

Prevention and combating domestic violence in Tuzla Canton

“Changing attitudes and behaviour of police officers in Tuzla Canton, Bosnia and Herzegovina, using communications for behavioural impact (COMBI)”

Summary factsheet



1. Background

Police officers are among the first responders to reports of domestic violence. Often, their actions can change the course of a reported case, and impact directly the safety of victims and their access to support and justice. According to the law on protection from domestic violence in Federation of BiH, police officers request one or more protection measures (eviction from home, restraining order, mandatory psychosocial treatment, anti-harassment and stalking order, substance abuse rehabilitation and temporary custody). According to research in Tuzla Canton, police officers do not request measures in all reported cases of violence due to social (gender stereotypes), institutional and administrative barriers. Using a methodology called Communications for Behavioural Impact (COMBI), from May 2020 to May 2021, with support from the European Union and UN Women, Association Vive Žene and the Ministry of Interior Tuzla Canton partnered to increase the rates of requested and proposed protection measures. The campaign involved 1,600 police officers, 30 students, as well as a large number of citizens from Tuzla Canton. The result of the campaign was a drastic increase in the rate of requested protection measures in relation to reported cases of domestic violence.

2. Intervention design and implementation process

In Tuzla Canton reported cases of domestic violence (DV) are insufficiently followed by requests for protection measures. According to data from the Ministry of Interior Tuzla Canton, in 2019, the rate of requested measures in relation to reported cases of DV was 19.8%, or less than in every fifth case. Protection measures are defined by the Law on protection from domestic violence in order to, among other aims, protect survivors and minimize their safety risk.

In 2018/2019 UN Women introduced the methodology using behavioural approaches in combating domestic violence and violence against women. Communications for behavioural impact (COMBI) methodology was introduced to CSO partners from Western Balkans and Turkey, with subsequent support in testing the methodology by choosing a specific behavioural objective to influence. The objective of the campaign in Tuzla was: Police officers in Tuzla Canton working on DV request protection measures every time they detect criminal acts of DV and increase the rate of proposed measures to at least 35%.

Understand

Diagnose

Design

Test

Analysis done by Vive Žene points to three types of behavioural barriers for police officers:

- Procedural (short deadlines, victim withdrawal from testifying, unclear assessment of the (criminal) act)
- Socio-cultural (social norms and prejudices)
- Institutional (organization of policework, lack of human capacities and knowledge about adequate response to DV cases)

During the period May 2020 – May 2021, three types of actions were implemented:

- Institutional collaboration (Memorandum of Understanding with Ministry of Interior, Guidelines for police officers on how to act in cases of DV)
- Community mobilization (door-to-door activities with police and students)
- Public campaign “[You hear, see, or know something? Then react! – Report violence](#)” (offline and online awareness raising)

3. Learn - Evaluation of the intervention

Summative independent evaluation was conducted at the end of the intervention measuring relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and impact, with the following findings:

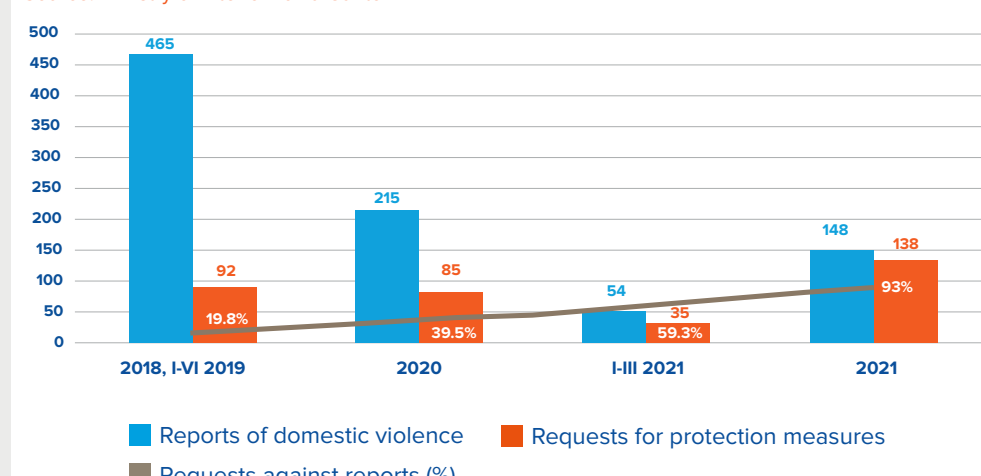
Relevance

- ➔ Strict adherence to the Law on Protection from Domestic Violence, especially concerning proposing protective measures, is very important in the fight against domestic violence. Earlier data showed that there was no consistency in requesting these measures.
- ➔ The campaign directly contributed to a significant improvement in requesting and proposing protection measures.
- ➔ Memorandum of Understanding with Tuzla Canton Ministry of Interior paved the way for direct engagement of police in the design and implementation of the COMBI campaign.
- ➔ Police officers believe that the campaign helped promote police as an important agent in protection of victims of domestic violence.

Effectiveness

- ➔ Percentage of requested and proposed protective measures in relation to reports of domestic violence increased substantially:

Overview of reports of DV and requests for protection measures*
Source: Ministry of Interior Tuzla Canton



*The drop in official reported cases of DV from 2020 can be explained by the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic and introduction of special measures hindering adequate response to DV. On the other hand, CSOs operating SOS helplines document increase in calls during this time.

- ➔ Change in attitudes and behaviour of police officers was documented in terms of increased requests for protection measures, reaching 59.3 percent at the end of the project, surpassing the target of 35%. After accessing data from Mol for the entire year 2021, the rate amounts to 93%, demonstrating impact beyond project completion.
- ➔ Internal review was launched by the Tuzla Canton Ministry of Interior to assess gaps in response to cases of domestic violence.

Efficiency

- Campaign used digital tools and marketing communication, with good visibility in the general population and intensified and responsive media reporting on issues related to domestic violence.

Impact

- Campaign directly influenced the Police Administration of the Tuzla Canton Ministry of Interior by actively engaging their staff in all aspects of the campaign, and increased police visibility and importance in the community.
- Campaign activities have had a positive impact in terms of motivation and determination of police to behave more consistently in line with the legislation and use their powers to protect victims of domestic violence.
- “Guidelines for the response of police officers in cases of domestic violence” significantly facilitated and standardised the work of police in terms of proposing protection measures in cases of domestic violence.

Watch the video and hear about the importance of protection measures in the words of a survivor and police

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