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Third Regional Forum: Ending Violence against Women in the Western Balkans and Turkey “Integrated Policies, Inclusive Partnerships”

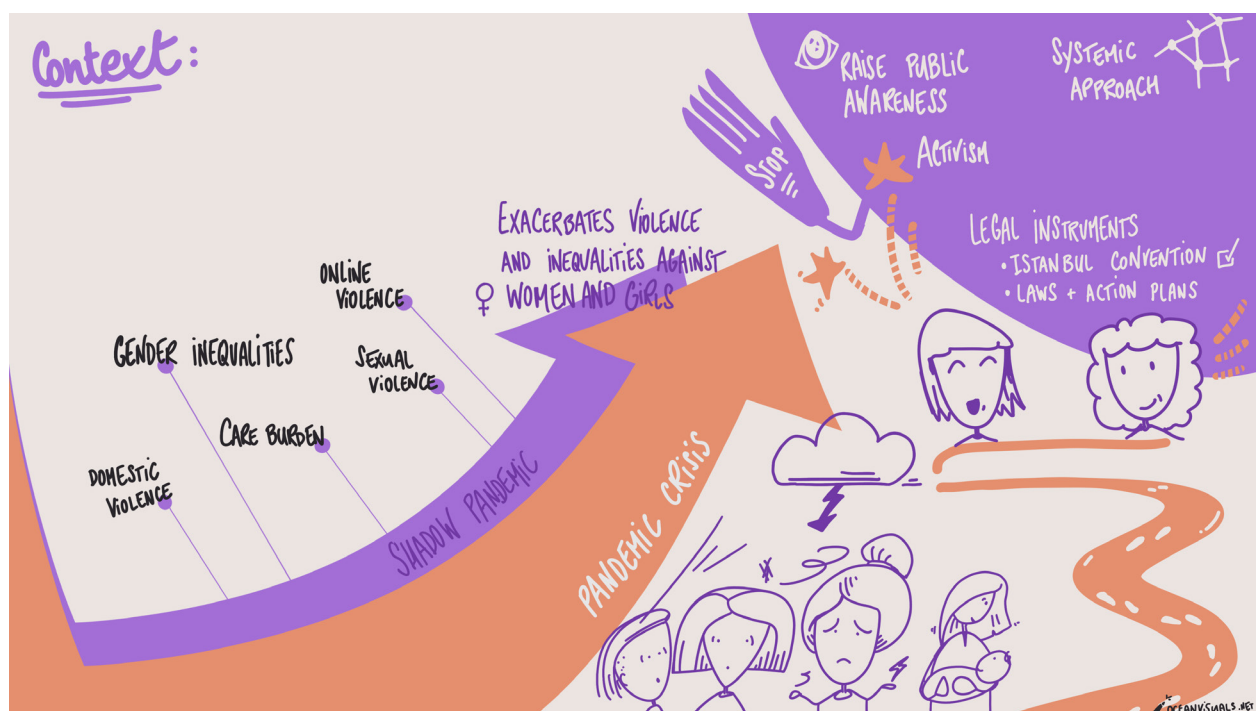


On 1-2 December 2021, over 150 participants, including government officials, representatives of civil society, human rights bodies, and regional institutions, joined forces in a unique event, channeling creativity to shape policy advocacy to advance the agenda on ending violence against women in the Western Balkans and Turkey.

The Forum is the first and only regular mechanism engaging strategic partners on ending violence against women in the region.

This edition of the Regional Forum paved the way for progress in four areas:

1. Leveraging data to prevent and respond to femicide
2. Preventing and responding to sexual violence against women and girls
3. Advancing work with perpetrators to protect women and children
4. Positive social norms to end violence against women



Through interactive booths, experts from the region and beyond discussed and agreed on the most urgent tools, mechanisms and measures for action in each area.

Outcome of Booth 1:

Leveraging data to prevent and respond to cases of femicide

The most **critical steps** for developing femicide watches:

- Regulate and codify the act of femicide in legislation.
- Adopt common standards for data collection.

The most important **lessons learned** to speed up the use of data to be ready to respond to crises such as the one posed by the pandemic:

- The pandemic shed light on the importance of systematic data collection by all entities (CSO and institutions).
- Without publicly available data, the public could not see increases in violence against women during the pandemic.



The most important **tools or actions** to collectively advance evidence-based policies and strategies for preventing femicide:

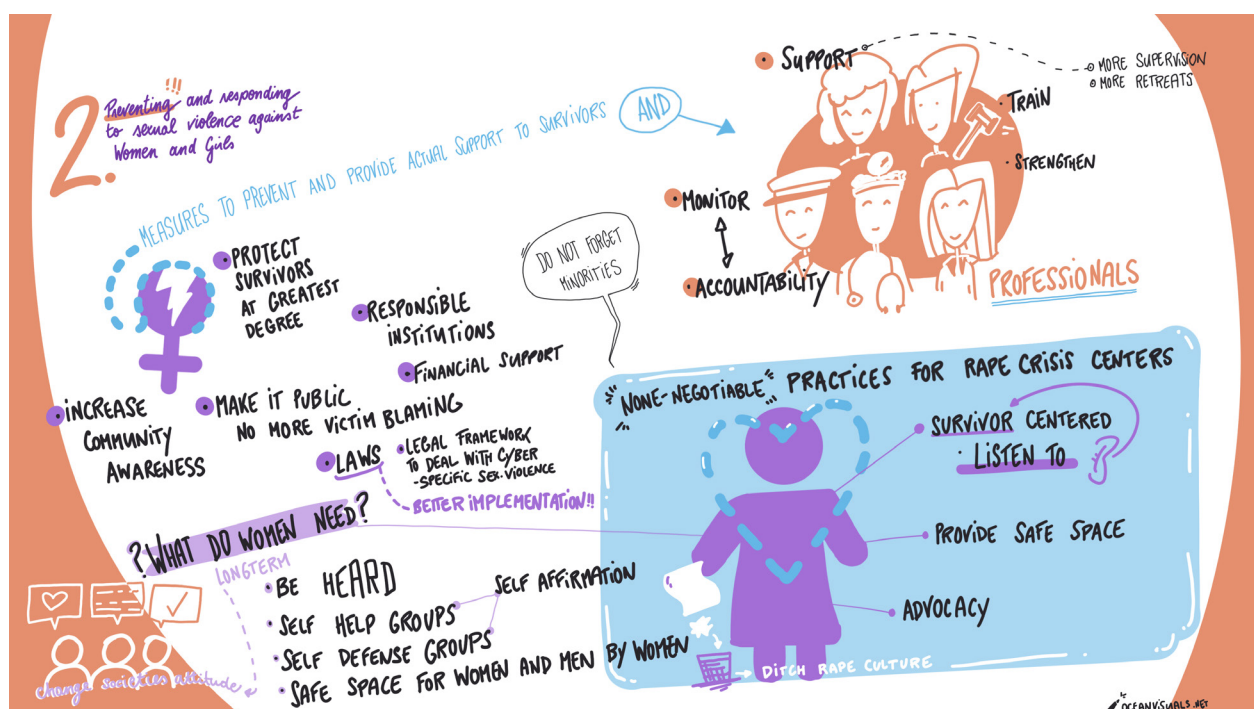
- Establish a regional femicide watch.
- Advocate for and support research that identifies data-driven, evidence-driven policies.
- Train professionals who respond to cases of femicide, including training judges and prosecutors on proving gender-based hate crimes against women.

Outcome of Booth 2:

Preventing and responding to sexual violence against women and girls

The most important **lessons learned** for state and non-state service providers to ensure the consistent provision of services, even in times of crisis:

- The need to provide additional support to service providers/staff to manage burn out and improve their well-being.
- The critical importance of maintaining face-to-face services to survivors.
- The need to include more young women in organizations to address the problem of cyberviolence.



Strategic legislative or policy changes related to sexual violence that should be the next focus of advocacy efforts:

- Establish rape crisis centers to provide specialized support to sexual violence survivors.
- Provide additional training to staff on collection of evidence of sexual violence, guiding women through the process and providing them with psychological support.

The most effective **actions or recommendations** for engaging the public and mobilizing direct public action to improve the prevention of and response to sexual violence:

- All institutions need to be strengthened; we need to find ways to change the mindset and social norms present.
- Engage journalists to report responsibly about GBV and educate the public on this topic.
- Provide support to grassroots activists in new and innovative ways.
- National Action plans need to have an ongoing transparent monitoring process that includes all parties across government and centers for sexual violence (CSVs).

Outcome of Booth 3:

Advancing work with perpetrators to protect women and children

The most important **recommendations** for promoting the establishment of perpetrator programmes:

- It's necessary to have separate specialized services with a victim safety component in order to have perpetrator programmes.
- Educate and sensitize professionals on working specifically with perpetrators of domestic violence.
- Ensure continuous communication between organizations or institutions working with victims and those working with perpetrators.



The most relevant or important **tools or actions** necessary to consolidate regional efforts to collectively advance the establishment of perpetrator programmes:

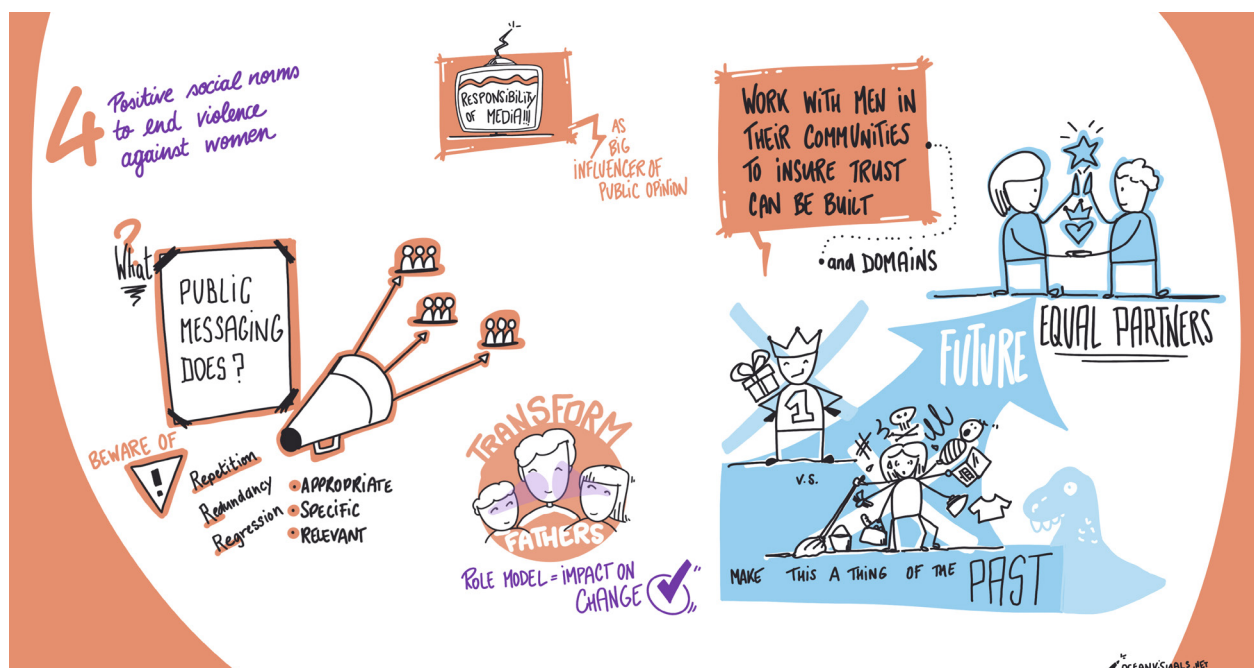
- Adopt the use of a standardized tool to evaluate perpetrator programmes.
- The implementation of laws and standards is key; their existence isn't enough.
- Create and support networks that monitor perpetrator programmes to ensure the correct application of standards.
- Develop and apply unique standards for treatment of perpetrators and data collection and management for comparability purposes.

Outcome of Booth 4:

Positive social norms to end violence against women

The most necessary **resources, actions, or learning proposals** to implement effective behavioural change initiatives:

- Institutions need to implement legislation in practice and provide financial support.
- Work more with young people and the general public, ensuring that all research and data is communicated in easily understandable language.
- Provide greater support to civil society to build institutional capacities.
- Organize dialogues with men, and include media in this work.



The most important **actions, tools or resources** to direct attention to working with men and boys:

- Work with children, especially with boys, from a very early age.
- Work with young families and first-time mothers and fathers.
- Transform and challenge gender roles from early childhood, especially with young fathers and mothers.
- Following the example of INGO No Means No Worldwide, work with both girls and boys on the topics most relevant to each group.

The most important **strategies or lessons learned** to uphold gender-equal norms in times of crisis and/or to inform long-term thinking about unpaid care work and its implications for gender equality:

- Urgent changes are needed in care policies (and mindsets as well) and mechanisms for the involvement of men.
- Implement income-support interventions, specifically addressed to women within each household.
- Coordinate actions between central and local institutions, and include all specialist NGOs in this coordination.

The most important **strategies** to ensure the gender-responsible representation of women and girls in the media:

- Educate journalists on GBV through continuous training.
- Monitor media programmes and call attention to those that promote or sensationalize violence.

The third edition of the Regional Forum follows on the success of the First and Second Regional Forums “Integrated Policies, Inclusive Partnerships” and it was organized as part of the regional programme on ending violence against women in the Western Balkans and Turkey “Implementing Norms, Changing Minds.”