

SLOVENIA**Women's programme**

In the Slovenian Prisons there are no specific programmes for women who have suffered gender violence within intimate partnerships and are in prison.

However, there are other educational programmes which are run in prisons, such as programmes for sexual offenders or for prisoners with drug or alcohol problems. In these programmes, issues such as violent behaviour and partnership relations are treated.

Men's programme

In 2006, within the research that was carried out in the framework of the ALTRA project, it was stated that a specific in-prison treatment programme for violent offenders was going to be developed. Unfortunately, this programme has not been developed yet because of lack of professional staff in prisons.

On the other hand, the NGO Association against violent communication started, in 2004, counselling and group work for men perpetrators of gender violence. The programme is called 'Training social skills for perpetrators of violence'. It is an outside prison programme. However, the NGO has an agreement with the Prison Administration of the country and in some concrete cases prisoners can be included in the programme. This possibility is being offered since 2008 in Ljubljana prison. The counselling takes place once a week and prisoners get one day leave to participate in the programme. The participation in the programmes is voluntary based.

The main aim of the programmes is to decrease violence in society and to achieve a more effective protection for victims of gender violence. The target group is men perpetrators of gender violence. Motivation to participate actively in the programme is one of the main selection criteria. Before starting the programme, all men go through an interview with the counsellor/trainer of the programme who decides who can participate. Inmates who want to participate also go through this interview and afterwards they are included to either individual or/and training of social skills group.

The programme is based on a feminist approach. During the programme is emphasised that violence is always responsibility of the one who committed violence, and never of the victim. During the sessions, participants work not only on physical violence in intimate relationships, but also on emotional, psychological and sexual abuse that it is used to establish power and control over women.

Regarding the methodology the programme is based in group and individual sessions. The group sessions are used as an space for training social skills. The group sessions are performed by a male counsellor who is a former perpetrator. That is what is called the 'user approach'. The sessions are based on presentation and discussion of different topics such as non-violent ways of



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resolving conflicts and sexist beliefs. The aim of the group sessions is that participants realise that they can move from a violent behaviour to a healthier and non violent way of living.

The short term goals of the programme are:

- To increase the effectiveness of victims of gender violence protection
- To increase the awareness of the existence of gender violence within society

The long term goals of the programme are:

- To carry out training for trainers to work with perpetrator of gender violence
- To expand the programme to the whole programme
- To influence the legislation in terms of penalties and consequences for perpetrators of gender violence