover, there are certain categories of cases, especially in situations when there is an imminent danger for victim's life, when the discussion is oriented strictly towards taking the victim out of danger. Thus, the data showed below, both in the case of victims and aggressors, do not result 100% from cases recorded at the Trust Line, this fact depending directly on how much female beneficiaries are willing to provide such information, on the specifics of situation in which they are found on the moment of the call or their emotional state. Nevertheless, it is important to create a psychosocial portrait of the victim and of the aggressor for combating, first of all, the existent myths and stereotypes used by the society for minimizing, excusing or justifying the abuse. Second of all, not less important is the meditation on the dynamics of the gender dimension and on the long-term social, psychological and economic consequences suffered by the victims.

This information is useful and can be developed in the complex process of creation of an adequate attitude towards the problem of domestic violence, as well as in the organization of the assistance system for this category of beneficiaries.

2.1.1. Age and marital status of domestic violence subjects

As regards victims' age, the range is rather wide – from less than **17** years old to over **60** years old. The majority of female beneficiaries are **31-35** years old and **27-30** years old (*see Figure 11*).

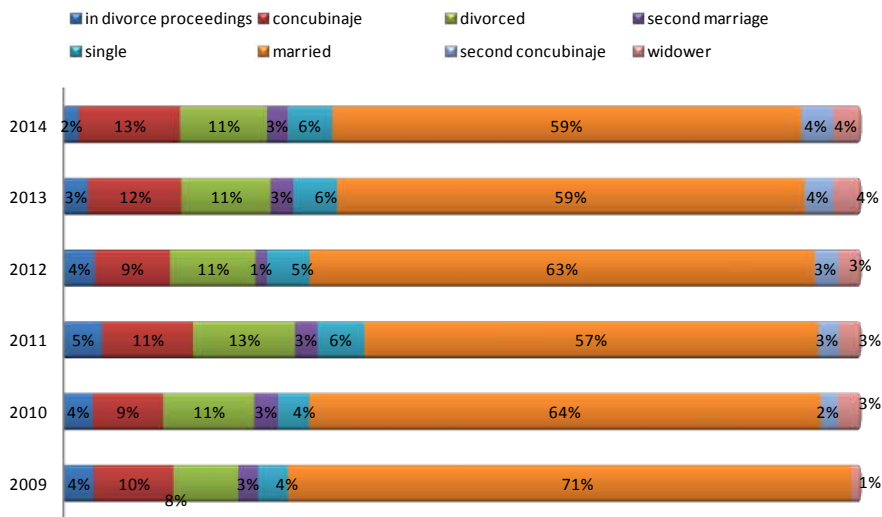
Figure 11. Phone calls dynamics depending on the age of domestic violence victims



Marital status. In five years of activity, a number of married individuals (*from 57% up to 64%*) benefited of the TL assistance, being followed by cohabiting couples (*from 9% up to 13%*), divorced individuals, their share representing 11% in all reported years, except 2011, when had been recorded 13%. Assisted beneficiaries from the category of individuals in the process of divorce, in a second relationship, unmarried individuals or widows/widowers represent shares, which do not exceed 6% of the overall number of beneficiaries for each reported year (*see Figure 12*).

II. Domestic violence phenomenon through the light of the Trust Line

Figure12. Phone calls dynamics depending on the marital status of domestic violence victims



2.1.2. Educational and occupational level of domestic violence subjects

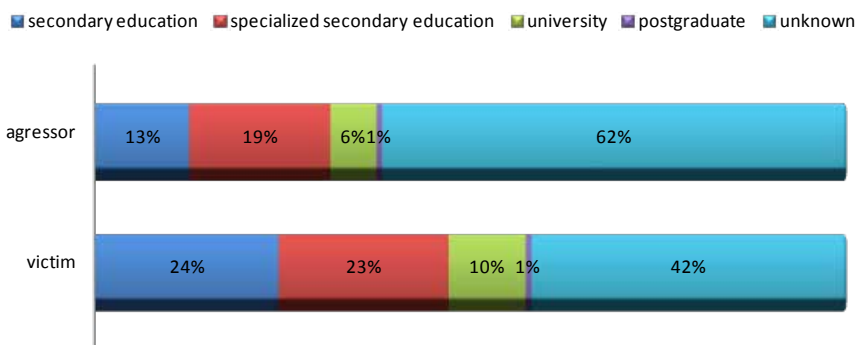
Another relevant aspect in the shaping of the psychosocial portrait is the educational and occupational level of domestic violence subjects. Taking into account the level of studies, there are no significant differences between subjects of violence. Therefore, 24% of victims and 12% of aggressors have **secondary education**. A great number of beneficiaries state that they have **secondary specialized education** (23% of victims and 19% of aggressors).

A great percent of cases the subjects of which come from among individuals with an average educational level do not necessarily confirm the idea that violence occurs mostly in such environments. It may be presumed that domestic violence is as spread as among individuals with a high educational level. Data recorded at the TL confirms this fact. Thus, from callers' statements, 10% of victims

and 6% of aggressors have **higher education**. The relatively small number of individuals from this category can be explained also by the fact that for people with a high educational level is much more easier to find resources for overcoming the crisis situation (they have a certain status, access to information, greater financial income, facts which allow them to survive after the break of the circle of violence, etc.) and thus, they do not need the help of organizations providing specialized services to domestic violence victims.

However, we should outline the fact that these figures are not relevant when the “Unknown” percentage for both categories is very high – 42% for victims and 62% for aggressors (*see Figure 13*).

Figure 13. Educational level of domestic violence actors



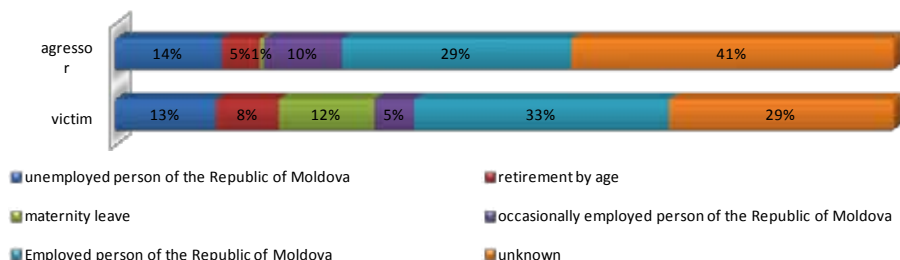
An important aspect taken into account when working with domestic violence victims is their **occupational level**. This clue allows the assessment of the degree of victim’s economic dependence, financial autonomy, her possibilities of having a living space separate from the aggressor.

Largely, both victims and aggressors are hired on a permanent or part-time basis in the Republic of Moldova or abroad (*see Figure 14*). A 12% share of victims, as well as of aggressors, have special difficulties in obtaining a job due to their age, the lack of general

II. Domestic violence phenomenon through the light of the Trust Line

or specialized education or social circumstances. The “*Unknown*” index for both categories of subjects is high enough at this chapter too – 27% for victims and 38% for aggressors.

Figure 14. Occupational level of domestic violence actors

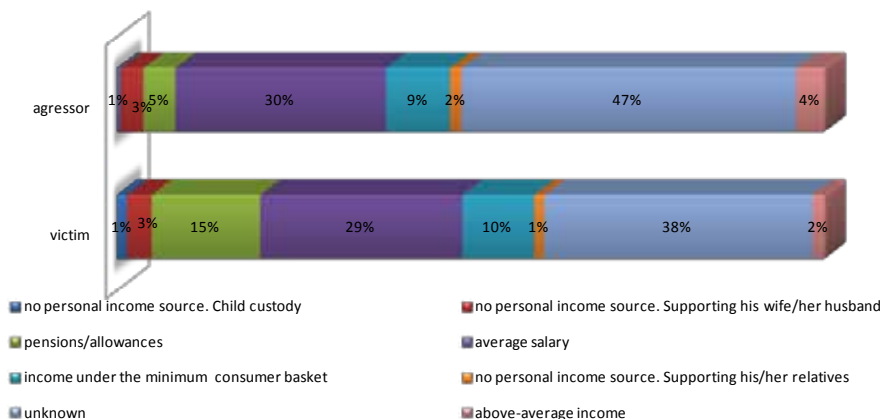


2.1.3. Level of personal income and the impact on domestic violence

The analysis of data recorded at the Trust Line denotes the fact that domestic violence is a scourge, which affects directly and undoubtedly the overall material welfare of the family. Although 38% of beneficiaries did not mention anything about their material status, it can be concluded that both in the case of victims and aggressors, the majority of callers who provided such information **gain average income** (29% in the case of victims and 30% in the case of aggressors). We should emphasize the large percent (around 15%) of victims who survive only from **pensions and allowances**; 10% of the number of victims and 9% of aggressors have low incomes, falling **under the limit of the minimum consumer basket** (see Figure 15).

The interpretation of the data obtained in the five years of activity allows us to determine that both aggressors and victims have a relatively equal contribution to the creation of the family budget.

Figure 15. Level of personal income of domestic violence actors



2.2.Types and forms of expression of domestic violence

The analysis of cases recorded at the Trust Line 0 8008 8008 of the International Center „La Strada” in 2009-2014 prove that domestic violence is expressed as a combination of different forms of manifestation of abusive behavior from the part of aggressors. According to victims’ confessions, domestic violence takes different forms, more or less visible, such as physical, psychological, sexual, economic and spiritual violence. Violent people express a series of aggressive behaviors under the form of certain combinations of coercive actions and several types of attacks. Most predominant cases are cases where physical violence is combined with the psychological one.

The other forms had been mentioned with an intensity directly proportional to advocacy campaign objectives, conceptualized and executed by the International Center „La Strada” in one period or another.

Physical violence, accompanied by psychological violence

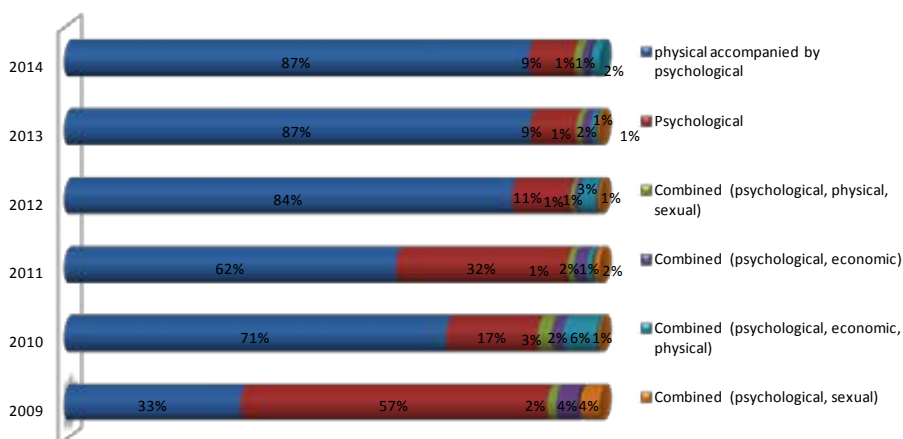
From the numerical viewpoint, the most common form of violence is physical violence, with certain insignificant increases or decreases. Thus, after the 1st phase of the campaign „A healthy family is a

II. Domestic violence phenomenon through the light of the Trust Line

family without violence” from 2010, which had the title „*You can have a life without fear*”, at the Trust Line had been recorded a significant number of such cases (71 %). While in 2011 had been recorded the smallest number of cases in which only physical violence is accused, accompanied by psychological violence (62% of the overall number of cases). This decrease seems to be due to the launch of another advocacy campaign, which did not encourage the identification of only these forms of domestic violence expression.

Nevertheless, the 2012-2014 period is characterized by a significant increase of the number of phone calls by which callers invoked again this type of domestic violence (*over 80% of the overall number of aggressors*). This increase is explained by the reaction of the general public to the three (numbers smaller than ten are written in words) TV advertisements broadcasted simultaneously on local TV channels, as well as due to the change of the Service’s program, this being available 24/7 during these years. We should outline the fact that at the night had been recorded sufficient cases of domestic violence, victims being endangered even during the call.

Figure 16. Phone calls dynamics depending on the types of domestic violence



Psychological violence

The number of Trust Line phone calls from individuals suffering from **psychological violence** practically doubled in 2011 (32%), as compared to 2010 (17%). This fact shows once again the positive impact of the 2nd phase of the campaign, intended to raise public awareness towards new forms of domestic violence expression, others than the physical one.

The maintenance of a relatively stable number of cases when only psychological violence is accused (11% in 2012 and 9% in 2013 and 2014) proves the awareness degree of population and victims of domestic violence, of the abnormality of this phenomenon and shows intolerance towards insults, intimidations, injuries, screams, negligence, exaggerated jealousy, emotional blackmail involving children, death threats, all these determining them to ask for specialists' help.

Combined violence

Apart from the combination between physical and psychological violence, there are other recorded forms as well of expression of combined violence, which prove once again that the final purpose of violence is exercising power and control on the victim, her subordination. Many women who suffered from violence from the part of their partners reported to the TL different forms of combined violence. Thus, in the analyzed period had been recorded a relatively small number of cases, which reflect a combination of violent behaviors in the family, but which allows to divide them into four subcategories.

Combined violence – psychological, physical, sexual

In five years of activity had been maintained a relatively homogeneous percentage of cases reflecting physical, psychological and sexual violence as a combination: 3% in 2010 and by 1% in the other 4 years. As a rule, in such cases physical abuses are accompanied by marital rapes, perverse sexual intercourses, by translating into practice perverse sexual behaviors from porn movies, etc. The fear and shame hampers most of the women to report to authorities such behavioral expressions of their partners.

II. Domestic violence phenomenon through the light of the Trust Line

Combined violence – psychological, economic

In the reported period, the combination between psychological and economic violence had been identified in a smaller, but stable number: by 1% for 2012 and 2014 and by 2% for 2010, 2011 and 2013. Usually, such cases imply the lack of the access to common income or even to personal incomes of the victim and to other important resources: food, medicines, education or a job. Over the last two years had been also recorded cases when the aggressor forces the victim to return debts accrued without her knowing and without her consent.

Combined violence – psychological, physical, economic

There had been also recorded cases when the impact of economic and psychological abuse is also intensified by physical abuse. The greatest number of cases when combined violence is accused (psychological, physical and economic) had been recorded in 2010, 6% up over the total number of phone calls, followed by 2012, when had been recorded 3% of phone calls from this category. The smallest number of cases reflecting psychological abuse, accompanied by physical and economic abuse, had been recorded in 2014 – 2% up, and in 2011 and 2013 – by one % every year. *Violență psihologică însoțită de cea sexuală*

Psychological violence accompanied by sexual violence

The type of **psychological violence accompanied by sexual violence** had been identified by 1% every reported year, except 2011, when had been recorded 2% of cases reflecting this combined type of abuse. As a rule, such cases reflect such sexual behaviors as marital rape, forcing the victim to sexual perversions, forcing the victim to have sexual intercourses or to strip in front of children, other behaviors with a sexual connotation.

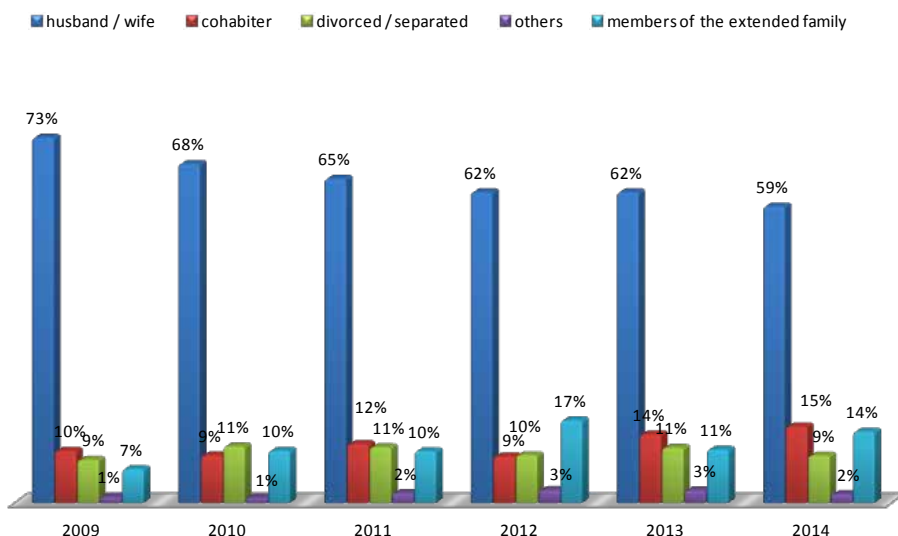
Having analyzed the dynamics of recorded cases, we have found a diversification of the forms of domestic violence expression claimed by beneficiaries. Thus, if initially, during the first two years of activity of this service had been recorded mostly cases of physical violence, later on, the number of cases when the beneficiaries claim psychological, economic or sexual violence increased. This fact is

due to public's reaction to the message from the second social ad „It is not normal to believe that violence is a norm”, that has been encouraging people to identify other forms of domestic violence expression, apart from the physical one, an advertisement frequently broadcasted during this period on TV and radio channels.

2.3. The specifics of relationships between domestic violence subjects

The qualitative analysis of cases recorded at the TL has found that as regards the type of relationship between the victim and the aggressor, the same numerical values are maintained for the entire reported period (see Figure 17). Thus, from the data declared during telephone requests regarding the victim's relationship with the aggressor, on the first place is **marriage** (around 60 % from the overall number of recorded cases), followed by other forms of consensual unions (around 40 %). It is also noted a similarity between the numerical values recorded for **cohabitation** and **divorce**.

Figure 17. Phone calls dynamics depending on the person who produces violence in the family



II. Domestic violence phenomenon through the light of the Trust Line

The main reason of continuous violence is the fact that former partners, although divorced, continue to live together due to financial difficulties, fact which impedes beneficiaries to end the process of partition of marital property or to find another residence place (*3.083 recorded cases in the reported period*).

In a significant number of cases, violence continues even when spouses are **divorced** and live separately (*534 recorded cases*), the aggressor frequently visiting victim's residence place. Violence is expressed, as a rule, by means of nightly visits under the influence of alcohol, physical abuses in the street, attempts to live/visit the former house without the consent of the beneficiary, psychological harassment at home or on the phone. Also in the case of divorced parents, are identified cases when the minor child is used for revenging on the victim: the refuse to return the children to the former wife and forcing her to pay the alimony, although the court legally established her custody on the minor children.

Along the five years of activity had been also recorded cases when the aggressor is not the partner, but a **relative** of the victim. From this category, we can mention *daughters-in-law/sons-in-law, brothers-in-law, grandparents, brothers, grandchildren, daughter/son or even one of the parents*. An increase of cases involving relatives has been felt in 2012 and 2014, when had been recorded 17% and 14% of phone calls falling within this category.

The smallest number of telephone requests had been recorded in cases when the aggressor is a former cohabitant, ex-boyfriend or lover; included for convenience in the category of **Others** (*from 1 to 3% of all cases recorded in one year*).

2.4. Specific aspects of domestic violence expressions

2.4.1. The specific of domestic violence involving children

In 2009-2014, both in the category of *others*, and in cases of domestic violence had been recorded cumulatively **2.548 cases** in which children suffered from various forms of violence or abuse. In Table 2 several details are given on types of cases of domestic violence involving children.

Table 2. Types of cases of violence involving minor children

Types of cases of domestic violence involving minor children	2009-2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Total
	Number of cases					
<i>Domestic violence with indirect involvement of minor children (witnesses)</i>	459	335	273	358	695	2.120
<i>Domestic violence with direct involvement of minor children (victims)</i>	61	83	28	31	29	232
<i>Domestic violence exclusively against minor children</i>	5	12	17	8	28	70
<i>Sexual abuse against children</i>	2	6	9	5	6	28
<i>Commercial sexual exploitation of children</i>	2	2	-	1	1	6
<i>Physical abuse against minor children outside the family</i>	1	3	-	3	14	21
<i>Violation of children's rights in educational institutions</i>	2	2	1	2	2	9
<i>Parent –children conflict</i>	8	9	2	7	10	36
<i>Violation of children's rights in the family</i>	3	6	2	3	12	26
Total	543	458	332	418	797	2.548

In the analyzed period, in **3.812 cases** of domestic violence against women had been also mentioned the involvement of children. Therefore, we can suppose that the real number of these children could be a lot bigger.

II. Domestic violence phenomenon through the light of the Trust Line

1. Domestic violence with the indirect involvement of minor children (witnesses)

Out of those 3.812 cases of domestic violence against women, in 55% (2.120 cases) children are mentioned as being witnesses to violence. In 2014 had been recorded the largest number of cases (695) where children are witnesses of violence, while in 2012 had been recorded the smallest number of such cases (273).

2. Domestic violence with the direct involvement of minor children (victims)

In 6 % of those 3.812 cases, children are direct subjects of violence, representing 232 cases. These cases are characterized by the fact that, apart from the partner, to physical abuse are subject also minor children of the family. In 2010 had been recorded 61, a significantly smaller number as compared to 2011, when there had been recorded 83 cases. The number of cases from this category remained relatively constant over the last three years varying around 30 cases.

As a rule, in such cases the application of physical violence is invoked, however, the number of calls on cases of psychological violence increased considerably over the last years. In such cases, minor children serve as a tool for the aggressor to impose his control and power over his life partner. In other cases, psychological violence is expressed through insults/intimidations or by forbidding the child to live with the other parent, deprivation of certain benefic activities for the development of the child. All these are only aiming to impose his authority to the minor child.

In other 11 cases, callers informed about acts of sexual abuse towards minors, occurred within the family, requesting our immediate intervention.

3. Domestic violence exclusively against minor children

In the reported period had been recorded 70 cases of domestic violence exclusively against children. The dynamics of this category of

cases is unstable, being characterized by increases and decreases. Hence, if in 2010 had been recorded only 5 cases, in 2011 the number of cases when abuse is exclusively or predominantly on the minor child increased, representing 12 cases of violence. In 2012 had been recorded 17 cases of abuse exclusively on the minor, as compared to 8 cases in 2013; in 2014 the number of cases from this category reached maximum numerical shares, being recorded 28 such cases. Victims had been girls and boys aged 5-17, children subject to physical abuse or sexual abuse from the part of their parents, brother, husband, grandparents, lover, father, single mother. The request of intervening in such cases comes from different categories of callers: neighbors, professional groups, members of extended families or the minor victim himself/herself. After the analysis of cases of domestic abuse against children, several traits of the minor victims are distinguished. We should specify that the majority of victims are 7-17 years old, although there are cases when victims are under the limit of seven years old. The majority of victims come from the rural area. The situation of victims coming from the urban areas is characterized by a series of lacks: the lack of a residence place, the lack of material resources, etc. In the majority of cases victims come from unorganized families, where mother or father is absent (due to death, divorce, abandonment, temporary leave abroad for work or in another locality). On the other hand, the presence in the family of a stepfather increases the risk for the victim to be abused, especially sexually. There had been also recorded a considerable number of cases of abuse against minor children when, although both parents are present, children are neglected, they are frequently missing classes or are not attending the kindergarten. It is about families where parents, being both addicted to alcohol, are violent with each other and with their children as well.

4. Sexual abuse against minor children

In the reference period had been also recorded 28 cases of sexual abuse against minor children. If in 2010 the number of such cases is very small, (2 recorded cases), the following years the number

II. Domestic violence phenomenon through the light of the Trust Line

of calls invoking sexual abuse against minor children increases (6 cases in 2011 and 2014, 9 cases in 2012 and 5 cases in 2013). Victims of sexual abuse are minor children aged 5-17, both girls and boys. As aggressors had been reported fellow villagers, members of extended families, father or even victim's peers.

Cases of sexual abuse against minor children are reported, as a rule, by parents, neighbors, professional groups or by the victim him/herself.

5. Commercial sexual exploitation of children

In 2009-2014 had been recorded 6 cases reflecting the phenomenon of commercial sexual exploitation of children, one of the smallest indexes. As a rule, in such cases family members (3 cases), neighbors (1 case) or professional groups (2 cases) request information or guidance or even specialists' intervention for providing the necessary assistance or request for the organization of child victim's hearing in the specialized child therapy room of the International Center „La Strada”.

6. Violation of children's rights in educational institutions

In the five years of activity of the Trust Line of the International Center „La Strada” had been reported a total number of 9 cases of domestic violence against minor children in educational institutions from the part of educators or the teaching staff. As a rule, it is about notices from the part of parents, willing to punish the aggressors.

7. Parent- teenager conflict

In the same period, the dynamics of cases reflecting parent- child conflicts is relatively constant: 8 cases in 2010 and 9 cases in 2011; after an exception in 2012, then the number of such cases reduced significantly, being recorded only 2 such cases. The following years had been recorded an increase, returning to approximately the same level: 7 cases in 2013 and 10 cases in 2014, the overall number in the analyzed period reaching 36 cases.

For such cases, it is characteristic for the parents or grandparents to request psychological counselling for improving their relationship with the child, requesting behavioral strategies for overcoming the teenage crisis, expressed through denial, runaway, the desire to keep an relationship unaccepted by his/her parents, demonstrative consumption of narcotic substances.

8. Violation of children's rights in the family

In 2009-2014 had been recorded 26 cases of violation of children's rights within the family – 2-3 cases annually, except 2011 and 2014, when had been recorded 6 cases, respectively 12 case from this category.

If the 3 cases of violation of children's rights in 2010 referred mostly to legal aspects (alimony, child visits regime), in 2011 the 6 cases from this category referred mostly to the emotional aspect of parent-child relationships. Such cases cannot be qualified as acts of violence, but can easily evolve into domestic violence if are continued. As a rule, the violation of right is expressed by such situation, as: the parent breaks the child visits regime; the father does not agree with the court judgment of offering the child custody to the mother because of her indecent behavior; mother does not take care of the child due to her unsatisfactory financial situation or alcohol consumption; close relatives accuse irresponsibility and immaturity in raising the children; the alcoholic parent neglects his child, etc.

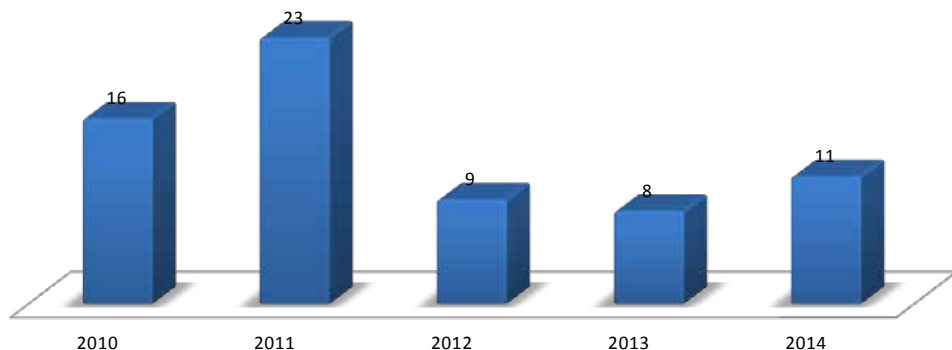
2.4.2. Peculiarities of domestic violence in mixed marriages

In the reported years, at the Trust Line had been recorded **67 phone calls** regarding domestic violence in mixed marriages (one of the parents is a foreign citizen). The dynamics of phone calls per years is reflected in Figure 18¹.

1 - In the diagram is missing the year of 2009, because the service had been created at the end of this year, when n phone calls from this category had been recorded.

II. Domestic violence phenomenon through the light of the Trust Line

Figure 18. Dynamics of domestic violence cases in mixed marriages



In 2010, in those 16 cases of violence in mixed marriages, one of the parents/partners represents the following countries: Russia and Ukraine (6 cases), Turkey (2 cases), France and Tajikistan (1 case). In 2011 had been recorded the largest number of phone calls on violence in mixed marriages – 23 cases, the citizenship of one of the parents being distributed as follows: the Russian Federation (9 cases), Turkey, Ukraine and Romania (2 cases), Australia, Azerbaijan, China, Egypt, Greece, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, Sweden (1 case).

The following two years the number of cases from this category decreased significantly. Thus, in 2012 had been recorded 9 cases involving one parent – foreign citizen from Turkey and Ukraine (2 cases), from Italy, Kirgizstan, Libya, Mongolia, the Russian Federation (by 1 case), and in 2013 had been recorded 8 cases of violence in mixed marriages; in 3 cases the victim-wife was citizen of the Russian Federation, in other 3 cases the aggressor-husband is from Iran, Kirgizstan and Romania; in one case the victim-wife was from Ukraine, while in another case the aggressor-husband was from the United States of America. In 2014, this category suffered a slight increase, being recorded 11 cases; in 2 of them the victim was a citizen of the Russian Federation and Ukraine; in the other 9 cases - aggressors were foreign citizens from Romania

(3 cases), Saudi Arabia, Azerbaijan, Italy, Slovakia, Syria and Turkey (by 1 case).

The geographic area where acts of domestic violence occurred

On the territory of the Republic of Moldova. Out of the overall number of 67 cases of violence in mixed marriages recorded in the reported period, 48 cases occurred on the territory of the Republic of Moldova. In a series of cases, women-victims, after the marriage with Moldovan citizens, moved permanently to the Republic of Moldova. In all cases, the husband was imposing his power and economic control, but was also applying physical force. In many cases, victims were depending financially on the husband, did not have their own residence place and did not have the necessary support of their relatives and friends. Although they had the intention of leaving, the lack of support and resources was not allowing them to return to their native country. Another problem faced by victims who were breaking the circle of violence was that they could not leave Moldova because the husband was not giving his consent for the mother to leave abroad with the minor children.

In other cases, aggressors were foreign citizens. They were living permanently in the Republic of Moldova, without a personal source of income, unable to integrate in a foreign society, under the influence of the daily consumption of alcohol, subjecting to abuse his partner, who was supporting him. There had been also recorded cases when aggressors were socially integrated and who made a career. Physical abuses in such cases were starting/intensifying when the victim was declaring that she refuses to convert to husband's religion or was converting to another religion without his consent, or was getting pregnant.

Abroad, in countries other than Moldova. In the rest of 19 cases, violence in mixed marriages produced abroad. In such cases, it was determined that victims of domestic violence succeeded to break the circle of violence and to leave the country they were staying. Coming back to Moldova, being aware of the risk that their

II. Domestic violence phenomenon through the light of the Trust Line

partner could come to Moldova as well, they requested for information from the TL consultants regarding the observance/protection of their parental rights on the children.

2.4.3. The specifics of violence involving people with high-level of vulnerability

The analysis of cases recorded in the five years of activity of the Trust Line outlines certain peculiarities in the assistance of cases involving elderly people with deficiencies (physical invalidity, mental deficiencies), both as regards victims and aggressors. The intervention and further integration of these people becomes difficult due to the specific of subjects' personality involved in acts of violence, and due to the manner in which the person is seen by professional groups.

- **Victims with a high-level of vulnerability (elderly people and people with disabilities)**

In the reported period, in **207** cases victims were third age people, while in **100** cases, the victim claimed psychological deficiencies and in **223** cases – somatic affections. We should specify that victims from this category have a high risk of vulnerability – physical affections involve special care, but, in the majority of cases, it cannot be provided by the extended family or local authorities (the lack or insufficiency of social workers). The ability of satisfying the natural needs of life decrease considerably, while the available income does not satisfy the personal needs.

- **Aggressors with a high-level of vulnerability (elderly people and people with disabilities)**

Specific difficulties occur also in the assistance of cases involving third age aggressors (145) or with somatic problems, including locomotors (89 cases) or with a psychiatric diagnosis (152 cases). In these cases we can notice the aggravation of certain personality emphases or even of psychopathological expressions, violence victims being in an environment with a high risk for their life. We should also mention that half of the persons registered in this

category, both victims and aggressors with a certain degree of invalidity are elderly, dependent or semi-dependent of other family members.

- **Intervention of competent authorities in cases of violence involving people with a high-level of vulnerability**

One of the deficiencies which can be imputed as systematical in the case of intervention of professional groups in cases of violence with subjects with a high-level of vulnerability is the superficiality with which the needs of this category are identified and assessed, taking into account their psychological peculiarities, as well as the socioeconomic environment they live in.

In such cases, law enforcement bodies should order an expertise and determine whether the person who after a **psychic disorder** (mental disease or mental deficiencies) cannot acknowledge or control its actions, can be declared by the court as incapable or capable and, depending on this, the aggressor can be held criminally or administratively liable, or can be admitted in a psychiatric institution for beneficiating of a medicinal treatment, according to his diagnosis.

The analysis of this type of cases showed that in practice, for avoiding this and long-term complicated procedure, involving several relevant professional groups, police officers declare that they do not dispose of legal action mechanisms or state that there are no available places in the specialized medical institution.

The same happens in case the aggressors have **physical deficiencies**. Representatives of law enforcement bodies, dominated by certain personal stereotypes (mercy, compassion), do not take any measures, leaving further the victim exposed to danger. This happens when the law does not provide any exceptions for holding legally liable people with locomotors deficiencies or any other physical deficiencies for the committed action. For holding legally liable, the law provides exceptions expressly in the case of minor children or persons declared incapable.

II. Domestic violence phenomenon through the light of the Trust Line

Intervention in such cases becomes faulty not only due to personal stereotypes of representatives of law enforcement bodies, but also due to the fact that the state does not ensure the existence of appropriate services for this specific category of family aggressors. We should specify that such aggressors need specific assistance, but currently, the state does not have the necessary mechanisms for representatives of law enforcement bodies to exercise their job duties, given the small number of psychoneurological clinics, the number of available place for placing/isolating aggressors is limited. Assistance in such cases is reduced to administrative contraventions or verbal rebuke. However, these do not hold the victim free of any dangers for her life and health.

2.4.4. Impact of alcohol and drugs consumption on domestic violence production

- **Alcohol consumption and its impact on domestic violence phenomenon**

The qualitative analysis of cases recorded at the Trust Line over the years 2009-2014 reveals both cases when alcohol consumption does not influence domestic violence and cases when violence is produced under the influence of alcohol (*see Figure 19*). Thus, in **1.691 cases**, representing 44 % of the overall number of recorded cases, the caller mentioned the presence of certain dependencies at the victim or the aggressor.

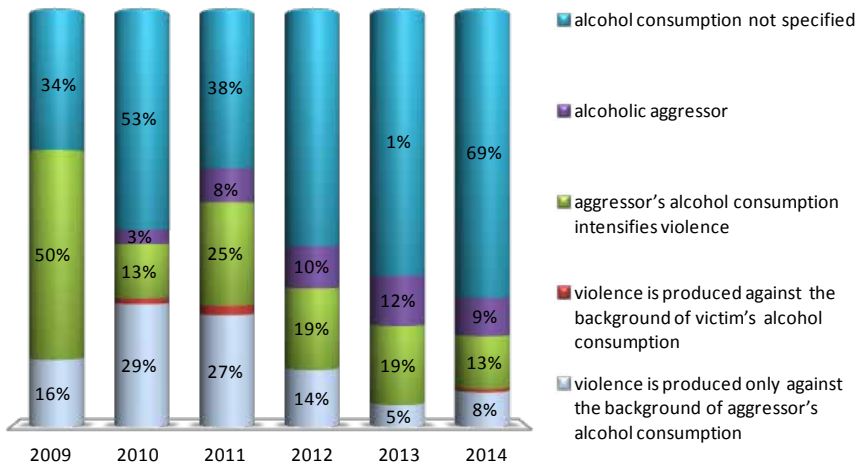
In a significant number of cases out of the total number of cases where alcohol consumption is invoked, **violence is produced by the aggressor only on the background of alcohol consumption**. The largest number of cases from this category had been recorded in 2011 (29%) and in 2012 (26%). The last two years the number of these cases diminished considerably, constituting 5% in 2013 and 8% in 2014.

The analysis of this type of cases proves that in a considerable number of cases **alcohol consumption only intensifies violence**.

The Trust Line 0 8008 8008: 5 years of activity

The largest number of cases from this category had been recorded in 2011, constituting 24%. In an insignificant number of phone calls, female beneficiaries state that the aggressor suffers from alcoholism (*from 3% up to 12%*).

Figure 19. Impact of alcohol consumption on domestic violence production



What is interesting here is that from the total number of domestic violence cases recorded in five years of activity, in **2.125 cases is not specified the impact of alcohol consumption on domestic violence.**

- **Drug consumption and its impact on domestic violence phenomenon**

In 2010-2013, callers claimed acts of violence committed by **drug-addicted aggressors** (by 1 % for each reported year). In the reported period had been recorded a relatively small number of cases where is mentioned **victim's addiction to alcohol or narcotic substances**, as a strategy of refuge from the violent environment she lives in. Thus, in 3% of cases is mentioned alcohol consumption and in 2% - drugs consumption by the victim.

II. Domestic violence phenomenon through the light of the Trust Line

A separate category of aggressors are abstinent or/and former alcoholics – by 1% per each reported year, except the period 2012-2013, when no case from this category had been reported. In an insignificant number had been mentioned also aggressors who, although they do not abusing alcohol, show the same violent behavior (by 1 % for 2011 and 2013).

However, from callers' confessions can be deduced the fact that alcohol is not a reason of initiation of violent episodes, but only a favorable factor to this end.

- **Intervention of competent authorities in cases of domestic violence generated by abusive alcohol consumption**

Cases of domestic violence involving alcohol-addicted aggressors require a special approach. However, professionals qualified to intervene in such cases frequently declare that they do not have the necessary legal levers for forcing people visit a specialist doctor for determining his/her alcohol-addiction degree, even if aggressors violate the public order or are causing bodily injuries to family members. As a rule, alcohol-addicted aggressors are only applied administrative contraventions and are registered as peace-breakers in families. An in-depth analysis of cases and of the provided assistance denotes the fact that law enforcement bodies know that the procedure of bounding to undergo drug testing and treatment is regulated by *Law No.713 on the control and prevention of abusive alcohol consumption, illicit consumption of drugs and other psychotropic substances*². Moreover, female beneficiaries and law enforcement bodies admit that the procedure of bounding to undergo a treatment under this law is complicated and inefficient.

2. Law No. 713 on the control and prevention of abusive alcohol consumption, illicit consumption of drugs and other narcotic substances as of 06.12.2001, published in the Official Monitor, No. 36-38 as of 14.03.2002, art. 208.

III. The specifics of assistance provided on the Trust Line

3.1. Overview and assessment of services provided on the Trust Line

In five years of activity, the Trust Line **0 8008 8008** succeeded to ascertain itself as an important link in the national assistance system in the field. This type of service is intended for victims of domestic violence, community members and professional groups from this sphere. The qualified staff provides consultations for all cases of domestic violence. This service is free of charge, available 24/7, including from the cellphone and is covering the entire territory of the Republic of Moldova.

Due to beneficiaries' special needs and to the evolution of the assistance system from the country, the service extended its mandate over the years. Thus, if initially it was providing only psychological consultations, information and guidance in crisis situations and was facilitating beneficiaries' access to other existent services in the field, from the spring of 2010, consultants of the Trust Line provide also primary legal consulting (information on the divorce proceedings, property partition, parental rights on children, information on the Protection order, etc.).

3.2. Assistance provided to victims of domestic violence before calling the Trust Line

Before analyzing the types of assistance requested and provided to TL beneficiaries, it is important to specify that a good part of domestic violence victims who called the TL benefited previously of appropriate assistance from the part of law enforcement bodies, LPA, doctors, social workers or within certain specialized centers existent in the republic. Thus, according to the structures, which the victim resorted to previously, the first place is held by police bodies. This is due to the fact that in accordance with legal provisions, representatives of Police Inspectorates play a decisive role in the combating and prevention of domestic violence.

III. The specifics of assistance provided on the Trust Line

According to police bodies, other two important categories of professionals, which victims of domestic violence resorted to previously, are prosecutors, judges and doctors. The smallest number of beneficiaries' resorts was to specialized assistance Centers, fact explained by their relatively small number, reduced capacity, complex procedure which the subject of domestic violence is subjected to for becoming a beneficiary of such Centers, as well as the stereotypes dominating the victim when appears the need to leave the household, children and to be as far as possible from the aggressor.

At the same time, a good part of female beneficiaries state that the Trust Line is the first service they resorted to for information and guidance. The most frequent reasons invoked by victims who did not ask for help are fear and shame. Fear has several dimensions – the fear of aggressor, the fear of not enhancing aggressor's acts of violence, the fear that her partner shall take away her minor children, the fear of not harming children's future career by calling to law enforcement bodies, the fear that the aggressor shall destroy their common property, threatening that he shall burn down the household, etc. The generator of the feeling of fear of domestic violence victims are usually community members, their own children, extended family or even the representatives of professional groups.

Other reasons determining the victims to maintain the circle of violence up till calling the Trust Line was the hope that the aggressor shall change in time, partner's forgiveness and the will of repairing the relationship with them, the feeling of guilt towards the aggressor or even the justification of the abusive behavior. Another category of victims think that without them partners will be lost in life, will not manage without their help. Certain female beneficiaries think that it is useless to change anything and any efforts of asking for help and breaking the circle of violence would be useless or would even worsen the existent situation. Others are ready to go through anything, only to keep their family and household at which they worked on the entire life, even if the relationship with the partner is very violent and they permanently live in

tension and danger. Another category of female beneficiaries invoke as reason for not resorting to authorities the lack of financial resources, the lack of a stable job, the lack of a residence place or the lack of sources for initiating the divorce proceedings, as well as the lack of support from the part of the extended family or friends.

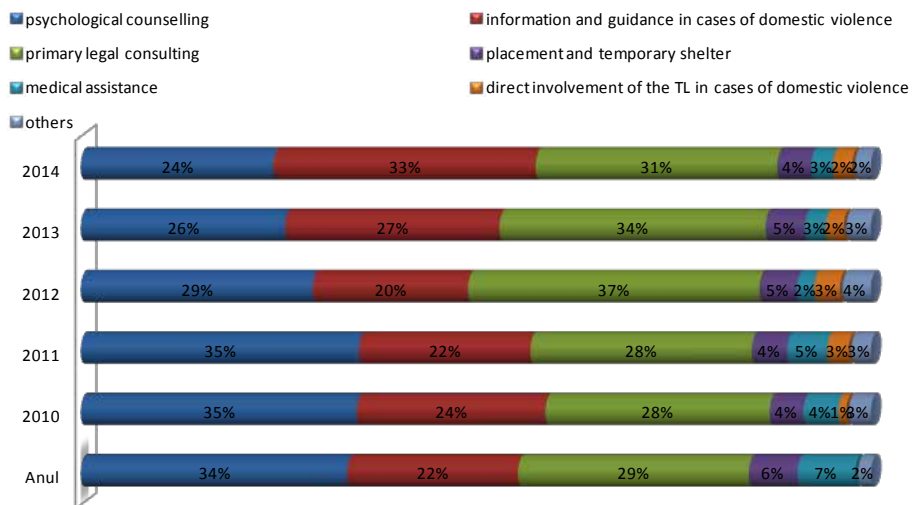
Regardless of the previously provided assistance by other professional groups and prejudices of domestic violence victims that make them inactive, Trust Line consultants are those who provide beneficiaries a dialogue based on trust, support, unconditioned acceptance, information and guidance. The information is always confidential and anonymous, while the intervention and further actions of the consultant are taken only together and with the consent of the beneficiary directly involved in the domestic violence case.

3.3.Types of assistance requested on the Trust Line

The analysis of the assistance requested on the Trust Line reflects beneficiaries' needs, needs that remained relatively constant during the entire analyzed period (*see Figure 20*):

- primary legal consulting– from 28% up to 31%;
- psychological counselling – from 24% up to 35%;
- information and guidance in cases of domestic violence – from 20% up to 33%;
- placement and temporary shelter – by 4% for 2010, 2011 and 2014, as well as by 5% for 2012 and 2013;
- medical assistance, including dealcoolisation treatment – from 2% up to 5%;
- the request to settle domestic violence cases on behalf of subjects, without the direct involvement of the caller – from 1% to 3%.

Figure 20. Phone calls dynamics according to callers'needs in cases of domestic violence



Below you can find the brief description of each type of assistance requested on the Trust Line and provided to beneficiaries.

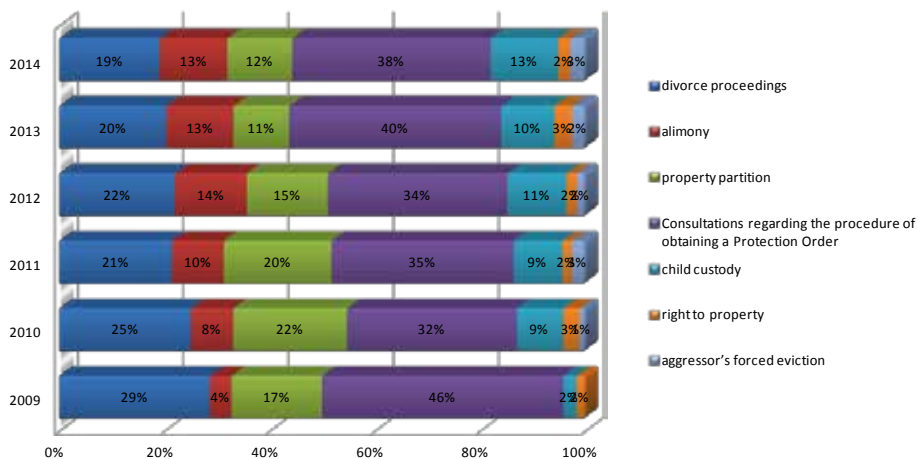
3.3.1. Types of telephone counselling provided on the Trust Line

Primary legal counselling

The primary legal counselling was the most frequently asked type of assistance in the five years of activity on the Trust Line (see Figure 21). Thus, from the total number of cases when legal counselling had been requested, the most information had been provided on the subject regarding the procedure of obtaining a Protection Order (from 32% up to 46%), being followed by:

- divorce proceedings (from 19% up to 25%);
- alimony (from 8% up to 14%);
- property partition (from 12% up to 22%);
- child custody (from 9% up to 13%);
- right to property (2% or 3% in each reported year);
- aggressor's forced eviction (from 1% up to 3%).

Figure 21. Phone calls dynamics depending on the specifics of legal counselling



Consultations regarding the procedure of obtaining a Protection Order

During the telephone counselling, frequently appears the need of informing the victims of domestic violence about the existence and the mechanism of application of the Law No.45-XVI on the prevention and combating of domestic violence. The analysis shows that the over last two years of activity considerably increased the number of people who know about this law or even benefited of protection provided by it. This fact can be the result of population information campaigns, including through the intermediary of mass media, the training of professional groups authorized by law to take action in cases of domestic violence, as well as due to a more active involvement of law enforcement bodies.

Divorce or marriage dissolution proceedings

Having poor legal knowledge, domestic violence victims frequently believe that they cannot divorce because their husbands does not agree or the state duty in case of marriage dissolution is large or they could lose their children, etc. However, the lack of appropriate information about the existence of legal aid services guaranteed

by the state or about the possibility of resorting to legal advisors for free legal assistance, who are working within nongovernmental organization in the field of prevention of domestic violence, many of the beneficiaries resort to the services of private lawyers for the services of whom they have to pay large amounts of money.

Alimony

A category of beneficiaries request information about the steps necessary to be taken in case of non-observance of court judgments of paying on time the alimony. Many of the beneficiaries claimed huge debts on alimony accrued in time, accusing the non-involvement or insufficient involvement of bailiffs in forcing aggressors to execute court decisions. Another category of beneficiaries request information about the possibility of increasing the quantum of the alimony if the father of the child is unemployed or has a very small official salary.

Property partition

During the divorce proceedings, especially in the attempt of dividing the common property, victims of domestic violence encounter difficulties that is hard to overcome. Thus, a property partition process requires considerable financial resources, costs from the part of the victim, which can be covered only by the person who initiates these proceedings and who shall be eventually the direct beneficiary of the claimed material goods. However, many aggressors are threatening that in case of divorce the victim will be left without any property or house, although in many cases he is the one who has no rights in the real estate, the victim of domestic violence taking possession of the real estate on the basis of a certificate of legal heir. There are also cases when, even if the property partition is done, former spouses continue to live together in the same house, in the same yard, the aggressor continuing his acts of violence on the victim.

Child custody /establishing the residence of minor children

In families with minor children where violence is present, the risk

of maintenance of the circle of violence increases. As a rule, in such cases the aggressor uses his own children as a victim manipulation tool with the purpose of maintaining his power and control on her. There appear threats that he shall take away the children, that she shall have no access to them, the aggressor choosing this abusive strategy especially in cases when the victim is not the official owner of the residence place, when she has insufficient financial resources, when she is economically dependent or when she has the intention of leaving abroad together with the children.

Forced eviction of the aggressor/ownership right

In the telephone consultations had been also identified the need of providing information to beneficiaries about the procedure of forced eviction of the aggressor who refuses to leave the residence place, although he has no right of ownership in the real estate he lives in with the victim.

Psychological counselling

Along the five years of activity, from the overall number of women assisted on the Trust Line, from 24% up to 35% of the total number of beneficiaries have been provided telephone psychological assistance. Psychological assistance is designed namely for people in a stalemate, aimed at settling the family crisis situation. During the phone call conversation, it is very important to set the contact with the beneficiary and to create an alliance based on trust, respect and responsibility.

The specifics of TL beneficiaries is that they frequently refuse to talk or are reticent about their problem. This is why, the use of communication techniques and explaining with patience and clarity the legal rights of the domestic violence victim and the existent resources make the women have a proactive attitude. Telephone counselling is based on empathy, balance, active listening, short questions, clarity and precision.

The main objective of telephone psychological counselling is to collect data about the actual safety of the beneficiary. As a rule, consultants identify the act/acts of violence that made the woman ask

III. The specifics of assistance provided on the Trust Line

for support, analyze violence dynamics, severity and frequency of acts of violence, the environment where these took place, who is the aggressor and the relationship between him and the victim, the presence of children and the identification of acts of violence against children, the assessment of immediate safety of the mature victim and children. During the counselling it is very important to take note of the measures already taken by the victim or that she is about to take for being safe and to record them.

If victim's need of benefiting of qualified psychotherapy had been identified, she is redirected to psychologists and psychotherapists with wide work experience with such categories of people.

Information and orientation in cases of domestic violence

In five years of activity, this type of assistance recorded a permanent growth. Thus, if the first years of activity the number of beneficiaries who had been informed and oriented amounted to 20-24%, in 2013 this number reached 27%, while in 2014 – up to 33%.

Trust Line consultants provide to the victims information about methods of defending themselves from the aggressor: breaking any contact with him, changing the residence place, changing the transport routes, changing the telephone number, etc. It is very useful to inform the victim about her rights, about the method in which the laws and the state institutions and community are defending the woman –victim of domestic violence. This information is provided in a clear unambiguous manner. Also very useful is the information about the information existent in the regions for violence victims, as well as about the Placement Centers, Crisis Centers, services for their children, about the NGOs working with the protection of domestic violence victims, information about the possibility of benefiting of legal assistance guaranteed by the state, the coordinates of specialists/institutions providing psychological counselling. To this information is also added the telephone number of the Police Inspectorate from the region of the victim. If the person chooses to stay in the violent environment, the consultant, together with the victim, are drafting a safety plan.

Placement and shelter

The field of domestic violence prevention requires many services for the victims of this phenomenon for supporting and providing solutions for women' and children's needs. The fact that there is a special law and other normative acts is a very important aspect, but there cannot replace the importance of services provided by Women Placement Centers. Thus, although in Moldova already exists legal protection provided for 6 years now, Placement Centers continue to be the most demanded by the beneficiaries. This need is maintained because not all victims are willing to call the police and to file a complaint, they prefer going to a shelter and stay there as long as necessary or possible.

At the same time, women with a high risk of victimization need safety during the divorce proceedings, because the state does not provide them such protection. A small number of women are not willing to stay in their house anymore, they need a temporary shelter until they find a stable residence. Thus, in the reported period had been recorded by 4% for 2010, 2011 and 2014 and by 5% for 2012 and 2013 of the beneficiaries who requested temporary shelter.

As a rule, the victim can be placed in a Center from 2-3 days up to 1-6 months, depending on the situation. During her stay at the Center, the Trust Line consultant is keeping in touch with her to find out how is evolving the psychoemotional rehabilitation process, what is her state of health, whether she benefited or not of legal assistance or assistance in finding a job, etc.

Medical assistance

Along the reported period had been also recorded an insignificant number of victims of domestic violence who requested qualified medical assistance (from 2% up to 5%). For benefiting of this type of assistance, they are re-directed, as a rule, to medical institutions.

Settlement of domestic violence cases on behalf of subjects, without the direct involvement of callers/ Intervention of the Trust line consultant

In an insignificant number of cases (from 1% up to 3%) appear requests of settling domestic violence cases on behalf of subjects, without their direct involvement. Such requests come from the part of professional groups, community members or domestic violence victims themselves with a high degree of victimization, who have insufficient personal resources for taking measures for overcoming the crisis situation.

Others

There had been also recorded a small number of requests included for convenience in the category Others, containing questions from the sphere of protection of children's rights, materials support or psychiatric treatment. Numerical values for such requests vary between 2-4% of the total number of requests recorded per each year of the reported period.

3.3.2. Facilitation of the access of domestic violence victims to the necessary assistance for redirecting them to the existent services

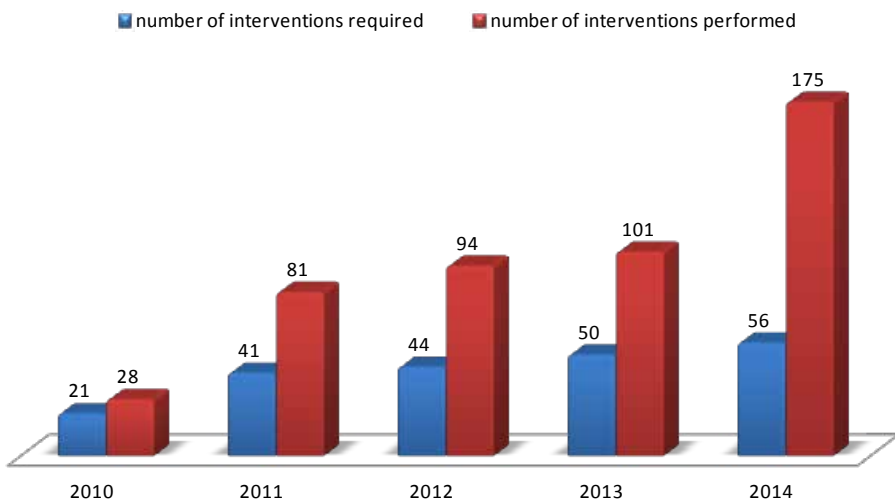
Taking into account the specifics of domestic violence victims and their vulnerability degree, starting from the first years of activity we focused on the necessity that the first contact between the victim and service provides to be established by the Trust Line consultants. Along the five years of activity, we have found that for a person in a crisis situation, a prompt reaction and an immediate answer to her needs can be decisive in overcoming a difficult situation, a situation which may endanger her mental or physical health, her economic and social status or the inter-relation with the others. For this purpose, currently, the Trust Line is considered an important link in the system of assistance and protection on national level of domestic violence victims. For settling cases of violence, the most frequently demanded are state institutions

The Trust Line 0 8008 8008: 5 years of activity

authorized by law to intervene in domestic violence cases: LPA, crisis centers for violence victims, maternity centers, as well as a series of specialized NGOs. As a rule, the Trust Line consultant is contacting the relevant center, is sending all the information and conveys the responsibility of taking care of the victim and makes sure on the phone that the beneficiary reached the appropriate institution/organization.

The report between the intervention requests and actual executed interventions, as well as the numerical distribution of cases per years, for which had been necessary the intervention of the Trust Line, is presented below in figure 22:

Figure 22. Numerical distribution of interventions



Thus, in 2010 had been performed **28** interventions for the settlement of **21** cases: involving placement centers, Social Assistance Divisions, LPAs, specialized NGOs and police commissariats.

III. The specifics of assistance provided on the Trust Line

In 2011, Trust Line consultants performed **81 interventions** for facilitating the settlement of **41** cases of domestic violence, as follows: in *14 cases* had been facilitated the placement of the victim in specialized placement centers, by contacting the centers and sending the appropriate petitions; in *12 cases* had been drafted and sent faxograms to the social assistance Division from the region for their intervention in cases of abuse of minor children; in *13 cases* had been required the involvement of the LPA in the settlement of domestic violence cases; in *2 cases* had been contacted district police commissariats for intervening in crisis situations for the reason that local police officers from the village were not available or were not willing to intervene.

In 2012 had been performed **94** interventions for the settlement of 44 cases: in *20 cases* had been facilitated victim's placement in specialized Placement Centers; in 6 cases had been contacted the LPA or the social assistance division from the region; in *6 cases* had been contacted Police Inspectorates; in *4 cases* had been informed the community social worker and only in one case had been contacted the beneficiary in a crisis situation, who was abroad.

Along the year of **2013**, Trust Line consultants performed **101** interventions for settling **50** cases of domestic violence or of violation of children's rights.

The largest number of interventions had been recorded in **2014**, a normal thing taking into account the fact that 2014 is the year with the largest number of phone calls, a year when Trust Line consultants performed **175** interventions for facilitating the settlement of **56 cases** of domestic violence.

As regards the number of performed intervention in relation to the number of settled cases, there is no specific explanation and no annual comparative analysis could be performed. Each case, being particular and special, required a different number of interventions, starting from its complexity and the prompt or less prompt reaction of the professional groups involved.

IV. Legal assistance provided to Trust Line beneficiaries

4.1. Legal assistance provided to domestic violence victims in civil litigation cases

Specialized legal assistance has been provided to Trust Line beneficiaries from October 2011, as a reply to the increasing needs of domestic violence victims. Every year, this type of assistance recorded an increase, the beneficiaries requesting more detailed information regarding concrete actions that must be taken when a domestic violence case occurs and the actions of competent authorities that are to intervene.

Adoption of Law No.45-XVI on the prevention and combating of domestic violence and the operation of appropriate amendments to the Code of Civil Procedure by introducing a separate chapter – Application of protection measures in cases of domestic violence – enabled the victims of domestic violence to address immediately to court in civil litigation for obtaining protection measures. For this purpose, the lawyer of the International Center „La Strada”, from October 2011, on behalf of the beneficiaries who called the Trust Line, filed several statements of claim in court, by which he required the issuance of a Protection Order.

Initially, the provided legal assistance was covering only legal consulting regarding the immediate actions that is necessary to be taken for removing the risks of violence application by the aggressor. For this purpose, the victim was assisted in drafting and filing requests in court for the issuance of a Protection Order, in drafting complaints to be filed to police bodies, for holding the aggressor legally liable. Further, requests for different types of legal assistance diversified, victims of domestic violence being provided legal assistance also in filing statements of claim for marriage dissolution, for establishing the residence place of children, for the collection of the alimony, property partition, eviction from the house, deprivation of aggressor’s parental rights, victims’ representation in court, filing complaints to competent bodies for initiating criminal investigation proceedings on the fact of domestic violence

and victims' assistance in the initiated criminal cases, appealing protocols of sanctioning for bodily injuries caused, etc. All these actions had been initiated because the Protection Orders were not a definitive solution in such cases, but a temporary one, removing the risk of violence for a certain period of time. The lawyer of the International Center „La Strada” assisted a total number of 139 cases, as follows:

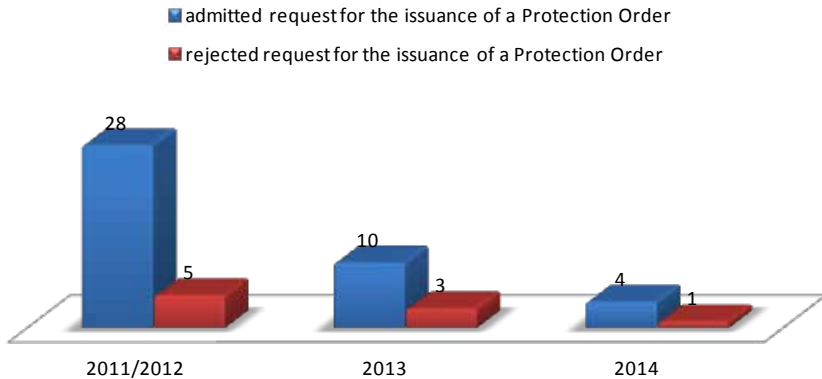
- ✓ October 2011-2012 – **41** cases;
- ✓ 2013 – **55** cases;
- ✓ 2014 – **43** cases.

4.1.1. Requests filed in court for the issuance of a Protection Order

Pursuant to Law No. on the prevention and combating of domestic violence and the provisions of the Code of Civil Procedure, on behalf of domestic violence victims had been filed:

- **in 2011-2012** had been filed **33 requests** for the issuance of a Protection Order, 28 requests of which had been admitted and 5 rejected; in 4 cases Protection Orders had been extended, in **11 cases** had been appealed by the aggressor and 2 Protection Orders had been cancelled;
- **in 2013** had been filed **13 requests** for the issuance of a Protection Order, 10 of which had been admitted and 3 rejected; on only one case the court resolution on the admission of the application for the issuance of a Protection Order had been appealed by the aggressor, his appeal being eventually rejected by the Court of Appeal;
- **in 2014** had been filed **5 requests** for the issuance of a Protection Order, 4 of which had been settled in court and admitted, being issued a Protection Order, and only in one case the court ceased the process, because the victim did not want a Protection Order anymore, making up with the aggressor (*see also figure 23*).

Figure 23. Filing requests for the issuance/rejection of the Protection Order



Among the reasons of rejection of requests for the issuance of Protection Orders filed for reasoning the court judgment, the most frequent were:

- ✓ the lack of evidences which would confirm the acts of violence committed by the aggressor on the victim, especially in the case when it has been invoked exclusively psychological violence (cases when victims had not been even summoned to court, fact which deprived them of the possibility of submitting to the court all available evidences for proving the committed acts of psychological violence);
- ✓ the victim got nervous before the court, due to the presence of the aggressor at the hearing and did not support lawyer's position, which was proving the aggressor's acts of verbal and physical violence;
- ✓ the court decided that it is about a family conflict and not domestic violence (the reason of refuse being the following: the house where the victim and the children live has been bought by the aggressor before the marriage, hence, she

cannot deprive him of the ownership right);

- ✓ the victim rejected the application filed on her behalf by the lawyer and requested only to make a warning to the aggressor.

There had been also cases when the request for the issuance of a Protection Order had been partially admitted, without being instituted the required protection measures. In this respect, judges hesitated to institute the protection measure on the aggressor's eviction from the house, justifying that the aggressor has ownership right in the house. Later on, after in 2013 appeared the first convictions of the Republic of Moldova at ECHR regarding domestic violence, when applying the protection measures was focusing on the life and integrity of the victim and not the ownership right of the aggressor, being admitted without any hesitation the measure for aggressor's eviction from the house owned by him.

Another as usually rejected measure was concerning the interdiction applied to aggressor of visiting his minor children.

As regards the grounds for cancelling the Protection Order issued by the supreme courts, reference had been made mostly on the lack of evidence to confirm the acts of violence committed by the aggressor on the victim.

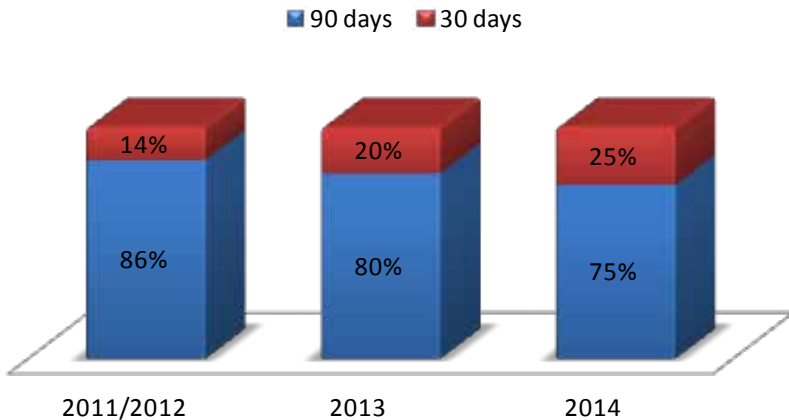
Period for which the Protection Order is issued

According to the Law on the prevention and combating of domestic violence, Protection Orders are issued for a period of up to 90 days. It can be withdrawn once with the disappearance of the danger that caused this protection measure or can be extended in case a repeated application is filed or in case of non-observance of the conditions stipulated in this Protection Order.

The analysis of cases of applying a Protection Order shows that courts applied this measure for a period of 30 and 90 days, the last one obviously prevailing during all the years of legal assistance (see figure 24). In some cases, judges hesitate to apply the Protection Order for more than one month, without justifying this action.

According to article 385 of the Code of Civil Procedure, the early revocation of protection measures before their expiry can take place only upon the justified request of the victim, based on her freely expressed will. Along the period of the provision of legal assistance services to victims of domestic violence, no application had been filed for the revocation of protection measures.

Figure 24. Period for which the Protection Order is issued



Protection measures instituted through the intermediary of the Protection Order

As regards the protection measures instituted by the court through the intermediary of the Protection Order for the victims of domestic violence, the most frequent were:

2011-2012:

- bounding the aggressor not to contact the victim, her children and other persons supported by her;
- bounding the aggressor to keep the distance, for ensuring victim's safety;
- bounding the aggressor to temporary leave the common

IV. Legal assistance provided to Trust Line beneficiaries

residence place or to stay away from the victim's place, without deciding on the ownership in the goods;

- bounding the aggressor to attend a special treatment or counselling program;
- forbidding the aggressor to visit the workplace or the residence place of the victim, etc.

2013:

- bounding the aggressor to temporary leave the common residence place (in 6 Protection Orders);
- bounding the aggressor to keep the distance, for ensuring victim's safety (in 9 Protection Orders);
- bounding the aggressor to contribute to child support (in 4 Protection Orders);
- bounding the aggressor not to commit acts of violence against the victim (in 10 Protection Orders).

2014:

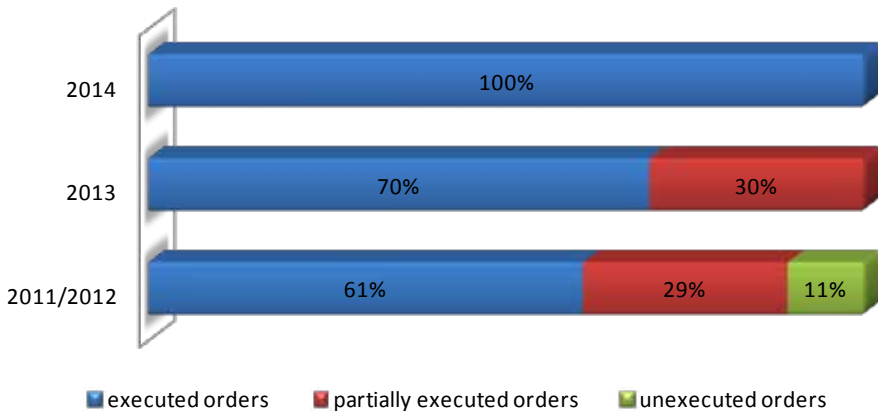
- bounding the aggressor to temporary leave the common dwelling and to stay away from the common dwelling (in 3 Protection Orders);
- bounding the aggressor to stay away from the victim's place, not to apply physical violence against victims (in 4 Protection Orders);
- bounding the aggressor to contribute to the support of common children, to limit the unilateral disposal by the aggressor of common goods (in one Protection Order)

Execution of Protection Order

Although the majority of the applications filed for the issuance of the Protection Order had been admitted, a specific problem during the entire period of legal assistance to domestic violence victims had been the execution of the Protection Orders as well. Thus, if in 2014 all the issued protection orders had been executed, except the measure regarding the bounding of the aggressor to contribute to the support of minor children, which had not been executed,

the percent of non-execution during the previous years has been a lot greater (see Figure 25).

Figure 25. Execution of the Protection Order



Difficulties encountered during the period of obtaining and executing the protection order

Along the period of legal assistance provided to domestic violence victims for obtaining the Protection Order, several difficulties had been encountered on the initial stage of settlement of domestic violence situations. Unfortunately, difficulties encountered the first years of legal assistance continue to persist. These refer mostly to the implementation of law provisions, and not to their content: there are lacking clear and concise mechanisms of implementation of legal provisions, there is lacking the coordination between relevant authorities vested with duties of prevention and combating of domestic violence.

The law force provides clear responsibilities for several professional groups, such as representatives of law enforcement bodies, social services, medical services, local public administration authorities bound to react promptly to any notice and to inform

IV. Legal assistance provided to Trust Line beneficiaries

the victims about their rights, to take the necessary measures for ensuring victim's protection. The lack of knowledge of legal provisions in the field of domestic violence and/or mechanisms of their implementation by relevant authorities constitutes a factor that favors the failure of an efficient settlement of cases of violence. In many cases, authorities' intervention leaves much to be desired, including police officer's intervention when the "protection measure" is limited to a reprimand or a fine applied to the aggressor.

Protection order issuance period

Although the law is rather clear as regards the Protection Order issuance period by the court, in the process of requesting the issuance of the Protection Order on behalf of the victim had been admitted several violations of this period. After the analysis of all Protection Orders requested and issued for the entire period of legal assistance, an improvement of this situation is felt from this viewpoint; if the first three years no Protection Order had been issued in 24 hours, the last year (2014) this period had been more or less observed. Thus, in 2011-2013, the period provided by law for the issuance of the Protection Order had not been observed mostly, these being issued with big delays. This is due to the fact that courts have been interpreting differently the 24 hours period provided for by law for the examination of victim's request and for issuing the Protection Order. According to Law No.45, The Order is issued in 24 hours after the request is made. Amendments made to the Code of Civil and Criminal Procedure stipulate that in 24 hours the court shall examine the request for the issuance of the order and shall decide its acceptance or rejection. Judges perceive this sentence only as their obligation of deciding on the admissibility of the request, without issuing the Order itself. Therefore, the examination of the application was lasting from 4-5 days up to 3 weeks.

Unfortunately, when the application for the issuance of the Protection Order is recorded, the time is not always specified, fact which is, in some cases, in victim's detriment, the issuance procedure can

last up to 2 working days, when every hour counts for the victim. Certain judges admit that they do not manage to express their opinions on the issuance of the Protection Order, especially when the application is filed Friday afternoon, followed by the weekend.

Evidence in cases of domestic violence

Courts continue to put on victim's shoulders the burden of proving the domestic violence in the case of requesting the issuance of a Protection Order. A small number of judges require a report regarding the characterization of the victim and the aggressor, as well as about circumstance of the domestic violence case, on the basis of verbal statements of the district police officer.

At the same time, it happens that the police officer fails to appear in court (usually in urban localities), and if he shows up – he cannot express his opinion on the examined case, fact which places the domestic violence victim in a more difficult situation.

Difficulties in obtaining the protection order appear also when invoking psychological violence, courts refusing to issue a protection Order for this reason. Unfortunately, **invoking psychological violence** in court is not enough for the issuance of a Protection Order. Thus, in several of the cases assisted by the lawyer had been invoked only psychological violence, without summoning the parties, including the beneficiary, the court rejected, as being unfounded, the request for the application of protection measures for the domestic violence victims, thus, refusing to apply protection measures. The court justified its decision by the lack of evidence that would justify the submitted requirements. The court resolution had been appealed at the Court of Appeal, but this court maintained the resolution of the first court.

Such situations reveal two problems: on the one hand, the hostile attitude of judges who do not give credibility to victim's statements, on the other hand, victim's impossibility of obtaining a psychological examination report. The only institution authorized to perform the psychiatric-psychological expertise is the Clinical

Hospital of Psychiatry that **focuses more on psychiatric aspects, rather than on psychological ones.** As a rule, this expertise can be requested only when criminal investigation proceedings are initiated. There had been many attempts of presenting as evidence the psychological characteristic of beneficiaries or the psychological evaluation report issued by the psychologist of the placement center, but, judges frequently have a sceptic attitude towards the complaints where only psychological violence is invoked and it is only at court's discretion to consider or not these psychological evaluation reports. Moreover, sanctions applied for the violation of the Protection Order are not sufficient to make the victim feel safe and to stop the violent behavior of the aggressor. Very seldom aggressors are arrested. Usually, they are sanctioned only with a fine, fact which eventually endangers even more the life of the victim and of the family members.

The operation of necessary amendments would be welcomed for the law to provide in cases of domestic violence that the burden of proof is put on aggressor's shoulders and the police bodies have a more active role in the presentation of evidences.

Execution of the Protection Order

Once issued, courts must send the Protection Orders to the police and the Social Assistance Division by fax or courier, because there had been multiple cases when these, being sent by usual mail, were getting on the table of the district police commissioner in 1 - 1,5 weeks after being issued by the court. About the same time will last the sending of the order from the police commissariat to the district police unit from victim's residence place. All in all, from the examination of the request for the issuance of the protection order and till it was brought to the knowledge of the family aggressor, in case the order is actually issue, were passing from 10 up to 30 days. Therefore, this order cannot be considered an emergency measure!

In certain cases, although the Protection Order is issued observing the legally stipulated period, its imminence and efficiency is undermined because the court failed to inform promptly all the parties about the issuance of the Protection Order, being maintained the danger state for the victim, a difficulty that continues to be encountered up till present time.

Along the time, other difficulties occurred as regards the registration of the Protection Order for being brought to the knowledge of the aggressor, being impossible to register it at the police bodies after 5p.m. The reason invoked was the termination of the working schedule of chancellery servants. When appropriate measures are not taken immediately for bringing to the knowledge of the aggressor the interdictions set by the court, the victim continues to be endangered.

In some representative cases, the Protection Order sent for execution to police bodies had been executed with delay, without being brought to the knowledge of the aggressor. Only after numerous notices sent by the lawyer, the restriction measures provided for in the Protection Order had been brought to the attention of the aggressor.

Supervision of protection Order execution

In many cases, police officers failed to ensure the observance by the aggressors of the measures set in the Protection Order and did not sanction them when the protection measures had been violated. Although the law bounds police officers to supervise the observance by the aggressor of restrictions set in the order, in most of the cases police bodies did not react promptly to victim's calls informing them about the violation of the Protection Order. In this respect, it was necessary to file several complaints to the Police Inspectorate and the district prosecutor's office regarding police bodies' inactions. Only after that, police bodies were reacting to the notices on the violation of protection measures set in the Order.

In many cases, district police officers do not know all the actions

that must be taken in result of violation of protection measures. There had been cases when for the non-observance of restrictions set in the Protection Order, contraventional proceedings had been initiated against the aggressor, examined in the district court, but which had been eventually closed. This fact happened because the official examiner (police officer) drafted a contravention protocol contrary to the legal provisions – he did not know that according to the new amendments, article 318 of the Contravention Code contains two paragraphs. In the protocol had been only specified the article and paragraph, one, which made it null and, led to the termination of contraventional proceedings. Subsequently, on the name of the aggressor had been drafted a new contravention protocol in accordance with article 318 of the Contravention Code. Pursuant to the court decision, a civil penalty had been applied to him. We should mention here that, although the legal framework provides that after the application of the civil penalty, in connection with the non-execution of the Protection Order, the aggressor continues to violate restrictions set in the Order, a criminal case shall be initiated against him. In this case, all these provisions had been ignored. Although the number of such violations is rather large, the criminal case had been initiated much later and only due to repeated requests, filed by the lawyer of the international Center „La Strada.”

There had been also cases when, although there were already two contravention protocols drafted for the non-execution of the Protection Order, no criminal case had been initiated, as provided by law, and the aggressors did not feel the negative consequences of the non-observance of the Protection Order. As consequence, victims had been further subject to a risk and aggressors had not been held criminally liable.

Thus, in many cases the existence of the Protection Order is not sufficient for counteracting acts of violence committed by aggressors against the victim. Law No.45 stipulates the criminal liability for the violation of the Protection Order only in case of a previous vio-

lation sanctioned in contraventional order. This provision does not ensure the safety of the domestic violence victim and aggressor's acts of violence against the victim are not counteracted appropriately. In this respect, it would be necessary to amend the legal framework for the possibility of immediate initiation of a criminal case for the non-execution of the Protection Order.

In many cases, both the police and the social worker, responsible for the supervision of execution of the Protection Order, do not react on victim's call regarding the violation of the Protection Order by the aggressor, leaving her without any protection. In such cases, victims have to leave their home and seek for a shelter.

In conclusion, there is no well-defined mechanism for the monitoring of the execution of the Protection Order and of measures specified in it. The appreciation of the manner in which the Protection Orders are executed is left at victim's discretion, who, as a rule, does not know the limits of execution and the method in which she must react. There is no clear and efficient mechanism for the monitoring of execution of the Protection Orders that would stipulate the obligation of leaving the house or of staying away from victim's residence place.

4.1.2. Statements of claim filed in court for the protection of interests of domestic violence victims, other than for obtaining a Protection Order

Obtaining a Protection Order (PO) is a short-term solution, intended to protect the victim from acts of violence committed by the aggressor against her for a certain period of time. Unfortunately, this fact does not change his violent behavior, which, as a rule, continues after the expiry of the PO; very few aggressors follow a rehabilitation program (in the Republic of Moldova exists only one specialized center for aggressors).

This is why, for a final settlement of this problem and for brea-

king the circle of violence, victims request also assistance regarding marriage dissolution. In these circumstances, it is necessary to ask the court to set the residence place of the minor children, the collection of the alimony and other actions related to marriage dissolution. Thus, during the reported period, after the phone calls on Trust Line had been filed several requests in court for:

- marriage dissolution – **22** requests;
- determining child's domicile – 17 requests;
- collection of alimony – **18** requests;
- property partition – **4** requests;
- eviction from the house – **1** requests;
- deprivation of parental rights – **1** requests;

On the civil cases initiated by the lawyer of the International Center „La Strada” in 2013 had been adopted **8 court judgments and 11 court judgments** in 2014, on marriage dissolution, determination of child's domicile, collection of alimony and property partition.

Difficulties encountered during the examination of the statements of claim, others than for obtaining a Protection Order

The Moldovan legislation in force provides special norms of settling civil actions on marriage dissolution in case the reason is domestic violence. Art. 37 of the Family Code of the Republic of Moldova expressly provides: *if during the examination process of marriage dissolution request, one of the spouses does not give h/her consent to divorce, the court shall adjourn the examination of the case, setting a period of reconciliation from one month to 6 months, except cases of divorce on the reason of domestic violence, confirmed by evidences.* Unfortunately, contrary to the above-mentioned legal norms and despite the fact that the invoked grounds of divorce was domestic violence (cases when a real and imminent danger exists), the courts whether adjourned the hearings,

without justification, tergiversated the examination of the cases or offered a period of reconciliation, although all necessary evidences had been presented and were confirming that the reason of marriage dissolution was violence *from the part of the husband*.

In certain cases, the judge did not know the legal provisions related to marriage dissolution when the reason invoked is domestic violence and that in such a case no reconciliation period is provided to spouses, such cases being recorded up ill present time. In many cases, judges decisions are more based on personal opinions about the problem of domestic violence rather than on the lack of knowledge or neglect of legal norms. There had been cases when the judge justified the adopted decision with the statement: "Today they are fighting, tomorrow they will make up". In other cases, the lawyer's attempt of explaining to the judge that family cannot be kept if family functions are not observed anymore has been qualified as "attempt of destroying the family".

The reconciliation period conferred to the victims of domestic violence who requested marriage dissolution for the reason of domestic violence has as consequence the amplification of violence. In such situations exists the risk for them to give up, to become even more timorous or to be even forced to withdraw their request. Moreover, the duration of the legal procedure influences victims' decision of reinstatement of their rights, being tempted to give up.

There had been cases when **judges showed a hostile attitude** towards domestic violence victims. In a particular case, the judge blamed the victim for husband's violent acts. His reaction has been quite biased: "You are the one to blame for the fact that your husband beats you. Haven't you see whom you were getting married to?! Maybe the children aren't his?". In another case of examination of the filed request for the collection of alimony, the judge asked the victim: "How would your husband find such an amount of money?", stating that "Such situations happen quite often in a family". As consequence, such attitudes of state authorities demoralize the

victim, the latter giving up in any endeavors of taking any further action against the aggressor.

In many civil actions where **authority's approval** is required, representatives of guardianship authorities continue to come unprepared at the hearings, fact which leads to the adjournment of the hearing and, as consequence, the examination of the case being unjustifiably tergiversated.

In result of the administrated civil procedures, appeared the need of making certain amendments to the existent legislation for the victims of domestic violence to be exempted of the payment of the state duty provided by law.

In some of the administrated cases, when filing the statements of claim for marriage dissolution, the judge refused to exempt the plaintiff from the payment of the state duty, although one day earlier an Protection Order had been issued and this order had been submitted to the judge who had been asked to exempt the plaintiff from the payment of the state duty.

This right of the victim must not be left at judge's discretion, the exemption from the payment of the state duty must be expressly provided for by the legislation in force.

In case of real estate partition procedure, **victims of domestic violence also encounter difficulties when they have to pay the 3% of the real estate value.** In many cases, the victim of domestic violence does not have the possibility to pay the state duty and must live with the aggressor in the same apartment, continuing to suffer from acts of violence. In this context, it is necessary to review the procedure for exempting domestic violence victims from the payment of the state duty for property partition, if not completely, at least partially.

4.2. Legal Assistance provided to domestic violence victims in criminal litigation cases

Apart from the cases initiated in civil procedure, for an efficient intervention in the settlement of domestic violence cases, it was necessary for the lawyer of the International Center “La Strada” to file complaints to police bodies for the initiation of criminal cases on domestic violence. Thus, female beneficiaries drafted and filed, with the help of the lawyer, **11 complaints** in 2013 and **8 complaints** in 2014, all to police bodies for the initiation of criminal cases under art. 2011 of the Criminal Code. In result of these complaints filed in 2013:

- had been initiated **5 criminal cases**, on **3** cases being issued **convictions sentences** of the aggressor;
- in **2** cases the aggressor had been held liable in contraventional order;
- in **4** cases no actions had been taken.

In 2014:

- had been initiated **4 criminal cases** on domestic violence and **1** on death threat, on **2** cases had been issued **conviction sentences**;
- in **3** cases no action had been taken, no criminal cases had been initiated, the main reason invoked by competent bodies being the lack of evidence.

The appeals filed on the inactions of law enforcement bodies, especially in cases where no action had been taken, had been impeded by the total withdrawal of the victims. More exactly, they whether refused to make any statements as regards the aggressor, or did not wish anymore to take any actions against him, refusing the services of the lawyer and interrupting any contact with him. At the same time, although a positive evolution is recorded the last year, the inquiry practice of domestic violence cases is still performed in contraventional order, rather than in criminal proceedings.

Currently, although more seldom, domestic violence cases that result in intentional small injuries caused to the body are documented as simple administrative contraventions, being initiated cases in accordance with art. 78 of the Contravention Code of the Republic of Moldova, in the detriment of the provisions of art. 2011, par. (1) of the Criminal Code.

In cases of psychological violence, aggressors are held liable in contraventional order pursuant to art.69 of the Contravention Code of the Republic of Moldova. Moreover, there had been also outlined the problem of prosecutor's refusal of initiating criminal proceedings for the reason that there are similar provisions in the Contravention Code and a less harsh law shall be applied.

There are still cases when, although there are sufficient evidences for opening criminal cases, upon victim's request of not opening a criminal case, in case she changed her mind or in case she reconciled with the aggressor or withdrew her complaint, the prosecution bodies do not initiate criminal proceedings. In these situations, the inaction of law enforcement bodies leads to the resumption of acts of violence from the part of aggressors against their victims. For many times, prosecution bodies act abusively, due to the professional status of the aggressor, family relationships, friendships, and initiate criminal cases in relation to the beneficiary on domestic violence situations. A representative example is also the initiation of a criminal case both on the name of the victim and of the aggressor. Further, being filed several complaints in relation to the prosecutor, by which had been requested the termination of criminal proceedings initiated in relation to the beneficiary, these had been examined superficially, the prosecutor being unpunished for all illegal actions admitted during criminal proceedings. Unfortunately, at the end the court blamed the beneficiary for the committal of domestic violence offence, although it was clear that she acted in legitimate defense.

As regards the sentences pronounced by courts on criminal cases initiated with the support of the lawyer of the International Center "La Strada", the experience shows that in many cases the

court is **setting punishments not proportional to the gravity of committed offences**, without taking into consideration all aggravating circumstances and without applying punishments under the form of unpaid community service, the victim continuing to be exposed to danger. Thus, on one of the initiated cases, two sentences were necessary for the aggressor to be punished by imprisonment for six months, enduring the punishment in a semi-closed penitentiary.

In the first criminal case, initiated under art. 2011, par.(1) of the Criminal Code, the court pronounced the sentence by which the aggressor had been found guilty in the committal of the offence, being set the punishment in the form of unpaid community service, in the amount of 120 hours. Although the sentence had been appealed, taking into consideration the soft punishment applied for the committed violent acts, the Court of Appeal maintained the sentence of the first court. In the second case regarding the same aggressor, the court pronounced another sentence by which he had been found guilty in the committal of the offence provided for by the same art. 201¹, par.(1) of the Criminal Code, this time being set a punishment by imprisonment for a term of 4 months.

Taking into consideration all circumstances of pending cases, the environment, ways of committal of the domestic violence offence, the experience shows that not always imprisonment is applied as punishment for aggressors. The application as punishment of unpaid community service will subject further the victim to a continuous danger.

4.3. Attitude of authorities regarding the settlement of domestic violence cases

In the absolute majority of cases is recorded a high level of resistance of legal authorities towards the application of the law in the field of prevention and combating of domestic violence.

IV. Legal assistance provided to Trust Line beneficiaries

At each stage of the defense process, the lawyer of the International Center “La Strada” faced different types of resistance, the most of them resuming to:

- the lack of trust in victims’ statements;
- directly blaming the victim for not settling the situation in private;
- admitting the possibility that the aggressor had been provoked to violence;
- prevalence of the ownership right and compassion towards the aggressor who did not have a place to live;
- violation of rules of summoning the parties to the trial at the cancelling of the Protection Order;
- at the issuance of the Protection Order, the burden of proving the domestic violence and the violation of the Protection Order are put exclusively on victim’s shoulders.

The examination procedure of the requests for the issuance of Protection Orders and denounces on domestic violence acts is carried out with the preconception that the victim lies about domestic violence for acquiring the ownership right in the house and for forcing the child to calumniating his father. Some judges reproach victims that they are guilty of the fact that they are beaten up, because they have tolerated violence for a long time, because they are weak or because they married foreign citizens, thinking that they would be better husbands.

All these inadequacies are due to an inefficient collaboration between the authorities involved in the implementation of the Law No.45, circumstances which, at their turn, create serious risks for domestic violence victims. At the same time, there is no mechanisms for the monitoring of execution of Protection Orders and measures stipulated in it. The appreciation of the manner in which Protection Orders are executed is left at victim’s discretion, who, as a rule, does not know the limits of execution and how she sho-

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uld react. Although the Supreme Court of Justice adopted the Decision of the Plenum of the Supreme Court of Justice No.1 as of 28.05.2012, intended to explain to judges the method of examination of the request for the issuance of a Protection Order, the circumstances which they must pay attention to and the terms of reference, there are still inconsistencies regarding the practice of law application by the courts in the settlement of cases of domestic violence.

In many cases had been documented offending behaviors towards the victims from the part of social workers, police officers and prosecutors. With different occasions, they intimidate them, asking the victims to withdraw their complaints and to make up with the aggressors, they defamed them, doubting their psychic and moral integrity, they forced them not to call 902 and file new complaints.

Cases assisted by the lawyer of the International Center “La Strada” during the provision of legal assistance to domestic violence victims outlined deficiencies in the provision of medical assistance to the victim, although in February 2012, pursuant to Order No.155 of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Moldova had been approved the Instruction on the intervention of medical institutions in cases of domestic violence. Thus, in one representative case, the victim called the ambulance after being aggressed by her husband, but the doctors did not draft the appropriate medical certificates, they did not specify in the medical chart all ecchymoses present on her body and the symptoms specified by the victim, fact which resulted in the impossibility of setting the proper degree of bodily injuries caused to the victim.

V. Difficulties encountered by Trust Line beneficiaries. Reaction of state institutions in the settlement of domestic violence cases

For settling cases of domestic violence, the law stipulates the existence of territorial multidisciplinary teams. This fact supposes that at community level special teams are created, consisting as a rule of representatives of law enforcement bodies, local public authorities (LPAs), social services and medical staff. Hereinafter, we shall analyze the role and involvement of each above-mentioned professional group through the light of beneficiaries stories told on the Trust Line and the difficulties faced by them in the attempt of settling domestic violence situations.

Thus, it is well known the fact that in Republic of Moldova had been adopted the Law No.45-XVI as of March 1, 2007 on the prevention and combating of domestic violence, a law that comes to protect domestic violence victims. Knowing this law by domestic violence subjects, especially knowing about the efficient application of legal provisions by professional groups, was one of the main concerns of TL consultants. We should remark the fact that along the activity of the telephone service a positive dynamics had been recorded in this respect.

Mass information campaigns, constant training of professional groups, authorized by law to intervene, performed in various state institutions or NGOs, as well as the increase of state bodies' interest towards this phenomenon denotes an improvement of the quality of state intervention in cases of violence. In during the first year of TL activity there were only a few people who knew about the existence of law, gradually the situation changed both among beneficiaries and representatives of professional groups. The population is much better informed and requests the application of legal norms, and people responsible for this implementation present a more efficient reply to these requests.

A clearer perception of domestic violence as an offence generated lately the increase of the number of issued Protection Orders and opened criminal cases. However, this thing does not mean that there are no difficulties. On the one hand, the implementation of the law reveals various legislative gaps that need to be removed, on the other hand, comes out the mechanisms of its implementation. Mostly, it is about not always efficient interventions of professional groups authorized with duties of prevention and combating of domestic violence – law enforcement bodies (police, prosecutor’s office, courts), LPAs, including social assistance services, medical institutions, placement services, as well as difficulties occurred during the process of multidisciplinary approach of such cases. Unfortunately, representatives of structures to which the Law is conferring certain competences (predominantly police officers and social workers) insufficiently collaborate between them, they take no common efforts against such a negative phenomenon as domestic violence. In this respect, sufficient signals had been recorded from the part of the beneficiaries, who told about how they were insistently visiting the mayor’s office, social workers and police officers, each of them trying to put the responsibility of settling such situations on other shoulders, without intervening and without collaborating between them.

Great problems occur also due to stereotypes regarding the myth of male superiority or the perception of domestic violence as a regularity, reason for which nor even police officers, social workers nor doctors intervene whenever necessary. This is due to the fact that they are also often led by stereotypes or, even worse, they are victims of violence or family aggressors themselves.

5.1. Difficulties in the sphere of law protection bodies

The analysis of data gathered in five years of activity of the Trust Line 0 8008 8008 shows that the most difficulties encountered by the female beneficiaries were related to the activity of *law pro-*

tection bodies (police, prosecution bodies, courts), authorized to ensure the observance of legal norms. And not because the rest of professional groups would have a more efficient intervention, but because police officers, prosecutors and judges are bound by law to ensure the public order by guaranteeing the safety of each person, being authorized to apply sanctions as well. In this respect, we should mention that the TL callers were often refusing to ask for help the law enforcement bodies, invoking various reasons – starting with the lack of trust or the fear of not worsening the situation and ending with the fear of aggressor and the shame towards the community.

Difficulties related to police bodies

Although the law clearly stipulates that ***in cases of domestic violence, even starting with the first notice, law enforcement bodies are bound to consider the possibility of initiating a criminal case under art. 201¹ of the Criminal Code***, renouncing to the practice of applying civil penalties under art.78 of the Contravention Code, unfortunately, there are still enough gaps at this chapter. This is due to the fact that many police officers either do not know the new legal provisions, or hesitate to apply them, of they also encounter, at their turn, ***difficulties or are facing the resistance of other actors involved, such as the criminal investigation body or prosecutors***. This fact leads to the inaction of the Chief Police Officer in stopping domestic violence.

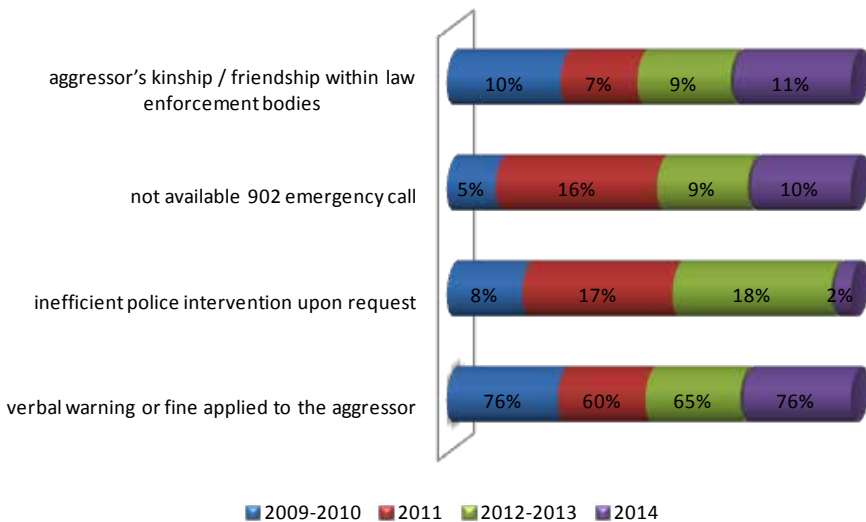
The inefficiency of the Chief Police Officers' intervention is based on other reasons as well, objective reasons that we should not neglect.

- ✓ Only a few police units have vehicles, fact which hinders very much their movement. Hence, when a Chief Police Officer has under his jurisdiction several rural localities, it is rather difficult to reply to all calls. Many police officers admit that they have to use their personal vehicles for work and not always their gas expenses are reimbursed.

- ✓ The weak technical equipment of police units (computers, printers etc.).

Therefore, during the entire period of reference, apart from the singular cases of inefficient intervention of law enforcement bodies, invoked by those who called the TL, four difficulties/parameters remained unchanged, being recorded in all the years of activity (*see Figure 26*).

Figure 26. Difficulties encountered by the victim when addressing to police bodies



1. Beneficiaries continue to be displeased with police intervention, resumed to ***a verbal rebuke or a fine applied to aggressor*** in accordance with art.78 of the Contravention Code, paid from the family budget and often by the victim herself, although, according to the law, she should not do this. In **2010-2012** there had been recorded multiple cases when police officers themselves were telling the victims that they are bound to pay the fines if the aggressor fails to do this. As a rule, after such sanctions, aggressor's behavior does not change or amplifies.

In 2013-2014, due to the training passed by over 500 police officers, the number of fines applied to aggressors reduced. However, this practice had not been totally abandoned. Thus, in 58 cases (in 2013) and in 53 cases (in 2014) the interventions of police officers reduced namely to the application of fines, practice forbidden for acts of domestic violence.

2. Another difficulty is ***the cases when the police does not intervene efficiently on calls*** or refuses to record victims' complaints, being invoked various reasons – that there is nothing they can do to the aggressor, that this is a private family matter, that no severe injuries are detected, that the victim lies or that they have other more important activities.

3. Many ***interventions were tardive or did not take place at all***, although being requested by the victims calling 902. As a rule, the greatest number of difficulties occur in the evening or at night. Thus, some callers informed us that they were not able to call 902, others told us that although someone answered the phone, they did not react promptly, or nobody came on the call. As a rule, the unit on duty informs the district police officer who must go on site.

However, another problem appears. Often, police officers do not know how to face the threats and complaints from the part of aggressors, who claim the violation of the inviolability of the domicile, the presumption of innocence, the ownership right. In this respect, police governing bodies do not adopt a common legal position, often applying civil penalties to police officers in the form of a warning or reduce the salary on the basis of aggressor's complaints. This fact generates confusion, the district police officer preferring not to intervene in the settlement of domestic violence cases.

4. The last category of cases presenting difficulties are cases where exist ***family/friendship relations between the aggressor and the law enforcement bodies***, fact which represents the reason of non-intervention or inefficient intervention of police officers. In such cases, victims often humiliated or ironized. For example, in

one of the cases a police officer tore victim's application right in front of her, the victim being brought forcibly to the commissariat and beaten up. In another case, a police officer "reproached" to the aggressor that "he did not beat her hard enough, as she succeeded to come to the police", took from the victim the certificate issued by the forensic doctor and refused to return it, further denying its existence.

Deficiencies related to the execution/observance of Protection Orders

Once with the increase of the number of issued Protection Orders, there appeared also deficiencies related to their execution/observance, tasks that fall within the competence of police officers and social workers. In this respect, although such violations took place very often in 2010-2012 as well, however, the largest number of them had been recorded in 2013-2014, years when the number of Protection Orders increased considerably. Thus, the largest number of irregularities are related to the non-observance of restrictions set to aggressors in the Order. Although there are issued Orders, these are violated, and police officers and/or social workers do not intervene.

In one single case, although a Protection Order was issued, the aggressor was still living in the house, the acts of violence were continuing and state's intervention was null. Another representative case was when three Protection Orders had been issued, but all of them had been violated by the aggressor. Although he had to leave the house according to each of these Orders, he never did it. Moreover, in one of the cases, the victim was the one who paid the fine applied to the aggressor for the violation of the Protection Order, in another case the police officer told her that "if he doesn't harm you, let him in".

There are also numerous cases when after the expiry of the Order, domestic violence intensifies. In such situations, the victim hesitates to call for help because she is afraid of aggravating the situation.

Difficulties related to prosecution bodies

As regards **prosecutors**, the majority of difficulties appear when preparing the files and filing them in court for the issuance of Protection Orders, as well as the non-observance of professional ethical norms. There are also frequent cases when the representatives of the prosecutor's office do not take into account certain legal and procedural aspects provided for by law for the research and settlement of cases of domestic violence in an efficient manner. However, we should remark the fact that if the first years of Trust Line activity had been recorded frequent cases when we were informed that the prosecutor knew absolutely nothing about the Protection Order and the situations of its application, further, once with the promotion of the law on the prevention and combating of domestic violence, they proved a different level of application of criminal law in the field. In certain cases, a criminal case is initiated on domestic violence in the form of psychological violence, in other situations the criminal case is initiated only if the victim confirms at least the presence of small injuries after an eventual attack.

In this context, an endemic misunderstanding of the fact that domestic violence is not one single action, but a series of systematic and intended actions, that aggressor's behavior towards his family members (but not towards strangers) are exclusively due to his will of exercising control and subjecting victims to his will.

Prosecutors often ignore legal forensic reports attesting the application of physical violence presents by the victims, at least and on other occasions, not exactly on the day of the incident incriminated to the aggressor. They do not perceive the practical application of other forms of domestic violence, such as economic, sexual violence.

It is also alarming the fact that some of the prosecutors, being informed systematically by the victims about continuing aggressive actions of the aggressor, do not consider necessary to address to court for the issuance of a Protection Order and/or the application of constraint measures towards the aggressor who violates the provisions of the Protection Order, according to the criminal procedure. This lack

of understanding of the domestic violence phenomenon led to an absolutely ridiculous situation, when a woman systematically beaten up by her husband for two years had been held criminally liable for domestic violence against her husband, who submitted a legal forensic report having small bodily injuries obtained during the application of the PR in favor of the woman. Violating the PO provisions, the aggressor attacked his wife again, in the attempt of trying to run away, she was pushing him with her hands and legs. Ehen the woman denounced systematic domestic violence against her, the prosecution bodies did not react, but, receiving the copy of the forensic examination report from the aggressor, they immediately initiated criminal investigation proceedings against the woman.

Difficulties in courts

Courts, together with police and prosecution bodies, are a very important link in the efficient settlement of cases of domestic violence, either it is about the criminal procedure or civil cases. Given the fact that in this Report, at Legal Assistance chapter (page 35-36) had been described the answer of the justice system in cases of domestic violence, only some legal aspects had been presented as regards the difficulties faced by the victims before beneficiating of lawyer's legal assistance or who did not beneficiate at all of such assistance.

Thus, the most common difficulties encountered in civil cases occurred during marriage dissolution proceedings. Although domestic violence is expressly specified as reason of divorce, fact which does not suppose the application of a period of reconciliation, only a few judges observe this legal provision and do not pronounce the decision as a matter of urgency. Moreover, some judges, apart from the fact that they often extend the period of reconciliation upon aggressor's request, they also refuse to make a decision in the absence of the aggressor in the court room. As consequence, legal proceedings are long-lasting, in once case the judge generally refused to pronounce the divorce, justifying that they have five minor children and that the victim would not manage by herself. This happens when both mother and children are systematically maltreated by the alcoholic and unemployed husband/father.

Judges' attitude is also regrettable, who often show an aggressive attitude towards the victims of violence, using a mocking language and stigmatizing them. Moreover, they dare to intervene in the personal relationship of the spouses, attributing prejudgments, cataloguing their behavior or judging their actions.

Another category of difficulties related to the issuance of Protection Orders under Law No.45-XVI as of March 1, 2007 on the prevention and combating of domestic violence. In this respect, the most commonly met deviations are:

- ***gathering evidences*** – an action put completely on the shoulders of the victim;
- judges' insistence that ***both parties should appear in court***, although it is not mandatory;
- ***restriction measures applied by the court does not ensure victims' safety*** (in some cases judged did not note in the Protection Order aggressor's eviction from the house, for the reason that "he has no other place to go" , "this is his house" or "because it's cold outside");
- ***non-observance of the period of 24 hours*** for the issuance of the Protection Order (in one of the cases, although the request for the issuance of the Protection Order had been filed a month earlier, no hearing in this respect had been set).

5.2. Difficulties in the social sphere

Difficulties related to LPAs/social assistance

Local Public Authorities, through the intermediary of their main representative – **community social worker** – play an important role in the protection of victims of domestic violence, a role very clearly set in the strategy of the National Referral System (NRS), a special framework created for contributing to the cooperation and coordination of the efforts of all active actors in the field. Unfortunately, neither the services from the sphere of law protection bodies, nor the

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services from the social sphere proved that they are doing their job in an appropriate manner when it is about domestic violence. Thus, even if the community social worker plays a definitive role within the multidisciplinary team, being de jure the specialist who ensures the case management, de facto a small number of social workers know its stages and even less social workers are actually applying them in their daily activity.

Even if they pass regular trainings, social workers are inefficiently prepared for working with domestic violence cases. One of the reasons would be also the fluctuation of the staff; not many social workers are holding such offices for a long time, for various reasons: unattractive salaries, multiple obligations, etc. This is why the majority of social workers resume to providing allowances or social help, many of them do not even know that the job description of a community social worker contains complex information about an intervention in cases of domestic violence.

One of these is the obligations of calling and coordinating the multidisciplinary team, an activity that means more than drafting the social inquiry and paying a home visit. Unfortunately, often the activity of the social worker is resumed only to paying a visit to the victim's house, who informed about a situation of domestic violence.

In tens of particular cases, beneficiaries invoke the inefficiency of mayor's or social worker's intervention. These, even if they take place, are reduced only to conversations. Thus, in certain cases, the gravity and emergency of the intervention is not taken into account in cases of domestic violence, being adjourned for unknown reasons, even when there is a risk for the life of minor children.

Hence, when minor children are involved, the LPAs are the one who play the most important role, constituting the guardianship authority in such situations and being responsible for the life and health of the children.

V. Difficulties encountered by Trust Line beneficiaries.

Difficulties identified in the most representative cases

✓ Being chased away and asking for help the social worker, he refused to intervene

✓ Although the Trust Line consultant informed personally authorities about a case of violence and neglect of three minor children (left home alone, hungry, during the wintertime), nobody intervened

✓ The social worker who called the TL is a victim of domestic violence herself and deplored the fact that neither the TL consultant can „come and take him, to do something with him”

✓ The social worker refuses to intervene, justifying that the aggressor is the former Mayor of the village

✓ All local public authorities refused to intervene, although the aggressor abuses his wife, mother and the three minor children

✓ The Mayor and the social worker told the victim to return home to the aggressor and the 4 minor children: „What kind of mother are you?”. And this happens when the victim had been hospitalized twice with severe injuries caused by her cohabitant and chased away from the house

✓ In a case of total neglect and violence against minor children, after the evaluation of the case, parents had been given a warning

✓ The social worker paid a visit to the victim at home with a third problem. Although she told the social worker about what was going on, the social worker replied that she is not interested in their problems, refusing to intervene

✓ The social worker does not intervene because the aggressor recently got employed as a constructor at a house of a close relative

- ✓ The social worker does not know what a social inquiry is and what are the necessary documents for placing the victim in a Placement Center
- ✓ The Mayor recommended her „to have patience“. Maybe things will get back to normal
- ✓ The Mayor told her „not to wander around and to return home to her husband“
- ✓ The social worker declared that the involvement in child neglect cases does not fall within his competence

Involvement of social workers in the execution/supervision of Protection Orders

Together with the operative district officer, the social worker is responsible for the supervision of execution of protection measures set by the court. In this respect, the court renders the Protection Orders for execution both to the police officer and to the social worker, both being responsible of informing the parties about its content. It is regrettable that in five years of activity, the Trust Line consultants did not record any case when the Order was executed/supervised by the police officer together with the social worker.

If police's answers about the execution of the Order contain exact information about police officer's actions, than social workers most frequently copy the text of the article from the Law No.45 which is actually listing the competence of the social worker. They do not even reply on many requests for information regarding the execution of Orders. Social workers resume to the drafting of the social inquiry and to paying a visit to victims. In none of the cases, the TL had information about the fact that social workers would be working with domestic violence aggressors or with the guardianship authorities for protecting the rights of the minor children, for documenting the method of execution of Protection Orders, as provided for by the Law No.45.\

The same situation is with the supervision of Protection Orders.

Social workers are not involving enough, considering that this thing falls only within the competence of the operative district officer, although according to the law, they shall also contact the victim and the aggressor from time to time and, pay visits and, in case they identify or they are informed about the violation of the Protection Order by the aggressor, they shall immediately inform the operative district officer.

Difficulties related to medical assistance

In the case of victims of domestic violence, medical assistance includes:

- forensics services;
- medical services in medical institutions of any type and level.

The role of forensics

Being an interdisciplinary specialty, between biological and socio-legal sciences, forensics comes to support victims of domestic violence through the evaluation of the physical abuse exercised on them. The forensic expert issues the certificate necessary for legal procedures, used by law enforcement bodies for being able to prove aggressor's guilt, as well as for fixing exactly the gravity of bodily injuries suffered by the victim and to contribute to the establishment of factual circumstances through the intermediary of its conclusions.

If in Chisinau and in the rest of urban localities is easy to obtain such a forensic expertise (in every district center operates a territorial section of the Center of Forensics with the registered address in Chisinau), for the victims from villages and communes this fact is much more difficult. This is due to the fact that victims have to go to the district center and this implies additional costs, victims of domestic violence often cannot afford to cover the costs of the expertise itself, not to mention the transportation costs. We must mention here that the forensic examination of people or medical

documents is carried out free of charge only upon the request of police commissariats, courts and prosecution bodies, but not on the victim's request.

Role of medical staff

Medical service providers have the possibility of detecting and intervening in cases of domestic violence because people who suffer from domestic abuses represent a substantial percent of those who resort to medical services. Many victims feel more comfortable to speak about what happened to them with their family physician or another specialist, rather than with the district police officer.

Unfortunately, the majority of medical staff is resumed only to the provision of medical assistance and, at a certain extent, emotional support, less attention is paid to the detailed documentation of directing of patients to other professional groups, authorized to intervene in such situations or to the existent service provides in this field.

Although doctors should be the most active actors in the identification of cases of domestic violence, the law stipulating concrete instructions in this respect³, only a few of them know about their role and even fewer apply it in practice. However, the greatest difficulty occurred in relation to this professional group is their obligation set in art.8 (5) of the Law No. 45 of informing /reporting cases of violence to police bodies from the territorial administrative unit even without victim's consent, in case of recording a real prejudice caused to the health of the person in result of an illegal action⁴. When identifying cases of child abuse or neglect, these shall be announced mandatorily, apart from law enforcement bodies, to guardianship authorities as well.⁵

3 INSTRUCTIONS on the intervention of social assistance and family protection sections/divisions, medical institutions and internal affairs authorities in cases of domestic violence

4 As grounds for informing law enforcement bodies about the victim of an offence without her consent is the Law No.254 as of 27.10.2005 on the medical profession (art. 13, paragraph 4, letter e), as well as Law No. 263 as of 27.10.2005 on patient's rights and responsibilities (art. 12, paragraph 4, letter e).

5 Common Order of the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Internal Affairs No.372/388 as of 03.11.2009 „On measures of improving the cooperation between health bodies and internal affairs authorities”.

Unfortunately, not always such cases are brought to the attention of relevant bodies. This is due to the fact that victims often do not admit that they had been aggressed at home, specifying another reason, and the doctor either doesn't even try to find the truth, ignoring such a situation, or does not succeed to identify certain signs which should put him on guard. But, when the victims specify directly what caused her injuries (mostly, it is about 902 emergency calls or direct visits to the hospital), the medical staff often resumes to providing medical assistance, "forgetting" to announce other actors who should be also involved.

5.3. Difficulties encountered at Placement Centers

There are 16 centers in the Republic of Moldova providing accommodation services to victims of domestic violence. Here should be appreciated the open attitude and availability of such centers when the Trust Line consultants call for placement requests.

Along the five years of activity, there had been only a few cases when we did not succeed to place victims with or without children. Due to good collaboration relationships set with the administration of the Centers, we succeeded to accommodate the beneficiaries. Authorities should also pay attention to the relatively small capacity of these Centers (from 2 to 10 mother-child couples, with some exceptions), fact which makes more difficult the urgent placement of beneficiaries. Thus, in several cases, we had to place the victims for a short period of time in centers with available places and, eventually, to replace them.

Certain Placement Centers do not provide appropriate conditions for mother-child couples with children older than 5 years. Children - direct victims of domestic violence need safety, regardless of age. In this context, difficulties occur also when victims with two or more children have to be placed, places in specialized centers being limited, and having inappropriate conditions. As regards the **geographic coverage**, the most of the Centers provide regional, local or municipal coverage. The fact that these are managed

The Trust Line 0 8008 8008: 5 years of activity

by district councils creates bureaucratic difficulties, connected with decision coordination. Moreover, if the beneficiaries are from other districts, it is necessary to place them through the intermediary of the National Referral System.

A problem indicated by many beneficiaries, as well as by several police officers, is related to **victims' placement overnight and during the weekend**. Given the fact that any placement must be coordinated with the administration of the center and or/ people in charge of local public authorities, the placement overnight and in the weekends is practically impossible. Thus, there had been recorded cases when victims' placement during the wintertime, at night, had been refused because the administration of the center was away, the victims calling the Trust Line right from the door of the Placement Center. In one case, it was impossible to place a victim with a two-year old child in any center, because it was during the weekend, so the victim had to spend the night in a canteen.

At the same time, for being placed in placement centers, victims of domestic violence must submit a series of documents (documents proving the identity, state of health, petitions from the LPAs, etc.), the preparation of which takes a lot of time, fact which delays the provision of the necessary assistance.

The insufficiency of funds generates a series of gaps that reduce the quality of provided services, and namely:

- of the supply with food is sufficient, than a small amount of money are allocated for the purchase of clothing and hygiene products;
- some shelter-type maternity Centers have no funds for ensuring an adequate security system both during the night and day; in such situations, the risk at which are exposed both the victims and the employees of the Center is imminent;
- staff insufficiency often reduces the efficiency of interventions; often the psychologist of the Center can

V. Difficulties encountered by Trust Line beneficiaries.

cumulate also the duties of a pedagogue or of the social worker; as consequence, being overloaded, exists the risk of professional burnout and this fact leaves traces on the quality of the provided services;

- the accommodation period does not satisfy the needs of many victims of domestic violence; as a rule, the period of stay in a shelter varies between one month and three months, a relatively short period for victims' rehabilitation;
- if the first two years the legal assistance services in the centers have been ensured by volunteers, who did not have the necessary experience and professional skills for an efficient intervention in cases of domestic violence, later on, larger centers succeeded to employ professional lawyers, but who often say that they perform "voluntary activity". In the case of district centers, legal advisors are hard to be employed due to small salaries, not to mention lawyers.
- As consequence, some centers do not provide legal assistance, fact which negatively affects both the activity of the centers (they do not provide complete services) and the victims (they must find a legal advisor outside the center, who would provide legal consulting, or employ a lawyer who would protect their interests in court).

However, we should mention the fact that the percentage of beneficiaries who requested accommodation is rather high. This is due to the fact that victims' placement in the centers is a measure that ensures a temporary safety and support, and doesn't settle the essential problem. As a rule, they have no other place to go but home, to the aggressor. Returning home, they find that meanwhile the aggressor sold stuff from their household and that the house is in a deplorable state. If we also add here the fact that for being accommodated in a center, the victim must withdraw her children from school or the kindergarten they are attending, the relatively small percentage of people who benefited of accommodation is rather explainable.

Conclusions and recommendations

Launched at the end of 2009, the Trust Line service 0 8008 8008 had a continuous activity for five years, fact which allowed it to become an important link in the national assistance system in the field of prevention and combating of domestic violence phenomenon. This is due to the fact that it is a national service, free of charge, available daily and non-stop, both from a landline and from mobile phones, regardless of callers' origin, social status or income. Due to the experience gathered by the Trust Line consultants during all these years, as well as partnerships established with the service providers from this field, the service won the trust of beneficiaries, becoming a reliable confident of domestic violence victims.

The almost eight thousand calls recorded in this period made possible the creation of a clear image on the domestic violence phenomenon at a national level, as well as on the evolution of assistance provided to victims of this phenomenon, fact reflected in this Report. Thus, in November, 2009 – December, 2014, on the Trust Line **0 8008 8008** had been received **7.857** calls from the entire territory of the Republic of Moldova, as well as from abroad. A comparative analysis of incoming calls allows us determine that the dynamics of calls is ascendant, in 2014 being recorded a maximum number of **2.634** calls. This increase proves the need of the existence of such a service, but indicates also the fact that beneficiaries gained more and more courage, broke the ice and are seeking for specialized help.

The qualitative and quantitative analysis of recorded cases in the last five years allows a complex approach of the analysis of this phenomenon: the description of characteristics of domestic violence subjects (victim/aggressor), the specific of expression of this phenomenon depending on gender, age, occupational level or marital status, as well as other associated aspects. An in-depth tackled subject in this Report referred to the analysis of the specifics of assistance requested and provided to beneficiaries through the intermediary of the Trust Line: psychological counselling, pri-

mary legal consulting, facilitation of the access to other existent services from this field, monitoring of recorded calls, as well as specialized legal assistance, provided by the lawyer of the International Center “La Strada”. This analysis also allowed us to deduce *the needs and difficulties* faced by the victims of domestic violence, the beneficiaries of the Trust Line, as well as the formulation of some *conclusions and recommendations*.

Conclusions

- The majority of people calling the Trust Line are women victims, however, there was also recorded a percent increase of men who called in 2014. We should mention that out of the overall number of men callers, 126 identified themselves as victims of domestic violence, while 81 – admitted that they aggressed their life partners.
- An important percent of cases of domestic violence have as subjects persons with an average level of education, but, the idea according to which violence occurred predominantly in these environments is wrong. Domestic violence is also widely spread among people with a high level of education, but for them is easier to find resources for overcoming a crisis situation (they have a certain status, they have access to information, greater financial income, which allow them to survive after the break of the circle of violence, etc.) and thus they do not need to call to organizations that provide specialized services to victims of domestic violence.
- Domestic violence is expressed as a combination of different forms of abusive behavior from the part of aggressors, more or less visible, as well as physical, psychological, sexual, economic and spiritual violence. Violent persons show a series of aggressive behaviors in the form of certain combinations of coercive acts and attacks, of several types. Still, prevailing cases are those where physical violence is combined with the psychological one. The other forms – economic, sexual or spiritual violence – had been mentioned more often or more seldom, depending on the objectives of advocacy campaigns designed and carried out by the International Center „La Strada” during the period of reference.
- Having analyzed the dynamics of the number of cases, we have found a more pronounced diversification of forms of violence expression in 2010 and 2011. This fact is due to

public's reaction to the second message from the social advertisement „It is not normal to think that violence is a norm”, encouraging the identification of new forms of expression of domestic violence, other than physical one. The ad had been broadcasted during the mentioned period on TV and radio channels.

- In 2009-2014 had been recorded around 2.548 cases when children suffered from different forms of abuse. As a rule, it is invoked the presence of physical violence, but the number of cases of psychological violence also increased considerably. Usually, minor children serve as a tool for the aggressor of exercising control and power on his life partner. In other cases, psychological violence is expressed by means of insults/intimidations or by forbidding the child to live with the other parent, deprivation of certain activities benefic for child's education, all these having the purpose of exercising authority on the minor child.
- The analysis of calls' content outlined certain peculiarities in the assistance of cases involving people with mental deficiencies, both victims and aggressors. The intervention in such situations becomes difficult not only because of the stereotypes of law enforcement bodies, but also due to the fact that the state does not ensure the existence of appropriate services for this specific category of beneficiaries. Currently, the state does not have the necessary mechanisms for the representatives of law enforcement bodies to exercise their job duties, taking into account the lack of alternative services, other than psychoneurological clinics designed for people with mental deficiencies, alcohol and/or drug-addicted people. In this respect, the opening of such centers would be a good solution both for the above-mentioned categories of people (they would beneficiate of an efficient treatment) and for domestic violence victims (they would be provided

a much more efficient protection).

- In 44% of the total number of recorded cases, callers mentioned the presence of certain vices at the victim of the aggressor, alcohol consumption mostly. However, from callers' confessions we have found that alcohol is not a reason of activation of violent episodes, it is just a stimulating factor or a factor that amplifies violence.
- During the last years, the entire justice system of the Republic of Moldova took considerable measures for improving state's reaction to domestic violence cases. Nevertheless, a lot of work must be done at his chapter for the improvement of the legal framework, the streamline of legal resources and fro a more active involvement of actors from the system.
- The significant increase, especially in 2014, of calls to law enforcement bodies comes to confirm the efforts of the General Police Inspectorate of intervening promptly and efficiently, through the intermediary of its subdivisions, in cases of domestic violence, as well as a better population informing about the obligations of competent bodies of intervening in such situations.
- Victims decide to call legal assistance services after several violence recidives, the last incident being perceived as unbearable and dangerous for their life and with negative effect on children's safety. Beneficiaries are more likely to file a complaint against the aggressor when they are encouraged by examples of other victims (the complaints of whom brought positive results) and if they are helped by specialists in the drafting of the complaint.
- The role played by children in the decisions of women – victims of domestic violence clearly suggest that legal or social interventions must be a priority in tackling children's situation, so that child's supreme interest is also taken

into account by the specialists, and maternity Centers must have a flexible policy towards the age of children of the beneficiaries who can be placed together with their mothers.

- Mass information campaigns, the constant training of professional groups, authorized by law to intervene, performed by various state institutions or NGOs, as well as the increase of the interest of law enforcement bodies towards this phenomenon, improved state's intervention in cases of violence.
- The implementation of the law reveals legislative gaps that need to be removed, as well as the imperfect mechanism of its implementation. Interventions of professional groups vested with duties of prevention and combating of domestic violence are not always efficient, difficulties occur mostly at the level of multidisciplinary approach of such cases; representatives of structures vested by Law with certain competences (police officers and social workers) do not collaborate sufficiently between them, fact which reduces the quality of interventions.
- The perception of domestic violence as an offence generated the increase of the number of issued Protection Orders. However, this increase is not accompanied by an improvement of their execution and observation, duties which fall within the competence of police officers and social workers. The observance of measures set by the Protection Order is not always ensured. This is because sanctions applied by law for its violation are insufficient for the victim to feel protected and for the violent behavior of the aggressor to be stopped.
- The national legislation provides criminal liability for the violation of the Protection Order only in the case of a previous violation sanctioned in contraventional order. This provision does not ensure the safety of the victim of

domestic violence and the violent actions of the aggressor are not counteracted at the desired level. Hence, it would be necessary to amend the legal framework for the possibility of immediate initiation of criminal proceedings in case of non-execution of the Protection Order.

- Even though proposals have been submitted for the improvement of the law in this field, currently is attested the presence of incomplete norms and sometimes contradictory norms, which causes only difficulties for judges and generates non-unitary legal practices from the part of courts. The problem of non-execution of Protection Orders becomes more and more acute, fact that generates the loss of trust in the act of justice.
- Although the new legislative amendments stipulate very clearly that in cases of domestic violence, even from the first notice, law enforcement bodies are bound to initiate a criminal case under art. 2011 of the Criminal Code, renouncing to the practice of applying contravention measures in accordance with the Contravention Code, still enough gaps are recorded at this chapter. This is due to the fact that many police officers whether do not know the new legal provisions, hesitate to apply them or encounter difficulties or resistance from the part of other actors involved, such as criminal investigation bodies or prosecutors. As consequence, there are many cases when beneficiaries of the Trust Line are not satisfied with police intervention, which resumes to a rebuke or a fine applied to the aggressor.
- Even if a criminal case is initiated, here intervenes the court which often, when applying criminal sanctions, is setting punishments absolutely disproportionate to the gravity of he committed offences, without taking into account all aggravating circumstances. The degree of danger for the victim of the offence committed by the aggressor is not

taken into account, resuming usually to the application of a punishment in the form of unpaid community service.

- Any act of violence is to be proved in court, fact which makes basically mandatory the performance of a forensic expertise. If in Chisinau and other urban localities is easy to obtain such a forensic expertise, for the victims from villages and communes this fact is much more difficult. The trip down to the district center implies additional costs; victims of domestic violence often cannot afford to cover the costs of the expertise itself, not to mention the transportation costs. We must mention here that the forensic examination of people or medical documents is carried out free of charge only upon the request of police commissariats, courts and prosecution bodies, but not on the victim's request.
- For enhancing the degree of victim's trust in justice, it is very important for the judges to settle the cases promptly, to apply unitary legal practices and to have a perfect personal conduct. Unfortunately, in many cases judges continue to play the role of "family pacifier" and confer a period of reconciliation in cases of marriage dissolution, cases where domestic violence is invoked as reason of marriage dissolution. The conferring of this period of reconciliation leads to violence amplification. In such situations exists the risk for them to give up, to become even more timorous or even to be forced to give up for good.
- Psychosocial assistance services have not reached a satisfactory level yet. Although they beneficiate of constant trainings, social workers are not prepared enough for intervening efficiently in domestic violence cases. The majority of them resume to providing allowances or social aids, many of them not even knowing that the job description of a community social worker contains complex information regarding the intervention in cases of domestic violence.

Namely the community social worker plays the main role in the management of a domestic violence case, being the one who is bound to call and coordinate the multidisciplinary team, his activity meaning more than just drafting the social inquiry and paying a visit to the victim.

- Along with the operative district officer, the social worker is responsible for the supervision of the execution of protection measures set by the court. Unfortunately, only a few cases are recorded when the execution of the Protection Order is supervised by the police officer and the social worker. Social workers are not getting involved enough, considering that this fact fall only within the competence of the operative district officer.
- Although doctors should be the most active actors in the identification of cases of domestic violence, the law stipulates specific instructions in this respect, only a few of them know their role and even fewer apply these instructions into practice. Unfortunately, not always such cases are brought to the knowledge of relevant bodies: whether the victims often do not admit that they had been aggressed in the family, indicating another cause or because the doctor does not even try to find out the truth, ignoring such a situation or failing to identify the signs that should put him on guard.
- Along the five years of activity only a few cases had been recorded when we did not succeed to provide a shelter to victims, with or without children, in specialized centers providing accommodation services. However, a problem reported by many beneficiaries and by some police officers is related to victims' placement overnight and in the weekends. At the same time, the insufficiency of funds generates a series of gaps that reduce the quality of the provided services.

- The percent of beneficiaries who requested for a shelter is not large. Victims' accommodation in centers is a measure that ensures temporary protection and support, for a certain period of time and doesn't settle the essential problem. As a rule, they have no other place to go but home, to the aggressor. Returning home, they find that meanwhile the aggressor sold some stuff from the household, the house is in a deplorable state. Moreover, for benefiting of a shelter, they must withdraw children from the school or kindergarten they are attending, fact which explains the relatively small percent of persons who asked for a shelter.

Recommendations

- In the context of the conclusions above, it is necessary to carry out training activities (debriefings, seminars, round tables) with professional groups for an experience exchange and for facilitating the collaboration intended to provide an efficient assistance to beneficiaries in the future. Services for domestic violence subjects must become more cooperative, flexible and mobile whenever needed.
- A more efficient cooperation of the members of multidisciplinary teams, renouncing as soon as possible to the habits of various structures of making reference one to the other, accusing the lack of competence in favor of a laborious interaction and mutually benefic collaborations would enhance the efficiency of interventions in the families where had been recorded cases of domestic violence.
- The quality of interventions and the significant decrease of the phenomenon of domestic violence would definitely increase if specialized services would be instituted for the aggressors. Currently, only one center of this kind is operating in the Republic of Moldova, which is not enough. The urgent development of services intended for psychological counselling for aggressors would mark the

beginning of a multidimensional approach of the domestic violence phenomenon, both victims and aggressors would be able confident that the problem of violence could be overcome and the life of a couple can be saved.

- The improvement of the quality of services for their service provides to answer as efficient as possible to requests, including by supplying with appropriate resources (equipment, fuel, transport), fact which would allow relevant assistance and protection services to ensure the efficient access of victims of domestic violence to justice and rehabilitation, including to long-term rehabilitation programs of aggressors and alcoholics.
- Law No.45 on the prevention and combating of domestic violence provides criminal liability for the violation of the Protection Order only in the case of a previous violation sanctioned in contraventional order. This provision does not ensure the safety of the victim of domestic violence and the violent actions of the aggressor are not counteracted at the desired level. Hence, it is necessary to amend the legal framework for the possibility of immediate initiation of criminal proceedings in case of non-execution of the Protection Order. It is also necessary to operate these amendments in such a way that the burden of proof in cases of domestic violence is put on the shoulders of the aggressor and police bodies play an active role in the collection of evidences.
- We believe it is imperative to institute certain mechanisms for ensuring the observance of the period of issuance of the Protection Order, for ensuring its immediate delivery to the victims of domestic violence and its execution by the responsible authorities. It is recommended the promotion of an efficient collaboration between the district police officer and the social worker as regards the execution of

Protection Orders and the sanctioning of actors responsible of the non-execution of their job duties. We also report the need of instituting a mechanism for the monitoring of the Protection Order execution. Certain amendments in the law are needed also for exempting the victims of domestic violence from the payment of the state duty, as well as the drafting of a mechanism that would provide the performance of a free of charge forensic expertise for the victims of domestic violence. The examination of the possibility of exempting victims from the state duty in the case of divorce, establishing child's domicile in cases initiates for the reason of domestic violence are stringent.

- For ensuring victims' protection it is necessary to strengthen the efforts of developing the services addressed to aggressors as a method of preventing violence recidives and of reducing the phenomenon of victims' withdrawing of their statements/victims' lack of cooperation with law enforcement bodies at the judicial and pre-judicial stage.
- For rendering more efficient the combating of all forms of violence, especially psychological violence, it is necessary to extend state resources and/or the creation of a licensing mechanism of institutions or specialists who would perform the psychological expertise. It is recommendable to perform an experience exchange between lawyers and their training regarding the aspects of evidence collection in files in which psychological violence is invoked. It is also necessary to support the efforts of psychologists of specialized Placement Centers for the evaluation of the psychological state of victims and their children, including by the supply with specialized tools, such as psychological tests. Hence, continuous professional development is welcomed, for ensuring an appropriate psychological assistance process for the victims who participate in legal proceedings.

- It is necessary the multiplication of audio recording of court hearings or avoiding situations when the judge shows a biased behavior. In such cases, it is recommended for the defenders to ensure the maximum protection of the rights of domestic violence victims, appealing any deviation from legal and deontological norms by filing complaints to the Superior Council of Magistracy and these complaints must be analyzed with full seriousness, applying disciplinary procedures against judges and hearing them at the sessions of the Superior Council of Magistracy.
- It is not enough to declare the right to free access to justice, this right must be ensured de facto. In this respect, a creation of an efficient mechanism of execution of court judgments is necessary.
- For avoiding erroneous practices and for removing the ambiguities from the system of law enforcement bodies, more and more obvious becomes the imperative necessity of generalization of legal practices in this field by competent structures (Supreme Court of Justice, National Institute of Justice) and the drafting of recommendations and correct interpretations of the application of the Law on prevention and combating of domestic violence.



**International Center for Women Rights Protection and Promotion
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