

summary of the project

and violence to financial and emotional stability

Project "Creating Path from poverty and violence to financial and emotional stability" began in December 2010 and was implemented by *BaBe!*, in cooperation with partner organizations *Delfin* from Pakrac and *Zvonimir* from Knin, and with support from Municipality of Gračac and City of Vukovar. This project was financed through the IPA IV program "Establishing Support in Social Integration and Employment of Disadvantaged Groups". Other funds necessary for the implementation of this project were acquired with the help from the Kingdom of Netherlands and IDEMO Institute for democracy, which also enabled us to increase the duration of this action from 12 to 18 months.

The goal of the project was to integrate women-victims of domestic violence, that have been long unemployed and dependent on the social welfare into the labor market by raising their personal as well as capacities of local institutions in Gračac, Knin, Pakrac, Tuzin, Vukovar and Zagreb. By creating a sustainable environment for partnerships and longitudinal cooperation between local stakeholders (such as welfare centers, local governments, business and civil sector), we have contributed to increasing chances of employment for women-victims of domestic violence.

The target groups for this project were:

1. Sixty (60) final beneficiaries - victims of domestic violence, that have been long unemployed and dependent on the social welfare
2. Six (6) local communities of Gračac, Knin, Pakrac, Tuzin, Vukovar and Zagreb with their local governments, employment centers, social welfare centers and CSOs as the prime stakeholders in this project
3. Potential employers in the targeted local communities

The key innovation that was made in this project where *the personal assistants* in seeking employment, which acted as an intermediary between different stakeholders, level of support and final beneficiaries.

The projected results of this project were:

- Increased employability of the women-victims of domestic violence
- Created capacities for indirect support to vulnerable groups seeking for employment, among 3 local CSOs and in 6 targeted regions
- Created sustainable capacities on local and regional level for ensuring access to labor market for all marginalized and vulnerable groups
- Increased awareness and knowledge of all important stakeholders about available modes and support schemes for employing marginalized and vulnerable groups

This project has managed to gather, in some of the six regions even for the first time, all of the important stakeholders in the process of employment of women-victims of domestic violence, such as representatives of the local district offices of Croatian Employment Service, Centers for Social Welfare, CSOs which help women-victims

atives of the local governments of Vukovar, Pakrac, . Workshops and discussions have increased the level of general awareness about this problem and contributed to understanding the roles, potentials and restrictions of every stakeholder in this complex process. As a result of that, a number of initiatives have been launched according to the proposed scheme of employment of women-victims of domestic violence.

Some of the activities have been put in motion during the implementation of the project, while others are still waiting to be executed, as not all the necessary preconditions have been insured. However, in all the regions where the project was conducted, the need for cooperation of all important stakeholders in full realization of all envisioned measures of active employment policies proved to be an indispensable element. In all of the six communities, measurable progress can be determined.

### **Beneficiaries of the project**

Overall, 71 women participated in the project and most of them fulfilled all three important criteria for participation: (1) they were victims of domestic violence, (2) they were on social welfare and (3) they were long-term unemployed. Most of them had some form of secondary education and few of them had higher education (university or college degree). All of them went through educational workshops that contributed to their knowledge and job seeking skills, empowering them to approach the labor market more proactively (whether to engage in volunteering, public works or some form of employment). In accordance with personal employment assistant, psychologist and labor market expert, individual development plans were created to enable women to reach their goal more effectively. From the total number of beneficiaries, 31 women (43 %) were given an opportunity to work for the duration of the project, while 17 of them are still employed. It is worthwhile mentioning that a relatively small number of permanently employed women can be also ascribed to their ability to accept only temporary jobs, since they have temporarily taken residence in Safe House Vukovar, where they sought refuge from the violent partners outside of their own communities. After the immediate threats have been resolved, they returned to their own communities to continue the job search.

### Our recommendations:

- **Continuous and intensified communication of unemployed women-victims of violence with personal job assistant and other women victims of violence through individual and group sessions** (at least once a week) ó our experience has shown that through individual and group sessions women gain confidence and receive support from their peers, making them realize that they are neither alone when facing such problems.
- **Further development of professional and job searching skills** ó this proved to be indispensable for creating better job opportunities of women-victims of domestic violence, as well as contributing to their self-esteem

### **Croatian Employment Office (CEO)**

All representatives from the CEO were cooperative, have shown interest and understanding for the problems and obstacles women-survivors face on the market.

awareness-raising among the CEO representatives on women-victims of domestic violence as specific and vulnerable group on the labor market. Additionally, they are already implementing measures that are tailor made to ensure vulnerable groups the right to funding and education in their search for employment. Likewise, as one of the most important stakeholder, the CEO must further develop a better cooperation with the local governments, local civil society organizations and potential employers (which was already starting to happen in Zagreb, Tuzla and Gračac) to fully integrate women-victims of domestic violence into the labor market and society.

#### Our recommendations:

- Assigning special coordinators for women-violence victims in regional CEO offices (as for instance in Zagreb CEO branch)
- Appointment of the additional personal job assistants (as it has shown useful in getting more beneficiaries employed)
- Increased visibility and further promotion of their program "Public Works"

#### **Employers**

All of the project activities were also directed towards potential employers, which turned out to be a more challenging goal. The employers in general were largely unaware and uninformed about the possibilities of subsidized employment of women-victims of domestic violence and other socially sensitive groups. All personal assistants communicated personally with the local employers, and small telephone survey was conducted among them, which showed that they are willing to employ vulnerable groups and are interested in a more tight cooperation with CEO and other relevant stakeholders.

#### Our recommendations:

- To further inform employers about the benefits they can realize by employing women-victims of domestic violence and other socially vulnerable groups
- To concentrate on mobilizing small and middle range entrepreneurs, because they show the biggest potential and in return might benefit most from employing vulnerable groups