

Executive Summary

The scope of Ariadne 2 is to develop a multilevel approach to the reporting procedure for domestic violence crimes, targeting at the cultivation of a more effective system to respond to and prevent domestic violence amongst the migrant and refugee population. Work package 2 has provided actions for the delivery of primary on-site research, which will constitute the object of the present report. The research was carried out in three levels, with discreet targets and people of reference, as follows:

1. To record the needs of **police personnel** for the management of domestic violence incidents against migrant/refugee women, aiming at more effective multidisciplinary cooperation and support for women.
2. To record the needs of **employees and representatives of centers and services** that aid victims of gender violence, such as the executives of the Civil Society, who are active in the field of gender violence against migrant/refugee women, aiming at the development and support of multidisciplinary cooperation among the entities.
3. To record the experiences of **migrant/refugee women** survivors regarding the existing procedures of police reporting, the gaps in multidisciplinary cooperation, and the extent to which the system's intervention met their needs.

The research among the police personnel was carried out by the KETHI and KEMEA research team, from 24/1/21 to 6/2/21, by use of a random sample of 130 questionnaires, while a qualitative approach was carried out as well through a 9-people focus group (date of the focus group research: 29/1/2021). Due to the restrictive measures against the spreading of the COVID 19, the entire research was conducted electronically.

The research among the personnel of the entities and representatives of centers and services was conducted by the KETHI team, from 18/1/21 to 25/2/21, on the basis of the qualitative analysis of 96 answers to questionnaires which were handed out in a non-random way, as well as through a 12-people focus group for the in-depth examination of issues that arose as significant from the quantitative research (date of the focus group research: 26/2/2021). Due to the restrictive measures against the spreading of the COVID 19, the entire research was conducted electronically.

The research among the migrant/refugee women who survived domestic violence was conducted by the research team of Action Aid and the Center for Research on Women's Issues Diotima, in January and February 2021, and carried out through interviews (13 women) with interpretation. Due to the restrictive measures against the spreading of the COVID 19, the interviews were distant, conducted over the phone or electronically (via whatsapp and viber).

The research among the **police personnel** is characterized by a wealth of information and interesting findings, of which two basic issues stand out and are expected to provide the ARIADNE2 action plan with interesting information. The first issue concerns cooperation between the police and migrant/refugee women victims of domestic violence. As transpired, the police employees who participated in the research have no extensive

experience in working with this specific population. They estimate that migrant/refugee women do not often turn to the police to report an incident of domestic violence, either due to ignorance of the law and procedures, or influences from their cultural background, or even due to their resident status in the country (pending asylum/residence permit). Yet, when this happens, police officers state that they face great and most often insurmountable problems communicating with them. The lack of available interpreters and cultural mediators renders communication difficult and the filling of a law-suit even more so. In addition, police officers report that due to the lack of special knowledge and absence of specific skills, they often remain awkward before a victim who is in dire psychological state, and probably physical as well, does not communicate in any language of common understanding, and is in need of support and protection. For this reason, police officers appear receptive to educational actions, as well as initiatives that may enhance a network of cooperation with the parties involved in the field.

The second important issue that arose from the research concerns the low degree of police cooperation with entities and organizations of the Civil Society and the centers of the Network for the aid and support of gender violence victims. It is surprising that local police stations frequently appear not to they have developed a network of cooperation with entities that are active at local level and, for this reason, the number of women victims who are referred by the police to advisory centers, or other services for their psychological support, is very low. The lack in multidisciplinary cooperation is deemed important by police officers, as they believe that police intervention can be effective and beneficial for domestic violence victims, when it is possible to collaborate with entities specialized in the treatment of the victims' psychological and physical injury, their empowerment, legal support, accommodation in guest houses for their own safety and that of dependent family members. Therefore, upon the determination and acknowledgment of the necessity, it is required to intervene in that direction, namely to strengthen multidisciplinary cooperation, and the police appears ready for this intervention.

The research in **employees and representatives of centers and services** that aid victims of gender violence, highlighted issues that to a great degree align with the ones identified by the research among police personnel, yet seen from a different perspective. In particular, an important issue that arose was the lack of specialized training of police personnel in the handling of gender violence victims, a fact which accounts for their poor performance. For this reason, the proposals made by the participants concern education and on-going training for police officers on issues of gender and domestic violence, as well as the response to female victims. For the migrant/refugee women population especially, a multi-cultural training is proposed, with a view to the lifting of prejudices, elimination of discriminations, and defense of human rights. On the issue of education, particularly, one suggestion is joint education-training of police officers and the personnel of the centers and services which aid and support violence victims (personnel of advisory centers, guest houses etc), based on the exchange of knowledge, experiences, good practices and the aim to strengthen cooperation for a more effective handling of incidences.

In the sector of multidisciplinary cooperation, it is worth mentioning that participants in the discussion state that their cooperation with the police is less frequent and effective. The reasons given to explain this finding were various. Initially, it is noted that the Police rarely refers an abused woman to an advisory center, especially migrant/refugee women who are victims of domestic violence. The women who contact the police before visiting the advisory centers usually report that they face indifferent and negative behavior from police officers, who discourage them from suing the abuse culprit. This attitude by police officers has been observed to be more intense towards migrant/refugee women. If one also takes into consideration the fact that communication cannot be achieved in a language that both sides know, then it is clear that police-victim cooperation is very difficult. Especially for migrant/refugee women, the executive officers involved in their legal aid report that response to the victims is influenced by police stereotypes and prejudices against them, as they deem that due to their cultural background the women have accepted domestic violence. Towards the enhancement of multidisciplinary cooperation and networking between the police and entities that aid violence victims, it was stressed that it must address all the entities involved, be targeted, characterized by periodicity and stability, elements which can be provided for in special cooperation protocols between the police and stakeholders.

The research among **migrant/refugee women** highlighted the inability of the police system to effectively tackle the domestic violence inflicted upon migrant/refugee women, especially those residing in camps. More specifically, through the narrations of survivors arose a generalized confusion regarding the information given to them, incorrect information or even misinformation regarding the procedure to report domestic violence (particularly the existence or not of an administrative fee and the in flagrante delicto procedure), as well as what the law provides for domestic violence (e.g. when severe physical damage has been caused). No woman reported coming to contact with the police services specializing in the combating of domestic violence that operate throughout the country. Police cooperation with lawyers and interpreters (when provided by NGOs) in the case of refugee women survivors was effective in resulting to a lawsuit being filed, yet not without irregularities or dysfunctions. On the other hand, migrant women survivors did not report any kind of cooperation between their lawyers and the police. In most cases, migrant women found themselves in flagrante delicto as well, following accusations made by their abuser against them.

Most women resort to the police because they had nowhere else to turn to – especially migrant women – and because the police represents the body which could protect them from such violent conditions. In the process, and despite poor information/support from the police, they continued to go there because their lawyer had advised them to file complaints, as that would strengthen their file before court. Thus, they turned to the police following prodding by their lawyer or their own initiative in order to have some evidence in hand. In all their contacts with the police, women survivors were called to defend their experiences and position and they went on to accuse the police for not applying the gist of the law, while at the same time they were made to clash with

immense powers including: structural violence, reasons of hegemonic Greekness, and patriarchal narrations.

In conclusion, the three discreet researches which were carried out in the context of the ARIDNE 2 Project, resulted in three basic common findings, which are substantiated by the findings of all three researches, despite the fact that they were conducted with different groups of interviewees (police officers, entities' personnel, migrant/refugee women victims of violence) and different research methods (questionnaires, focus groups, interviews).

The first common finding is that the manner in which the state is institutionally and practically organized to respond to domestic violence – namely, to aid women so that they will remove themselves from the abusive environment and punish the culprits – demonstrates significant shortcomings. Existing procedures do not lead to satisfactory results, neither for the women themselves nor the children they may have, especially when those are migrant/refugee women, often live in camps, and are called to face additional problems of everyday survival. The research among police officers detected many difficulties in cooperating with the victims due to language, the research among entities' employees detected deficiencies in the training of police officers and other state officers, and research among the migrant/refugee women themselves illustrated the confusion created with regard to guidelines on where to turn to and in which way.

The second common finding regards multidisciplinary cooperation more specifically, as it seems to be too limited to cope with the complex institutional and practical framework of the policies to combat domestic violence against women and especially migrant/refugee women. The first research among police officers determined the low degree of cooperation between the police and other competent entities, the second research among employees of the competent entities detected police reluctance to refer abused women to support entities, and the research among the migrant/refugee women highlighted the entities' inability to cooperate in order to jointly ensure the necessary requirements for the filing of a lawsuit, such as interpretation and legal help.

The third common finding is the agreement among interviewees that measures should be taken to tackle the shortcomings in existing procedures, improve the effectiveness of multidisciplinary cooperation in the treatment of migrant/refugee women who suffer from domestic abuse. The specific malfunctions which were detected and analyzed by the three researches are adequately substantiated, in order to become the object of a study in view of the procedures' redesign. The desideratum of all parties is that migrant/refugee women will be encouraged to turn to the police and report domestic violence, and that the Greek state, as a set of services, becomes more effective in protecting women and punishing perpetrators of a crime that is committed within a family's closed space and thus often remains obscure.