Domestic violence: the intruder in the workplace and vocational integration
"Domestic violence against women hinders their social inclusion generally and in the job market in particular, resulting in marginalisation, poverty, and financial and material dependency. The physical and psychological effects of violence may affect not just access to work, but also the workplace situation (absenteeism, psychological stress, change of residence etc). There is therefore a need for comprehensive solutions to this problem from labour market organisations, for example through agreements between employers and trade unions aimed at protecting and supporting female workers who are victims of domestic violence,... " [1] 

In memory of Vivie Papadimitriou

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Introduction

Linking domestic violence and working life is arguably counterintuitive. An initial reaction is that violence is arguably a private matter for those involved to sort out; it is about people’s relationships and should not impinge on work. Arguably, too, co-workers, employers and trade union reps are not "social workers" and have no business getting involved in such things. Victims’ stories, however, show that violence has severely affected their working lives.

Like it or not, however, there is clear evidence that domestic violence does intrude into work and vocational integration.

Domestic violence has a big impact on victims’ working lives – it stops them doing or finding a job. Yet keeping or getting a job is vital to them. Not just for obvious reasons of financial independence, but also because the work community is often the first place where victims can find a listening ear and informal support. Domestic violence also affects and incurs a high cost for victims’ employers and co-workers through lost productivity, resignations, replacements, extended absences and sick leave, harassment by partners at workplaces or training sites, putting co-workers in danger and under stress.

Violence comes in bursts. But spells of violence will be worse and last much longer if victims keep silent and hide their problems. But victims who are listened to, get support and adapted working and vocational integration arrangements can take more timely action to keep themselves and their children safe.

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Three interlocking approaches can help victims keep their jobs or complete a careers guidance, training or vocational integration process:

- Prevention through awareness-raising in companies to make the different aspects of violence and how they operate better known, to unpick entrenched public stereotypes ("it's a private matter, it's a relationship thing, it can happen in any couple’, etc.). Victims feel shame, and will often not describe what they are enduring as "violence". The message must be got over that "violence is a serious violation of fundamental human rights; there is no excuse for it; the victim is not to blame."

- Help from link workers who are trained to spot violence, can listen to the victim - and the abuser - and support them in accessing specialized provision.

- Identifying ways of addressing the different practical problems encountered in workplace and vocational integration sites, such as taking safety precautions, adjusting working hours if necessary, screening phone calls, ensuring that co-workers keep an eye out (if the victim is willing to open up).

Finally, national laws and collective agreements (if any) must ensure that victims are protected and not penalized by losing their job, and can have the time off work needed to take the necessary action to bring an end to the abuse.

*  

This assessment and these assumptions provided the basis for work done in partnership with NGOs and a European trade union.

Six NGOs were involved: COFACE (the Confederation of Family Organisations in the European Union) promoted it and provided overall coordination; FPS
Domestic violence: affecting workplaces and access to work.

(Femmes Prévoyantes Socialistes - Belgium) set the programme in motion and coordinated the educational aspects; FGTB (General Labour Federation of Belgium), KMOP (Family and Child Care Center - Greece), Salud Y Familia - Spain and WMAV (Women and Mothers Against Violence - Bulgaria) were the project partners.

A. Domestic violence

I. Facts and figures

"Intimate relationship violence consists in a set of behaviours, actions or attitudes by one partner or former partner intended to control and dominate the other. These include repeated (or apt to be so) verbal, physical, sexual or economic assaults, threats or constraints that inflict harm on the other person including their integration into society and work. Such violence affects not only the victim but also other family members, including children. It is a form of family abuse.

Most instances of intimate relationship violence are the expression in the private sphere of unequal power relations between women and men still at work in our society. ³

II. Alarming figures

According to the survey done by Belgium's Institute for Gender Equality

- One in seven women has been subjected to at least one act of violence by her (ex-) partner within the last 12 months. In most cases the abusers are male and the victims female.
- The commonly used term "battered women" does not reflect all the types of intimate partner violence, which is predominantly psychological: verbal

³ Official definition of violence - Belgium 2006.
http://igvm-iefh.belgium.be/fr/domaines_action/violence/partnergeweld/
Domestic violence: affecting workplaces and access to work. - FPS-2011

Abuse is by far most common (41.5%), followed by threats (22%), and then physical assaults (15%). Most sexual violence is against women (5.6% versus 0.8% of men). It is also mostly women who are locked in or thrown out of the house (5.9% against 2.7% men).

- 8.9% of women have been coerced into sexual activity before the age of 18, most often by a family member or someone they know. 23% of these abused under-age girls have never told anyone about it.
- Also, only a small minority of abused women make an official complaint (13.9%).

Last year, over 50,000 criminal case files were opened in Belgium.

The official figures on spousal or partner abuse of adult women recorded by gendarmerie (national police) units and DGSP (Department of Public Health) staff in France from 2002 to 2006 are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Violence</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>Trend 2005-2006</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marital rape</td>
<td>329</td>
<td>423</td>
<td>445</td>
<td>591</td>
<td>575</td>
<td>-2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other felony and misdemeanor willful grievous bodily harm</td>
<td>30,661</td>
<td>34,721</td>
<td>34,848</td>
<td>36,141</td>
<td>40,507</td>
<td>12.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attempted murder</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>-28.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the 27 women who killed men in 2008, 11 were victims of partner abuse. On average, one woman dies every 2.5 days in France from intimate partner violence.

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6 Observatoire national de la délinquance – France © INHES / OND – Rapport 2007
An endless catalogue of figures could be given on woman abuse. Overwhelming as they are, however, these figures tell only a small part of the story for various reasons.

First, not all victims describe what they are enduring as "violence". It is not uncommon to hear stories like: "My man often puts a knife to my throat, but he doesn't hurt me. If I'm still asleep and he wants me to get his breakfast, he'll urinate on me to wake me up. He calls me a fat cow when he wants to have sex. I'm diabetic but he makes me eat because he doesn't like skinny women". The woman who recounted all this did not feel she was being abused. It took counselling for her to understand that this is not a normal way to live. It took using the word "violence" to get her to see the disrespect and humiliation she was enduring.

But victims who are aware and able to complain do not always get dealt with properly. Police and prosecutors may not have the training, proof can be hard to provide. Complaints are still too often filed "no further action" by police and prosecutors. Also, many victims withdraw their complaints before trial.

"The key thing when looking at the intimate partner violence figures is their low disclosure rate. The so-called "community and safety" crime survey done by the Observatoire national de la délinquance (OND - National Crime Observatory) (...) showed a very low disclosure rate of about 9%, meaning that 91% of cases go unpunished".  

III. An opinion poll - WMAV (Bulgaria)

The Bulgarian organization "Women and Mothers against Violence" carried out an informative opinion poll to test its constituency’s perceptions of violence. 180

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7 [http://www.senat.fr/rap/r09-553/r09-5533.html](http://www.senat.fr/rap/r09-553/r09-5533.html)  
8 [Annexe 1](#)
adult men and women were interviewed in 18 different Bulgarian towns. The survey findings are in line with Belgian figures:

- 40% of respondents were personally acquainted with a victim of violence;
- 62.2% of people knew a woman who was being psychologically abused by a family member;
- 12.8% knew someone who was enduring family sexual abuse;
- 5.5% had been or were then enduring physical abuse. What is also concerning in Women and Mothers Against Violence’s findings is that 5% of women refused to answer the question "Have you been abused?”;
- 12.5% had experienced harassment, humiliation, verbal abuse (3.9% did not wish to answer).

It is also significant that 49.2% of respondents (mainly men) thought that domestic violence was a private matter, while 50.8% (mainly women) thought it was a public issue.

**B. Domestic violence intrudes in the workplace.**

**I. An investigation into the working world - FGTB (Belgium).**

The FGTB trade union federation surveyed 382 union representatives from the industrial cleaning, public services, metal manufacturing, home help, chemicals and retail sectors "to see whether the scheme to keep victims of violence at work held good, persuade the union’s policy bodies to include the issue in trade union training, to open up a problem which is currently only dealt with by our organization’s (FGTB) women’s committees, to action the scheme and develop expertise with employers”\(^9\).

The results included:

\(^9\) see Annex 2
• Of those union reps who responded to the survey, a minority of men thought violence was an issue for workplace awareness-raising. By contrast, 89% of women thought it should be turned from a matter of private interest into a societal, public health and welfare at work concern;
• 3.30% of union reps had already been asked directly by victims for help or information (cleaning industry and retail sector);
• Within these sectors, 60% of union reps had spotted signs of physical or psychological abuse;
• 5.72% of these reps thought that union reps needed a "toolkit" to act as a "referral point" to appropriate services;
• Long- and short-term sickness absences and lateness are the most cited consequences, needing the union reps to speak to the employer about it.

These figures show that domestic violence is clearly in evidence in the workplace. And yet only 5.72% of union reps think a toolkit is needed. Does this reflect a belief that they cannot/should not have to get involved, or rather that they think they need something other than a "tool kit"?

This question requires further exploration. In any event, it means pressing a convincing agenda that violence is seriously bad for work, the worker and her co-workers. It also means making a convincing case to union representatives, into-work facilitators and trainers that they have a key role to play.

II. Cost

The economic cost of violence – however high – arguably pales into insignificance compared to the human cost and suffering of victims and their families. But comparing the figures for the cost of violence with those of public and private spending necessitated by or allocated to preventing violence is an interesting exercise. The costed case for victim support and prevention then becomes clear.
It is hard to put a financial cost on violence, especially when assessing the financial impact on an employer. The French association Psytel\(^{10}\) has done considerable research into this using "available, easily updated" data.

They included:
- Direct medical costs: A&E treatment, hospitalization, general medicine and psychiatric care, medication use;
- Non-medical direct costs: civil justice, criminal justice, prison, local and national police activities;
- The costs of direct social consequences: emergency shelter, housing, various benefits, sick pay, preventive measures;
- The costs of indirect consequences: lost production due to death, sickness / absenteeism and imprisonment, and finally the costs of rape and serious harm.

The amounts to which their estimates led them are (for France):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Simplified cost items</th>
<th>in €M (Psytel estimates)</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health care</td>
<td>483</td>
<td>19.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police, Justice</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>9.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welfare benefits</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>4.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct costs</td>
<td>838</td>
<td>33.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lost production</td>
<td>1 099</td>
<td>44.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human costs</td>
<td>535</td>
<td>21.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect consequences</td>
<td>1 634</td>
<td>66.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand TOTAL</td>
<td>2 472</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Psytel has turned these figures into the following chart:

\(^{10}\) [www.psytel.eu](http://www.psytel.eu)
This puts the estimated cost to French business as being 1 099 million euros. The population of Belgium is about one-sixth that of France. The cost of violence to Belgian business can therefore be estimated at about 188 million euros. This figure should be compared with the cost to an employer of adapting an abuse victim’s job. Psytel estimates that 1 euro invested in effective prevention of domestic violence can generate savings of about 87 euros. The cost of violence is put at 16 billion euros a year for all EU countries, or 33 euros per person!

These are sobering figures!

### III. How violence affects physical and mental health

"Intimate partner and sexual violence have serious short- and long-term physical, mental, sexual and reproductive health problems for victims and for their children, and lead to high social and economic costs".  

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11 [http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs239/fr/index.html](http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs239/fr/index.html)
Workers’ ill-health has a high cost to employers: absences, work accidents due to inattention and fatigue, stress caused to co-workers, etc.

Violence impacts health in many ways. Some are the direct result of physical assaults and abuse: “black and blue” bruising of varying severity, fractures, burns. These are easily spotted.

But there are many other less visible ones. Headaches, for instance, or back pain, stomach ache, muscle pain and tenderness, digestive problems, difficulty walking and poor general health. Violence can also cause depression, sleep and dietary disorders, emotional upset and suicide attempts.

Some health effects observed in a women’s refuge:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Memory loss</th>
<th>Hits the children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thinks she’s losing her mind</td>
<td>Indecisive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety/stress</td>
<td>Suicidal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insomnia</td>
<td>Mixed feelings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss of dignity</td>
<td>Shame</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss of appetite</td>
<td>Guilt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worrying</td>
<td>Loss of self-esteem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Headaches</td>
<td>Isolation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feels judged, misunderstood</td>
<td>Withdrawal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stomach ache</td>
<td>Hatred of men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feels alone</td>
<td>Distrust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nervous breakdown</td>
<td>Financial worries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Becomes aggressive</td>
<td>Poor concentration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irritable/Outbursts of anger</td>
<td>Impaired productivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-doubt</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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12 [http://www.mirepi.com/violence.html#5](http://www.mirepi.com/violence.html#5)
Violence also results in a state of post-traumatic stress that affects health, attention and concentration. Neuropsychiatrist Muriel Salmona has developed this concept: "Trauma is what happens when the psyche comes under attack and its defences are swamped by stimuli associated with the occurrence of an event that is an assault or a threat to the life or physical or mental inviolability of a person who is exposed to it as a victim, witness or perpetrator [...] 58% of female victims of domestic violence suffer from post-traumatic stress compared to 24% of all trauma victims (Astin, 1995), and the figures are even higher when sexual abuse is involved - 80% (Breslau et al., 1991), while 60% of children who witness or are themselves victims of family violence suffer from post-traumatic stress".  

Muriel Salmona describes a process of "dissociation" which results in "deadened emotions accompanied by an altered state of consciousness (feelings of unreality, being a spectator of the violent scene, depersonalisation, “zoning out”). Traumatic memory is a time bomb, with intrusive flashbacks that replay the violence on an endless loop re-experiencing the suffering and distress. This numbing of emotional responsiveness is also accompanied by hypervigilance, controlling and avoidance behaviour and risk behaviour.

Muriel Salmona also shows that people who have experienced trauma and violence cease to react like those who have not. This postulate is borne out by medical imaging: the brain is unresponsive and in stupor.

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These health problems have big repercussions for work. The Liège-based anti-domestic violence group *Collectif contre les violences* has singled out:
"A loss of self-esteem that makes it hard to build a positive self-image, discover one’s hidden qualities, go out and do things, the isolation that cuts them off from a network of contacts that is vital to getting work [...]"

- "Experiences of violence-dominated relationships that can make the person reject all forms of authority at work, or be unable to situate themselves in an “authoritarian” set-up leaving them vulnerable to bullying.
- Limited career options that may be tied into a restorative process."  

**C. European Project "Job-keeping or vocational integration for victims of domestic violence"**

**I. Initial partnership with Quebec**

In 2005-2006, FPS ran a joint research project with the Montreal-based psychosocial intervention liaison centre CLIPP (Centre Liaison sur l’intervention psychosociale)\(^{15}\) for which two focus groups of into-work facilitators and job trainers were set up.

The idea was to probe what these into-work facilitators knew about domestic violence, their ability to spot situations of violence, refer victims and abusers to specialized provision, and list the consequences of intimate partner violence for finding and keeping a job. They were also to come up with practical things that the work community and into-work facilitators could do. They were also questioned about their training needs. The focus groups confirmed the impact of domestic violence on work and the forms it could take.

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\(^{14}\) Nathalie Mignano - *Violences conjugales : freins ou leviers à l’insertion socioprofessionnelle ? Collectif contre les violences familiales et l’exclusion (CVFE) Violences conjugales : freins ou leviers à l’insertion socioprofessionnelle ?*

\(^{15}\) [www.clipp.ca](http://www.clipp.ca)
A two-day training module based on this was devised, tested out and its relevance assessed in Brussels and Montreal. The outcomes were conclusive.  

FPS decided to take the thinking and work forward to develop a strategy for action in workplaces and vocational training bodies.

A literature review and various contacts made showed this to be a key issue with which front-line workers were ready to engage.

It also transpired from our research and preliminary contacts that union representatives, occupational doctors and workplace harassment complaint resolution officers could become trusted "link workers" for victims who see them as able to provide support through listening and referral to appropriate provision. Trade union reps are also best placed to have input into developing a workplace information and prevention policy as part of welfare at work policy, but also to agree on practical arrangements about jobs and negotiate flexibility into working hours. They can also negotiate time off for victims to take the necessary steps to get out of the abusive situation.

A "link worker" is any professional, whether personal social service providers or otherwise, who can intervene to help victims of violence keep or get a job: union reps, vocational guidance and training providers, into-work facilitators, occupational doctors, health insurance fund medical officers, workplace harassment complaint resolution officers, etc.

II. Proposed manner of proceeding

http://www.femmesprevoyantes.be/fps/PublicationsetOutilsPedagogiques/AnalysesEtudesPdf/violences.htm

Responsible publisher: Dominique Plasman 1/2 place saint Jean - 1000
We proposed five areas of intervention where link workers could act to help workers or those on job integration/employability schemes enduring domestic violence. "Link workers" can act through:

- Listening and spotting;
- Awareness and information;
- Referral to specialized resources;
- Adapted working or training arrangements and practical assistance;
- Negotiating a company policy and supportive legislation to safeguard victims’ jobs.

**Listening and spotting**

Listening and empathy may be part of a union rep’s or job trainer and coach’s “job”, but giving listening support to victims or abusers may be less easy. It is an area riddled with stereotypes and unease. Domestic violence is commonly held to be a private, relationship matter. Victims and abusers are stereotypes as having a particular profile, and that it cannot happen to people one knows. There is also a high likelihood that the person to whom a victim or perpetrator turns has themselves some exposure to violence through their own relationship or friends and acquaintances. Amnesty International estimates that one in three people will know someone affected by violence.

Vocational training must accommodate these needs. Victims who have taken the plunge and signed up for job training or an vocational integration scheme must be able to use it as a springboard. But their vulnerabilities and resources must be taken into account to give them proper guidance. Victims of violence, abusers, and exposed children have special needs that must be understood.

Job trainers/coaches and union representatives must be able to spot situations of violence. This does not mean turning into a detective or psychologist. A clear distinction has to be made between "screening" - a tool for counselling
professionals - and "spotting" which can be carried out as part of vocational integration.

**Screening** is a clinical approach which involves identifying signs and medical conditions, and investigating. The practitioner makes assumptions based on recognized signs and determine whether they add up to a syndrome (set of symptoms) which makes sense within his theoretical knowledge.

**Spotting** involves no more than paying attention to facts, behaviours, and pleas for help from victims/abusers. It is about helpfulness and attentiveness rather than intrusiveness or extracting confessions.

Surprisingly, the mere fact that “trustworthy persons” have a fair idea of what violence is, its cycle and how it escalates, and knowing there is somewhere to talk about it, is found to be enough to bring many problem situations out into the open.

Caution! Nothing is worse for a victim than not being recognized as such, making light of what they are enduring, making the violence their fault, or equating violence with arguing. Belittling the effects of the situation by treating it as a personality, relationship or communication problem is particularly disastrous for the victim and perpetrator alike. It makes the victim partly to blame for the violence while supporting the abuser’s impunity and self-justification - "she pushed me to it".

Finally, it must be stressed that victims who decide to open up must obviously be guaranteed the discretion of the link worker they go to. They must have the assurance that nothing will be done without their say-so.

**Referral to specialized resources**
It is important for link workers to have an extensive contact book. Specialized violence prevention and treatment centres are not the only things that can help victims, there are other possibilities, too, like police-run victim support centres, family planning centres, mental health centres, etc.

More than this list of "standard" addresses and a systematic search in their own area, link workers must build up a list of personal contacts drawn from among professionals they have had personal dealings with or have heard of. This means choosing resource people well-versed in violence issues. Specialized resources in abused women refuges can provide good local contacts here.

It has been found that domestic violence is still too poorly understood and rarely part of the training for medical, social work, psychology, legal and law enforcement professionals. There is a big danger of secondary victimization where the problem is treated as a communication issue, or mediation offered. Relation counselling or mediation can work only where the protagonists are on equal terms. Domestic violence is a crime and must be dealt with as such.

**Job adaptations and practical help**

**Making the case**

It has been shown that domestic violence has a big impact on work in terms of cost, organization and profitability.

Firms need to be shown these impacts and where their interest lies in taking victims’ particular needs into account. Vocational training providers must see the compelling arguments for it so as to adapt training options and arrangements to the individual’s specific needs. (Work experience training in a restaurant kitchen where orders are shouted out might not be suitable, for example).

**Survival Guide, tips and tricks**
Very simple adaptations can be made to jobs or vocational integration courses that may be crucial to victims who need the assurance of safety precautions at their work or training site.

**EXAMPLES:** The abuser goes to the workplace and issues threats: his picture is given to the security guard who can stop him entering the factory; repeated harassing phone calls stop the victim from working: change the number or filter the calls through someone else; he hides her shoes: she keeps a pair of shoes in her locker at work, so what if she has to get there in slippers; he consistently changes her alarm clock: a co-worker texts her on her mobile phone in the morning ...

Abusers’ imagination knows no bounds, so the imagination and creativity of link workers, co-workers and friends also needs unleashing to find solutions.

**Awareness and information.**

This action has a twofold aim:

- It must be possible to talk about violence at the workplace or training site to inform victims and let them verbalize what they are enduring (including bringing in the impact of domestic violence on exposed children), to stress the unacceptability of violence, put across the message that the company is sensitive to the issue.

- It is vital for workers to be able to identify the link worker through their involvement in the awareness and information activity.
Here again, thinking outside the box is needed: put up a poster in the canteen, put a flyer in the pay slip envelope, stick up a violence hotline number in the toilet, get the link worker to wear a "White Ribbon"... 

**Negotiating a company policy and supportive legislation**

Companies could include protection for victims of violence in their work rules and personnel management practices, such as by offering (time-limited) protection against dismissal such as exists for pregnant workers. Firms could also develop policies providing for paid leave, extended leave or moving staff who are enduring violence.

Firms have to get the clear message that workers enduring violence need to know they can get help, that they will not be censured and the discretion about their plight will be assured.

In Belgium, all workers have the right to consult the occupational health service without referral free of charge. Employers (who choose the occupational health service they sign up to) should ensure that they can give initial support and help to victims of violence.

Preventive measures and protection for workers enduring violence in Belgium can be based on the "Welfare at Work Code" which lays down "measures to foster improvements in the safety and health of workers at work". 

**Context: Daphne Europe**

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The aim was to put these proposed ideas to the test through a transnational project to try them out and put the resulting programme into practice. It was also thought that the variety of cultures and situations would offer a comparison of practices and legislation in the different countries to inform participants’ various agendas and views. This was done through COFACE\(^{20}\) by means of a partnership set up with certain of its member organizations. A Daphne Programme subsidy\(^ {21}\) was applied for and granted. Daphne is a programme run by the European Commission’s Directorate General for Justice and Social Affairs to combat violence against children, young people and women\(^ {22}\).

This programme not only enables an ambitious project to be run but also for value to be added to the work through European partnerships. It also gives it a high profile, not least through the "Daphne Toolkit"\(^ {23}\) site which makes the tools and research developed by other Daphne-subsidized projects available to the public.

**III. The partners**

COFACE\(^ {24}\) took responsibility as project promoter and overall coordinator.

COFACE is a pluralistic organisation, at the heart of civil society, which aims at promoting family policy, solidarity between generations and the interests of children within the European Union. COFACE advocates a policy of non-discrimination and of equal opportunities between persons and between family forms, and specifically supports policies aiming at equality between women and men.

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\(^{20}\) [www.coface-eu.org](http://www.coface-eu.org)

\(^{21}\) [Daphné Project Ref 1999-285-W](http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/funding/daphne/funding_daphne_en.htm)

\(^{22}\) [http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/funding/daphne/funding_daphne_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/funding/daphne/funding_daphne_en.htm)

\(^{23}\) [www.daphne-toolkit.org/](http://www.daphne-toolkit.org/)

\(^{24}\) Confederation of Family Organisations in the European Union.
FPS[^25] is a Belgian NGO that campaigns for policies to achieve a more egalitarian society. As a mutual aid organization, it also campaigns against health inequalities, informs, educates, organizes concerted action and carries out health promotion activities. FPS also runs a network of Family Planning Centres, and a network of vocational improvement and skills development schools.

KMOP is a Greek non-profit, social NGO with humanitarian values, believing in every individual’s potential to enrich society. It focuses on issues pertaining to social welfare and health, vocational integration and employment generation, scientific research and the development of know-how in social policy issues.

FGTB is a Belgian national trade union that speaks for the interests of all in-work and unemployed, young and older men and women workers. Its singular aim is to work for a more equal and cohesive society. Its strength is to combine a capacity for concerted action with the resolute defence of workers in a gender equality approach. CEPAG (André Genot workers’ education centre) is a non-profit continuing education organization with close ties to FGTB Wallonia providing training and outreach activities to working-class communities on political, social, cultural and economic issues.

Salud y Familia is a Spanish voluntary organization providing individual medical, psychological, intercultural, social and legal assistance without discrimination as to origin, race, gender, nationality, social status or religion. The association puts a special focus on family and reproductive health issues including family planning and abortion, as well as family relations and basic health, social and legal support.

The Bulgarian National Movement (WMAV) is an NGO founded in 1990. Its main goal is to protect mothers, children, and families against all forms of violence – social, physical, mental and emotional. More specifically, it works on protection of

[^25]: Femmes prévoyantes socialistes
the family, promoting and supporting breastfeeding, conducting social and cultural research and follow-up of projects on the social rights of the family, women, children and young people, social inclusion and protection of consumer rights.

D. The set-up

A common basis was proposed for the different project actions and it was suggested that the partners should develop their own training schemes and tools out of that basis. It was felt to be more valuable and effective for each partner to interpret the ideas through the prism of their own specific experience and knowledge rather than imposing a common training scheme or developing common awareness-building tools and strategies. This set-up also enabled each partner to better target the approach and tools used to their target groups.

The project roll-out proved this to be the right approach: the various partners contributed to the project over and above what was required, initiating surveys, focus groups, tools for spotting danger situations or sharing awareness-raising activities.

Two seminars were held for project managers and trainers: seminar 1 organized by Salud y Familia aimed to create a common knowledge base about violence, and project baseline assumptions. Seminar 2 was organized by WMAV to enable thought to be given to strategies and communication tools to educate employers and workers about violence and the impact it has on working life.

The project was rounded off with a wrap-up conference attended by professionals from across Europe sharing their experiences as well as Belgian professionals: trade unionists, vocational training and vocational integration specialists, medical officers, technical/vocational education teachers, family planning centre counsellors etc.
I.  **Seminar 1**
A basic content was proposed to the partners at this seminar. They adapted it and their methods to their target audience in their country.

**Initial training: FPS**

FPS devised an initial training seminar for project leaders and trainers from each partner country designed to establish common basic content: analysis of domestic violence, impact of violence on working life and the role of link workers. This provided the basis for partners’ own training of link workers in their respective countries.

The training comprised two modules each requiring one day’s training.

On Day One, a gender analysis of violence was offered to demonstrate that this is a societal issue, not a private matter. The aim was also for initial support providers to victims and abusers to put aside their stereotypes, learn about the different forms and understand the cycle of violence. It was also vital for them to understand the process by which victims are controlled and how it destroys their self-esteem.

The powerlessness felt by those who would help victims had to be addressed. Falling into the temptation of planning a course of action for the individual and pressing them to leave their abusive partner would be to incite further violence. The thing not to forget is that underlying the victim-abuser relationship is love. The fundamental requirements of an individual or family’s basic needs (housing, money, organization, etc.) are not to be overlooked.

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Link workers must be shown that even victims who are unprepared to change their situation can be helped by being offered a range of practical help and different working arrangements, but also by being told that they do not deserve this, that the abuser is violating their fundamental human rights, helping to rebuild their self-esteem.

The first day’s discussions were kicked off by playing the game "Wanted", which involves making a composite sketch (drawing and written description) of a victim and an abuser: age, occupation, personality traits. The purpose of this is to elucidate participants’ stereotypes and their difficulties in tackling the issue.

The first training session covered27:

CH 1. The facts and figures
CH 2. Gender
CH 3. Conflict/violence
CH 4. Definition of violence
CH 5. The different forms of violence
CH 6. Escalation
CH 7. The cycle
CH 8. How to help
CH 9. Secondary victimization

The second module considered the impact of violence on work. The content looked at was28:

CH 1. Domestic violence intrudes into the workplace
CH 2. The employer’s interest and duties

27 Liliane Leroy, Les violences entre partenaires: quelles répercussions sur la vie professionnelle, quelles pistes d’action pour aider les victimes ?, FPS 2011
28 See Annex 4
Domestic violence: affecting workplaces and access to work.

CH 3. The role of union reps and into-work facilitators
CH 4. Spotting problems
CH 5. How to help
CH 6. Referral

A set of "Tips and Tactics" cards was also proposed to show various practical problems that might arise, and ways of finding practical solutions, developing company policies and preventive measures based on these situations. Its purpose is to be a creativity-enabler. The situations and solutions are only examples. The key thing is to use blank cards to identify problems specific to the users and look for appropriate solutions.

Risk assessment: KMOP

Questionnaire

The victim’s needs and safety should be taken seriously into account in any kind of intervention. That’s why it is necessary not to focus only on the fact of abuse but also to try to make a broader evaluation of the situation in order to assess the levels of risk. Here are some of the questions that are used in our counselling centres in order to assess the situation:

☐ When did the abuse start?
☐ Is there an on-going abuse?
☐ Is there an increased frequency and severity of attacks against the victim?
☐ Which is the most serious injury that the victim has suffered and when did that occur?
☐ Are there any weapons in the house?
☐ Has the abuser ever used any kind of weapons against the victim?

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29 See Annex 5
Has the abuser ever tried to strangle the victim?

Does the abuser misuse alcohol or drugs?

Has the abuser threatened to kill the victim or the children?

Is the victim afraid of being killed by the perpetrator?

Is the victim afraid that the abuser will commit suicide?

Is the perpetrator very jealous? Does he accuse the victim of having affairs?

Does the perpetrator suffer from depression? Is the perpetrator paranoid?

Does he watch the victim’s movements? Does he control the victim?

Does the abuser have a criminal history?

Does the victim think of leaving/divorcing the abuser?

Does the victim have suicidal thoughts?

If the answers are positive to the above questions then the victim is in a high level of risk. In that case we have to contact the authorities in order to protect the victim, the children or other vulnerable adults. The victim should know from the beginning the reasons for compelling disclosure, we explain the reasons for doing that and we try to find a safe place for them and their children.

4. Approaching the victim

When we approach the victim we try to build a good and trustful relationship. We don’t have a judgmental attitude and we try to make her feel comfortable. This is what we should have in mind when we approach an abused person.

It’s quite difficult for the victim to speak freely, for that reason we should recognize her fears, her worries and show respect for her experiences. So we use phrases such as “I am sorry for what you have suffered, I understand that you are having difficult times, I want you to know that I will do anything I can to
help you. I know that it might be difficult for you to express yourself and feel comfortable to talk to me but this is necessary in order to help you…”

☐ It is important to show the victim that we believe her. Because the abuser can be someone beyond suspicion who may persuade the victim that no one is going to believe her. Therefore it is important for her to know that at least we do.

☐ During the assessment we prefer open type questions such as “what happened when your husband returned? How did he abuse you?

☐ We ask from the victim to describe the events in a chronological order, starting from the fact of abuse e.g. “What happened when you returned home that afternoon?”

☐ We try to listen carefully without comments to what the woman says. In case she bursts out crying she needs time to calm down and she should not be pressed to talk.

☐ We collect the information for the abuse and the injuries with straight questions such as “Where did he hurt you?” “How did he hurt you?” “Did he use punches or any other object or weapon?”

☐ We never make questions that may imply that the victim deserved the violent behaviour. We never ask “What did you do for him to hurt you?” We should not forget that the victim is not responsible for the abuser’s motives and intentions. Furthermore it is important not to make questions that victimize her such as “Why are you staying with him?” Or “Try to calm him down or learn to compromise”. These types of questions or comments make the abused woman feel responsible for her abuse and justify in a way her abuser’s behaviour.
We should ensure the battered woman that no one has the right to hurt her / abuse her for any reason. This would help in the establishing of a trustful therapeutic relationship.

We should know that sometimes the victim may feel safe but some other times she may feel unsafe and frightened and this can prevent her from speaking freely.

The interview should not be focused only on the physical abuse of a person but also on the other types of abuse such as threats, sexual attacks, etc.

The four stages of decision-making: Salud y Familia

Pre-contemplation
The woman verbalizes the conflicts she is enduring but does not necessarily think there is a problem to be solved. She excuses her partner’s violent behaviour, and blames herself for not bringing enough money home.

Contemplation
The woman appears ambivalent and self-contradictory. She knows she is in an acute conflict setting but does not clearly identify what the problem is that needs solving. She excuses her partner’s aggressive behaviour but is also able to differentiate responsibilities. She thinks there is a problem in the relationship. She blames herself for not contributing more to the household income.

Preparation
The woman identifies the problem and looks for ways and means (tools) of solving it. She realizes that she and/or her children are suffering from the situation. She accepts help offered by people in her social network. She assigns responsibility to each member of the couple and occasionally tries to address the problems herself. But she still remains uncertain and undecided.
Action
The woman solves the problem. She regrets not acting sooner against the violence. She seeks help from her close circle (contacts, friends, etc.). She will get information from public or private resources, in her social network. She draws support from all this. She realizes that she has enough personal resources to solve the problem fairly quickly.

Following this initial training, the trainers from partner countries adapted the content and methods to their target groups.

II. WMAV Seminar 2

A seminar was arranged in Sofia to devise tools for creating awareness among workers and consider the best strategies for disseminating them. The practices reported at it were surprising not to say unsettling. After the seminar, the partners developed awareness-building tools in the form of folders or posters.

Over and above the practicalities discussed, two out-of-the-ordinary talks are particularly worth mentioning.

Domestic violence on television.

A discussion was held with Zoya Velinova, a journalist on Bulgarian television who won an international award in 2010 for her work on programmes dealing with social issues.

She argued that violence is not an interpersonal but a societal problem, and so national television has a vital role to play by holding domestic violence cases up to public scrutiny, just as it would burglaries or road rage incidents.
She focused on how violence is portrayed on commercial channels and how she believes public broadcasters should address it. Her contention is that public television does not sensationalise; it preserves the anonymity of victims and witnesses. More balance is brought by giving airtime to the different views: those of victims, the police, doctors, and main witnesses. Zoya Velinova works to the template: what is happening? Where is it happening? Why? What happened before? She believes that the media cannot simply reflect events, they must also be part of the solution to problems: providing addresses, showing solutions and following up so that victims know there are ways out.

Zoya Velinova believes the media have a responsibility for shaping public attitudes, changing mindsets. This can be done through programme commentaries, showcasing how victims have managed to get out of their plight, and portraying what has been done in other countries.

Including the issue in seminars on stress.

Maria Djongova, a lecturer in clinical psychology, and Dr. Dora Pachova, who lectures in homeopathy and family therapy, give talks to company team building and communication sessions. They believe that violence is an intrinsic part of the issues to be addressed. Their baseline position is that any talk of relationships, cooperation and communication must naturally include the ideas of respect/lack of respect, egalitarian relations/dominance, and non-violence/violence.

Maria Djongova and Dora Pachova see various advantages in including violence issues in these training sessions. Top management do not need to be urged to lay on a specific programme on violence. Managers are more "open" and "relaxed" in team building sessions. Also, words, signs and topics of discussion related to violence crop up spontaneously in sessions.
These sessions enable educational programmes and respectful communication programmes to be provided.

**III. Training groups: a programme for link workers**

Groups of twenty-odd link workers were set up by the four partners, comprising union reps for Belgium, job mentoring and into-work facilitation professionals for the others. The groups met three times over the two years.

- An initial two-day session was held in each country to train the link workers in violence issues generally and the impact of violence on work, based on the initial training given in seminar 1 adapted by each trainer to the needs and capacities of their audience.

- A second meeting was held after seminar 2 for each group to devise a public awareness folder and/or poster\(^{30}\) and develop strategies for disseminating them. Salud y Familia organized focus groups of - among others - people whose origins lie in immigration to develop their poster\(^{31}\).

- A final meeting was held to review the training process and prospects.

**E. Evaluation and outlook, by Bernard Demuysère**

Bernard Demuysère was asked to act as external project evaluator. He is a qualified psychologist, Director of the *Ecole des Parents et des Educateurs* in Belgium, and a training provider. He provided follow-up at each level of the process: seminars, working groups and link worker training groups. His input provided the perspective to see the big picture of our two years of work. It also

\(^{30}\) See the partners' websites or [www.femmesprevoyantes.be](http://www.femmesprevoyantes.be)

\(^{31}\) See [http://www.saludyfamilia.es](http://www.saludyfamilia.es)
gave us ideas as to the possible direction our "post-Daphne" work might take. What follows is his summary of that demanding assignment.

I. **Introduction**

The DAPHNE project had ambitious aims to induce changes at once in

- people: victims, perpetrators and "link workers": social workers, union representatives or into-work facilitators.
- workforce-wide company practices for an organized response to keep victims at work
- society: attitudes towards the issue.
II. Findings

The same issue recurs in each country: the workplace impact of domestic violence. The in-country training given brought to light both evidence of the existence of this problem and the difficulty of talking about it. At a meeting of the partners, a participant said in relation to training given in their country: "Once we started talking about it, they (the women participants) realized that some of their co-workers were affected and that something had to be done about it".
The differences begin to emerge when it comes to what to do about it. There is much the four partners can do together in the DAPHNE project, but each country must find its own way and solutions that match where it stands in the organization of society in light of the culture and social practices prevailing in its country.

What emerges clearly from the evaluations is that this DAPHNE project has been a means for each partner to establish cooperation with other European associations through exchanges of experiences on the help available in the different countries, the training of workers – either union reps or link workers - who engage with the issue, as well as methods, tools and techniques.

The project can be said to have enabled a real awareness of the problem and its underlying human dimension, and also enabled the trainers from the four partner countries to work out practical ways of raising awareness of the problem.

Materials (folders, booklets, training course books, posters, etc.) have been produced with both similar and different aims, as is made clear in other parts of this report.

Some of these materials were designed to educate and inform employees’ and victims’ families, while others (Greece) are addressed directly to victims. They also contain information on the profile of abusers and victims, and the cycle of violence, contact details of people who can help, as well as advice and recommendations on what steps victims of physical or sexual abuse should take.

For other partners, the materials are intended to enable union reps to advertise and inform workers that shop stewards can help in not just working life (keeping their jobs) but also private life (referral to appropriate support services).
A second key aspect of the work for all was **forming part of a wider social/employment fabric**: building a network of companies to publicize the DAPHNE project’s work and the tools developed by it for men and women in their work environment, forming a more cohesive part of professional networks, family doctors, social workers, midwives and educational psychologists, etc.

**In summary**, this Daphne project sought to engage with,

- victims and answers for them, individually and collectively
- an organization (company, voluntary group, NGO, etc.) whose job it is to provide an organized response to keep victims at work
- a society to be made aware.

Relative to the deliverables specified by the coordinator (COFACE), we find:

- **Developing awareness-raising tools.** This has substantially been delivered
- **Developing a training programme.** This has substantially been delivered and tested out.
- **Developing a list of useful contacts.** This is well under way in the different countries.
- **Creating a database of practical solutions.** This has been extensively discussed and a number have been produced.
- **Trade union and policy recommendations:** a number of recommendations were made at the final conference held in Brussels in November 2011.

**III. Outlooks**

The DAPHNE project’s activities are chiefly focused on **training** of link workers and **raising awareness** among the public and workers. But to be effective, action must be based on something more than just public awareness and training of link workers (however galvanizing that may be).
Domestic violence: affecting workplaces and access to work.

Looked at against 6 success factors in project effectiveness some major ways forward can be identified to consolidate the work started!

What are the success factors in effective project implementation?

1. Awareness of the problem
2. The work community
3. The objectives
4. The role of link workers
5. Link workers: a mutual choice
6. Training of participants.

Awareness of the problem

As mentioned earlier, domestic violence has workplace impacts in each country, and is still often hard to talk about. One aspect of the DAPHNE project focused on this vital need for public awareness: information for families, victims, co-workers, etc. This is something relatively new to Bulgaria and so training was of particular importance. In Belgium, following an initial training session, union reps asked for sectoral training to increase business awareness due to the high incidence of the problem and the acute need to be equipped to address it.

Creating awareness is undoubtedly not the easiest thing to do, but the DAPHNE project participants did put a focus on this strategic aspect and worked extensively on it. The job of raising public awareness through folders, posters and the media should be taken forward. A single awareness campaign is not enough, there is a huge job of work to do!

The work community

Linking into the previous point, no less important is coordination of the work done by link workers with the work community (occupational health service, social security bodies, trade union, etc.). One of the project partners (Bulgaria) set up a national meeting with representatives of institutions. Another (Greece) sought to set up a network of private firms to disseminate the DAPHNE project results. In Belgium, the success enjoyed by the final conference evidences the importance of creating this linkage.

IV. The objectives

The stated objective is quite clear: job-keeping or vocational integration for victims of domestic violence. The aim is not a production or commercial one, but about giving advice and assistance, which puts those trying to deliver it in a singular position in the company. This raises both organizational (links with other company services and management) and ethical (relating to confidentiality) issues. The outcomes are conditional on the actions taken, but also on how collaboration takes place between link workers and their contacts. As one partner observed, however, the employer may argue that this objective is not a business concern and consign it back to the private sphere.

The role of link workers

Link workers: a mutual choice

Training of participants

F. Legislation

A comparison of prevailing legislation in the partner countries

By Laia Costa - Salud y Familia
Summing up of the issues related to IPV (Intimate Partner Violence) contended in the study “Feasibility study to assess the possibilities, opportunities and needs to standardise national legislation on violence against women, violence against children and sexual orientation violence” (published 2010 by European Union), related to the legislation of the DAPHNE partners’ countries: Belgium, Bulgaria, Greece and Spain.

All the countries, Bulgaria, Greece, Belgium and Spain have some kind of dedicated framework law which specifies acts of violence in a domestic context as the target.

A reference to international law, human rights law or an equality perspective is rarely evident in national legislation, with the exception of Spain, although on a policy level the connection between IPV and gender inequality is more often recognized..

In the event of an act falling under both a specific law in IPV law and general criminal law provisions, Bulgaria, Greece and Spain have specifically regulated which law should be applied.

The four countries define all criminal offences as aggravated if they are committed within the family/household or against a close person or current or ex-partner.

This approach allows for the use of all provisions of criminal law while imposing a higher sentence but, with the exception of Spain, no gender dimension is introduced.

Spain is the only country that has a specific criminal offence.
A different, but, at times, overlapping approach is a broad and dedicated law, regulating such measures as protective interventions, court restraining orders and sometimes also penalisation. This approach, which we call ‘a framework law’, can combine provisions in different domains of law and Bulgaria, Greece and Spain have such legislation.

The most advanced from the perspective of an integrated approach is without doubt the Spanish Organic Law, covering not only prosecution, including the creation of special courts, but also addressing preventive and supportive measures (welfare, child support, housing, employment), and it is unique in its specification of gender-based violence.

_all the countries have the orders that provide immediate protection. The emergency removal order (also called ‘go order’ or ‘barring order’). Such an order allows the police (sometimes operating under the authority of either a prosecutorial or an administrative authority) to temporarily ban the offender from the home (the range of the ban varies from 3 to 20 days).
In addition, in Belgium, Bulgaria, Spain, urgent court decisions to remove the perpetrators or ban them from the residence can be issued by a judge _ex parte_ on probable cause within a day._

All the countries consider IPV a public offence, so there is no need to require a victim complaint or private prosecution. In Bulgaria the victim must investigate and initiate a private prosecution depending on the offence.

When the victim of IPV is a non-EU national without an independent residence permit, all the countries allow the victim to apply for a residence permit after they no longer share residence with a violent partner; and legal provisions to offer perpetrator programmes exist in the four countries although capacity is generally limited. In most Member States it is a sentencing option, while a few try to insert the programmes into the procedure at an earlier stage.
Some experts explain that in Greece the police often continue to treat IPV as a family or private matter. Some experts in Bulgaria point to lack of sufficient expertise in CJS actors, including judges, as the main barrier to implementation of laws as the reluctance to prosecute.

Belgium points out that reluctance of victims to cooperate with investigations or testify in court may seriously hamper the prosecution of IPV cases.

Virtually all Member States provide some form of shelter facilities, with the majority dedicated for IPV victims however, sustainable funding remains a problem in most, and is not legally based.

Several national experts emphasise the importance of having multi-agency intervention programmes available in which criminal justice and other professionals collaborate in a systematic way. They are not to be found in the four countries.

Prevention

In all the states awareness-raising campaigns on IPV have been launched (or are ongoing), including information that IPV is a crime which can and will be prosecuted. A number of campaigns also focused on the right to protection. Far less information was provided on primary prevention and many of these interventions appear to be localised and not mainstreamed into the school curricula or youth work.

Capacity-building and training

National experts from Bulgaria, Greece and Spain commented on the lack of expertise and knowledge among professionals, due to limited or no training of the
relevant actors in civil and criminal legal systems. Although training provisions are reported by Belgium, Greece and Spain, only in Greece and in Spain is training for police mandatory.

Statistics, data and research
Bulgaria, Greece and Spain have undertaken prevalence studies, only Belgium and Spain report that one or more institutions collect data on reported, prosecuted and convicted cases and the number of protection orders issued.

Conclusions
The success both of the work done throughout these two years and the final conference has demonstrated a groundswell of interest in the vocational integration of victims of domestic violence. Those set to become "link workers", our own organizations’ governing bodies, trade union governing bodies, into-work facilitators and vocational guidance providers, medical officers, vocational/technical education teachers and others all responded positively at relevant points in our approach.

In addition to this study, this partnership endeavour has produced a booklet in French entitled "Les violences entre partenaires: quelles répercussions sur la vie professionnelle, quelles pistes d'action pour aider les victimes?" 33, translated into English 34 as "Violence between partners: its impact on the victim's professional life and what can be done to help her". Similar booklets have also been produced by KMOP, Salud y Familia, and WMAV, and likewise translated into English 35. Salud y Familia has also published - in Spanish only - a booklet reporting the findings of the focus groups set up as groundwork for preparing the poster for the awareness campaign. 36

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33 Liliane Leroy - Les violences entre partenaires: quelles répercussions sur la vie professionnelle, quelles pistes d'action pour aider les victimes? www.femmesprevoyantes.be
34 Ibid.
35 See the partners' websites and www.femmesprevoyantes.be
36 See http://www.saludyfamilia.es
The project gave an opportunity to meet, get acquainted and share practices with, and compile a contact list of, professionals from Europe and Belgium who support victims of violence. These contacts will be kept up and there are plans for further knowledge-sharing. A valuable way to do that would be to create a web portal to pull together the knowledge, know-how and tools that we all have but which are - at best - scattered around the web. What is needed is a forum for distilling and exchanging ideas.

At the end of these two years’ work, it can be reasonably said that we have delivered on our aim: gaining acceptance for the premise that domestic violence does affect working life.

We have awareness tools, "how-to handbooks" aimed at link workers, and a body of know-how.

But all this is only the first step towards getting all participants in the working world to see that "domestic violence is intruding into working life" and to understand that helping victims keep their jobs is in everyone's interest.

For this to happen, employers, union officials, vocational training providers and into-work facilitators have to be persuaded of the need to train link workers on a large scale.

It is also important that acknowledgement of the impact of violence on work and help for victims be given permanence through such things as collective agreements and welfare at work legislation, or more widely included in the social dialogue and corporate social responsibility (CSR).  

37 [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corporate_social_responsibility](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corporate_social_responsibility)
Annexes

Annex 1: WMAV survey
Annex 3: FPS training 1
Annex 4: FPS training 2
Annex 5: FPS game
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