

Expanding the Reach of STOPVAW

Two Peace Corps volunteers serving in Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan have put the extensive resources of the Stop Violence Against Women website to good use in their work with women's NGOs dedicated to anti-violence efforts.

Jennifer Nader works in Kherson, Ukraine at the "Successful Woman" NGO, a four-year old organization providing a wide variety of services for victims of trafficking and violence: crisis hotline, anonymous consultations, self-help groups, legal and psychological consultations, shelter (the first in southern Ukraine), and trainings on violence prevention, women's leadership and job skills. "Successful Woman" served 2,413 clients in 2003.

The organization is concerned about the lack of official documentation of domestic violence in Ukraine, and has received a Democracy Grant from the U.S. Embassy in Ukraine to produce a documentary film for a public education campaign on the subject. The goal of the campaign is two-fold: to educate the general public in Ukraine about the causes and effects of domestic violence, and to make women who may be victims of domestic violence aware of the services available to help them in their local communities.

"Successful Woman" has also collaborated with The Advocates to translate all the domestic violence training modules on the Stop Violence Against Women website (http://www.stopvaw.org/Domestic_Violence__Training_Materials.html) into Russian and Ukrainian. When the film and the translations of the training modules are completed, they will be distributed to 200 NGOs and educational institutions throughout Ukraine.

In addition, "Successful Woman" will use the film and the training modules to conduct trainings on domestic violence in educational institutions and public spaces, such as libraries, in Kherson, Chaplinka, Belozerka, Nova Kahovka, Kahovka, Skadovsk, Siropinsk, and Gola Printan. They will also train trainers from Winrock International's "Woman for Woman" centers in Rovno, Lviv, Kharkiv, Chernivtsi, Zhitomer and Donetsk, who can then provide further trainings throughout their regions.

Jessica Nowlin works in Sustainable Economic and Organizational Development with Crisis Center Sezim for Women and Family in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. Sezim has one of the only shelters in the country, along with two hotlines (one for domestic violence victims and one for victims of trafficking in persons), counseling services for victims of violence and trafficking, legal and psychological consultations, a newsletter, and 7 affiliate centers in Chui and Issyk-Kul Regions that conduct seminars for women and men, including law enforcement officials and teachers.

Recently, Jessica helped Sezim win a grant from the New Zealand Embassy in Moscow to implement a work program for former Sezim clients. The women received training in the creation of national handicrafts to be sold locally and internationally. The center intends to expand this program in the future to

enable current and former clients to generate income in order to help them reintegrate into society after their experiences with violence.

Jessica also recently assisted Sezim in acquiring a grant through the Peace Corps Partnership Project for the 16 Days Against Gender Violence Worldwide Campaign. Sezim will present (with secondary school students) plays in local villages about bride kidnapping (a common practice here), provide three seminars for university students in Bishkek, conduct a media campaign and distribute pamphlets throughout the city of Bishkek with information about Sezim and other crisis centers in the country.

In another exciting development, the Kyrgyz government recently donated new office and shelter space to Sezim in a former hospital wing.

In addition to working on grant writing and translating, Jessica is also participating in seminars on domestic violence, using information about domestic violence statistics and domestic violence law from Minnesota and the United States. For presentations on women's issues in Kyrgyzstan given to Peace Corps volunteers and to non-English speakers (mainly university students), she compiled a manual about domestic violence and trafficking, using resources from the Stop Violence Against Women website and other sources. The manual provides a broad range of information on domestic violence, human trafficking, and legislation relating to these subjects in both Kyrgyzstan and the United States, as well as contact information for NGOs in Kyrgyzstan that work on domestic violence and trafficking and programs to aid victims in the United States. Jessica commented that the Stop Violence Against Women website and other sources "have been indispensable in that pursuit of information [for the training manual]. I will continue to use it as my work goes on..."