Georgia 2017: Developing a Domestic Violence Risk Assessment

This collaboration is an initiative under the “Unite to Fight Violence Against Women” project funded by the European Union.

UN Women called upon GRW's expertise to create a tool to assess the risk an offender poses to re-abuse or kill a victim of domestic violence. This tool supports the justice system in Georgia to protect victims and hold offenders accountable.

Ending violence against women and girls within the Republic of Georgia using institutionalized state and victim-services agency intervention.

What is a risk assessment?
A risk assessment tool assesses the frequency, severity, and patterns of domestic violence, using victims’ responses to narrative questionnaires and available data on a particular case. Risk assessment tools enable law enforcement, the justice system and community actors to identify lethal offenders and those most likely to re-abuse in domestic violence cases.
Over the course of decades, we have learned that to critically respond to offenders and evaluate their likelihood of repeated violence, we need input from victims and community partners.

For this project, GRW sought contributions from victims in Georgia, UN Women, community members, justice system practitioners, advocates, agency leaders, and experts.

This interagency input and approach needs a system of communication and linkage between each agency to develop a risk assessment tool for law enforcement that can also inform the rest of the system’s response.

- Requires engagement and coordination of many agencies that will engage victims from their initial call for help through case discharge
- Needs to be consistent: new system practitioners can count on a consistent, effective, and fair response
- Agree on fundamental intervention principles that are clear to victims and offenders
- Interveners must see scope and severity of offender’s violence, how often and under what circumstances it is occurring, and the pattern of abuse: escalating, deescalating, potentially lethal, or unpredictable
- Gather information to propose interventions based on circumstances, severity, and frequency of abuse
- Dialogue with victims through focus groups about their experiences with the criminal justice response in Georgia
November Workshop

Global Rights for Women strives to create standardized practice among all police throughout the country that makes the severity and frequency of the domestic violence visible to all justice practitioners.

GRW traveled to Georgia twice within 2 months to develop a risk assessment tool and work with local practitioners to adapt it.

We developed this tool to anticipate the likelihood of repeat violence and potential lethality by the perpetrator.

Process

1. Training and facilitated discussion on understanding domestic violence offenders' use of coercive controlling violence and its root cause, and best practice in system response

2. Teaching the importance of standardized risk assessment practices with an emphasis on the information gathered by the MIA

3. Explaining how to use that risk information between agencies within the criminal justice system

4. Discussion and feedback about development of GRADA and the studies that support its validity
GRADA

Georgia Risk Assessment for Domestic Abuse (GRADA) tool developed for law enforcement in Georgia to utilize.

We incorporated input from victims and practitioners in Georgia and combined it with years of research on factors that show an increase in probability of committing further abuse or using lethal force.

GRW collaborated heavily with UN Women and the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia to develop this tool.

By the Numbers

Collected input from 40 practitioners, experts, and service providers in Georgia on GRADA

Conducted focus groups with 18 victim services and shelter staff in Georgia

Conducted focus groups with 26 victims of domestic violence in Georgia*

*we were able to compensate victims and NGO organizations for their time thanks to individual donations from GRW donors
Many organizations and individuals came together to support the development of the 2017 Georgia Risk Assessment.

UN Women
Ministry of Internal Affairs
Prosecutor’s Office of Georgia
Anti-Violence Network of Georgia
Victims State Fund for Protection and Assistance
Georgian Young Lawyers Association
Judiciary
Ministry of Corrections
National Probation Agency
Hon. Lori Flohaug, former US prosecutor
Marcus Bruning, US retired law enforcement officer
Kay Arola, Executive Director, US Arrowhead Regional Corrections
Ketevan Reaves, interpreter and translator

To learn more about Global Rights for Women, please visit our website at: www.globalrightsforwomen.org. For specific questions about this project or about future workshops, please contact Melissa Scaia, International Training Director at mscaia@grwomen.org.