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I AM HEAD OF THE FAMILY

WHY SHOULD I CHANGE?

**IT'S HER
BLAME**

**I LOST
CONTROL**

**I'M ASHAMED
OF MY BEHAVIOUR**

**PLEASE,
I'M SORRY**

I WILL BE A BETTER PERSON

**THE IMPORTANCE OF A PERPETRATOR'S
VIOLENT BEHAVIOUR CHANGE PROGRAM
AT AN EARLY STAGE AND
EXISTING BEST PRACTICES**

2022

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**The publication was prepared with the financial support
of an international organization
Brot für die Welt (Bread for the World)**

**Opinions expressed in the publication may do not
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Article 16 of the Istanbul Convention on Violence against Women obliges member states to invest in programs aimed at perpetrators of domestic violence. Programs should focus on studying nonviolent behaviour by the perpetrator, which will lead to a change in the violent behaviour structure in the future and will have a significant impact on the prevention of violence.

According to the practice in Georgia, work with perpetrators begins after they enter the penitentiary system as convicts or probationers. In 2018-2019, based on the Spanish model, a joint Perpetrator's Behaviour Change Program was launched for the penitentiary and the Non-custodial Penalties and Probation National Agency systems. All convicts accused of domestic violence under Article 168 of the Criminal Code of Georgia were obliged to undergo it. The program was aimed at raising understanding of the violent behaviour of the perpetrator and overcoming it through acquiring new skills and managing the conflicts. However, according to the Public Defender Report of 2019, this practice was quite fragmented. The violent behaviour change program efficiency has not been assessed as well¹.

When analyzing worldwide experience, the best practice indicates that **the perpetrator's behaviour change programs' development in one direction is insufficient to change the abusive environment**. For example, in Scotland, the program includes three interrelated components - the perpetrator, the victim, and the child. The Australian model involves coordinated work of different agencies and increasing the motivation of perpetrators to join the program at an initial stage. The Spanish experience focuses on penitentiary and probation facilities and creating a database of violent records. Polish experience is based on **strengthening the municipalities' role to expand the program and ensure voluntary involvement of the beneficiaries**. In Georgian reality, the mediator's role can be used as a kind of "framework" that starts working with vulnerable families during the conflict (in case of a relevant court dispute) and through the use of various techniques "indirectly" leads the disputing parties to realize the problem.

The monitoring report has revealed that domestic violence triggers are mainly transmitted to the following three characteristics: economic, psychological, and socio-cultural, which include traumatic experiences, prevailing stereotypes, low economic opportunity, substance and gambling addiction, etc. The research has shown that the population perceives the perpetrator's ability to change behaviour more positively since his behaviour has been studied and is linked to psycho-socio-cultural factors (cognitive-behavioural approach). Accordingly, they see the need to develop a behaviour change program for the perpetrator at an early stage. The most crucial measures for changing the perpetrator's behaviour are the involvement of a psychologist and an addiction specialist in the program. Although the population is well aware of the linkage between victim security and the behaviour change program, **there is "low acceptance" of the perpetrator's behaviour change program. It is explained by existing stereo-**

¹ Public Defender Report, 2019, p.196, available at - <https://www.ombudsman.ge/res/docs/2020040215365449134.pdf>

types, the lack of information, and relevant policies. Accordingly, without a mandatory or combined approach, the only voluntary involvement of the perpetrators in the program cannot be a priority, **at least at the initial stage of the program.**

The study has revealed different views on the essence of the behaviour change program, emphasizing **the psychologist and social worker's positive role and group, individual, and family therapy.**

According to the study data, **to ensure the unidentified perpetrators' involvement in the program at an early stage,** it is essential **to conduct an awareness-raising campaign in different directions,** including raising the population's awareness to shape public opinion; working with boys, especially antisocial ones to prevent violence and strengthen the psychologist's role in the process; and active communication and cooperation with stakeholders.

According to the international practice and the data reflected in the multisectoral cooperation is crucial for the successful implementation of the program (at all stages, including monitoring). It involves the redistribution of activities and functions related to the program implementation between different governmental and non-governmental/private agencies, for instance, using the resources of the state agency under the umbrella and/or the relevant professional institution (outsourcing).

The perpetrator's behaviour change program's effectiveness will be increased if it focuses more on prevention, for instance: identification and integration of unidentified perpetrators into the behaviour change program, working with adolescents with violent behaviour in schools, etc. This is possible by strengthening work with vulnerable families and by launching joint rehabilitation programs for perpetrators and victims.

The recommendations based on the monitoring findings are addressed to various agencies and include: considering the pandemic to introduce an online module of the behaviour change program for perpetrators at an early stage; to create relevant crisis centres in municipalities, which will work with perpetrators/potential perpetrators through a multidisciplinary team at an early stage; to sign a memorandum of understanding on cooperation between different agencies to expand the program and integrate a broader category of perpetrators; to create a unified database; to produce and promote an awareness-raising campaign; to develop the perpetrator's behaviour change program at an early stage which would define its structure, program modules, criteria for identifying beneficiaries, professional development of service providers, etc.; to revise the criteria and coordination mechanisms of the referral system, etc.

INTRODUCTION

Violence against women has long been recognized as a human rights violation (United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women 1979) and a major social and public health problem worldwide (World Health Assembly 1996). Violent relationships always imply a misbalance between power and control mechanisms. Violence against women is examined in three directions: individual (psychology of the individual), family and other relationships (e.g., socialization, upbringing, etc.), and socio-cultural (power-related)².

Domestic violence is recognized as violence against a family member that is of a coercive, controlling, threatening nature. It is a complex problem and primarily targets women and children, and often the “role” of men is not even discussed since he is considered the perpetrator. According to some researchers, addressing only women while undertaking the measures against domestic violence is not a solution. Involvement of the men in various interventions, revising approaches to prevention and response measures to domestic violence, and coming up with conceptually new approaches are necessary³.

Article 16 of the Istanbul Convention on Violence against Women obliges member states to invest in programs focusing on perpetrators^{4,5}. According to researchers, by the principles of the Istanbul Convention the perpetrator’s behaviour change programs needs to be focused on studying nonviolent behaviour by the abuser, which will lead to a change in the structure of the violent behaviour in the future and will have a significant impact on the prevention of violence⁶.

The challenges with the implementation of perpetrator’s behavior change programs are derived from the perception that the issue of domestic violence is primarily related to the victim and, therefore, interventions and legislative initiatives should be implemented in this direction. As a result, in many Eastern European countries, there is an insufficient number of behaviour change programs; the shortcomings related to intersectoral and multisectoral cooperation are also observed.

2 Treatment Programs for Perpetrators of Domestic Violence: European and International Approaches Alessandra Chiurazzi Caterina Arcidiacono Susana Helm Caterina Arcidiacono. NEW MALE STUDIES: AN INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL ~ ISSN 1839-7816 ~ VOL. 4, ISSUE 3, 2015 PP. 5-22 © 2015 AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF MALE HEALTH AND STUDIES .p.7

3 *ibid*, p. 6

4 Domestic and sexual violence perpetrator programmes: Article 16 of the Istanbul Convention (2016) – A collection of papers on the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence. Council of Europe, September 2014, Printed at the Council of Europe. p. 6-8. available at - <https://rm.coe.int/-16-/16808d24c3>

5 EUROPEAN PERPETRATOR PROGRAMMES: A SURVEY ON DAY-TO-DAY OUTCOME MEASUREMENT. Research gate. Oriol Gines Canales, Heinrich Geldschlager, David Nax, Alvaro Ponce. STUDIA HUMANISTYCZNE AGH. Tom 14/2 • 2015. p.34 available at- <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/283805963>

6 *ibid*, p. 34

In addition, international experience proves that working with perpetrators through relevant behaviour change programs is much more efficient at the initial stages of violence while its use in the later stages (at a recurring stage) reduces incidents of violence by only 5%⁷.

According to the above mentioned, it is necessary to strengthen the work in the following directions **(focusing on the practice of working with perpetrators at an early stage regulated by the law)**: (i) changing public discourse based primarily on legislative changes and creating accountable, coordinated systems for effective work against domestic violence, including working with perpetrators; (ii) making the focus on abusive men and not only on women victims, and also engaging more nonviolent men who need to take more responsibility for combating domestic violence⁸.

This paper aims **to study stakeholders' attitudes toward the introduction of the perpetrators' behaviour change program at an early stage, review existing best practices, and initiate active discussions to promote legislative regulation and implementation of the program.**

7 Eckhardt, Christopher I., Christopher Murphy, Danielle Black, and Laura Suhr. "Intervention Programs for Perpetrators of Intimate Partner Violence: Conclusions from A Clinical Research Perspective." Public health reports 121, no. 4 (2006): p. 369-381;

Batterer intervention programmes: A meta-analytic review of effectiveness. Esther Arias¹, Ramón Arce Fernández¹, Manuel Vilariño Vázquez¹ Univ. Santiago de Compostela, Dep. Psicología Social, Básica y Metodología, España. p.154, available at - <https://journals.copmadrid.org/pi/art/in2013a18>.

8 Work with Perpetrators of Domestic Violence in Eastern European and Baltic countries / Katarzyna Wojnicka. August 2015, p. 42, available at - https://www.researchgate.net/publication/280934295_Work_with_Perpetrators_of_Domestic_Violence_in_Eastern_European_and_Baltic_countries

METHODOLOGY

During the research quantitative and qualitative research methods have been used:

Qualitative research: through the desk review the data from different countries (surveys, reports, articles, etc.) have been studied; **9 group discussions** and **25 in-depth interviews were conducted.**

Locations - Kutaisi, Zugdidi, Khoni, Tskaltubo.

Focus Group composition: women, men, and mixed group.

In-depth Interview composition: social worker, the civil sector representatives, Kutaisi Crisis Center and shelter psychologist, shelter administration representative, representatives of the National Agency for Crime Prevention, representatives of Non-Custodial Sentences and Probation National Agency of Georgia, convicted perpetrators, victims of violence, and representatives of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

Quantitative study: 582 respondents have been interviewed in 10 regions in total:

Table №1

№	City	Number of respondents
1.	Vani	51
2.	Bagdati	52
3.	Senaki	50
4.	Tkibuli	57
5.	Samtredia	117
6.	Terjola	52
7.	Chokhatauri	51
8.	Kobuleti	47

THE CONTEXT

Principles and approaches to working with the perpetrator in European countries are affected by the socio-economic development of a country, cultural stereotypes, historical context, etc.⁹

In Western Europe, many programs against domestic violence/gender-based violence, such as “Boys and Men for Gender Equality”, „He for She” (Man - for a woman), “The White Ribbon Campaign”, etc., promote motivation and involvement of the men into the programs. The main objective of these programs is to inform, educate and promote the development of non-violent culture.

In Europe, the US, and Australia, perpetrator’s behaviour change programs focus on abusive men who benefit from the program voluntarily and through referrals from various agencies, such as the courts, police, social service agency, information provided by a former or current partner, etc. In addition, some programs work with men victims of violence¹⁰.

As for the programs, across Western Europe, they are implemented in the following four main directions: **treatment programs delivered within the prison; probation-led behaviour change programs; behaviour change programs delivered by non-governmental organizations and other agencies that have links to the criminal justice; behavior change programs delivered by NGOs and other agencies that have no link to the criminal justice system (mainly for domestic violence perpetrators at an early stage)**¹¹.

However, in some Eastern European countries, the history of violent behaviour change programs is relatively short. Therefore, several **barriers hinder** the perpetrator’s behavior change program from proper implementation. In Eastern European countries (Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Romania), according to the behaviour change programs’ meta-analysis results, the barriers to perpetrator’s behaviour change programs are related to:

9 *ibid*, p. 38-41

10 Treatment Programs for Perpetrators of Domestic Violence: European and International Approaches Alessandra Chiu-razzi Caterina Arcidiacono Susana Helm Caterina Arcidiacono. NEW MALE STUDIES: AN INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL ~ ISSN 1839-7816 ~ VOL. 4, ISSUE 3, 2015 PP. 5-22 © 2015 AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF MALE HEALTH AND STUDIES. p. 8, available at - <https://vidacs.eu/Documenti/Ending-Intimate-Partner-Violence.pdf>

11 Domestic and sexual violence perpetrator programs: Article 16 of the Istanbul Convention (2016) – A collection of papers on the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence. Council of Europe, September 2014, Printed at the Council of Europe, p. 9. available at - <https://rm.coe.int/-16-/16808d24c3>

- The relatively short period of the post-communist past and the existence of civil society, EU membership, and gender policy-making.
- Interrelated **economic (insufficient funding for civil society organizations` development) and legal factors**. For example, **the lack of social services** for the victims of violence (related to insufficient funding) **hinders the proper implementation of the Law, and consequently, victims are not protected from further violence.**
- Initially the programs for perpetrators were introduced by the feminist/victim service provider organizations in Poland and Bulgaria. They claimed that **domestic violence should not be combated only from the victim's perspective. Such an approach reduces the effectiveness and intensity of the state interventions** (since they are done situationally, according to the moment of violence, and are not systemic). **The male "factor" should be considered as well** (men commit 90% of domestic violence cases)¹². Such an approach will help to combat domestic violence more effectively, since numerous studies and analyses of existing perpetrator's behaviour change programs show, that the best results can be achieved by implementing a "multifaceted" approach, through inter (between sector services) and intrasectoral (between services and agencies) collaboration¹³.
- Implementing behaviour change programs linked to probation and prison, is subject to significant challenges in meeting the Istanbul Convention standards¹⁴. **In this respect, it proves the importance of implementing violent behaviour change programs in issuing a protective/restraining order at an initial stage of violence.**

12 Work with Perpetrators of Domestic Violence in Eastern European and Baltic countries / Katarzyna Wojnicka. August 2015. p. 38-41

13 Probation and prison based programmes for perpetrators of domestic and sexual violence: A European overview. WWP EN Expert Paper | European probation and prison based programs for perpetrators of domestic and sexual violence. p. 3 available at - https://www.work-with-perpetrators.eu/fileadmin/WWP_Network/redakteure/Expert%20Essays/Expert_paper_prison_and_probation_final.pdf

14 *ibid*, p. 12

LEGAL OBLIGATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTING THE PERPETRATOR'S BEHAVIOUR CHANGE PROGRAM – A SITUATION IN GEORGIA

On June 1, 2011, the Government of Georgia adopted a decree approving the Domestic Violence Perpetrators' Rehabilitation conception¹⁵. It aims to develop measures to change the perpetrators' attitudes and behaviours (including the mandatory training course); facilitate their introduction and implementation, even for them serving a sentence for domestic violence or are on probation. This conception was followed by significant legislative changes in the Criminal Code (CC), which provides for the introduction of a mandatory training course aimed to change violent attitudes and behaviour in the case of domestic crime. Under Article 65 of the Criminal Code and Article 168¹ of the same Code, a court may impose all convicts committing domestic violence to undergo a mandatory training course directed at changing violent attitudes and behaviour¹⁶.

In the law of Georgia on “Violence against Women and/or Elimination of Domestic Violence, Protection and Support of Victims of Violence”, in addition to several changes to stand in line with the Istanbul Convention, **measures aimed to promote the prevention of violence, change of perpetrators' attitudes and behaviour are to be taken**¹⁷. Article 20 of the law directly sets specific measures, **including those aimed at changing the perpetrator's violent behaviour and psychological and social assistance**. Their goal is to prevent the repeated commission of a crime and ensure the victim's safety, acknowledge responsibility by the perpetrator for the violent behaviour and its consequences, and maintain positive changes in his attitudes and behaviour. For this purpose, the law stipulates a mandatory training course for perpetrators to change violent attitudes and behaviour¹⁸. According to the article, “measures aimed to change the perpetrator's attitudes, behaviour and the rules and forms of their implementation shall be set by a resolution of the Government of Georgia”. However, the Government of Georgia has not adopted a resolution regulating the involvement in the perpetrator's violent behaviour change mandatory course.

In 2016, the National Probation Agency Department of Rehabilitation Programs developed the “Violent Behaviour Management Rehabilitation Program, Gender-based Violence”, which aimed to prevent recurrences of violent behaviour. The program would assist probationers (characterized by violent actions) in understanding and overcoming violent behaviour, acquiring new skills, managing conflicts, and building partnerships. In 2017, Inter-agency Commission on Gender Equality, Violence against

15 Decree #55 of the government of Georgia on Approval of the Concept of Rehabilitation of Perpetrators of Domestic Violence, 2011, January 13, available at -

<https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/2350710?publication=0>

16 Articles 65 and 168¹ of the Criminal Code of Georgia, available at -

<https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/16426?publication=238>

17 Law of Georgia on Elimination of Violence against Women and/or Domestic Violence, Protection and Support of Victims of Violence, 1.6.3 g, 1.20, 1.7.3, available at -

<https://www.matsne.gov.ge/document/view/26422?publication=18>

18 *ibid*, A.20

Women, and Domestic Violence (Interagency Commission on Gender Equality) adopted the Unified National Communication Strategy and Action Plan on Violence against Women and Domestic Violence for 2017-2021. In 2018-2019, a “Unified Program for Perpetrators’ Behaviour Change” was developed for convicts and piloted by the National Agency for the Execution of Non-Custodial Sentences and Probation with the involvement of probationers and penitentiaries¹⁹.

Despite the development and implementation of perpetrators’ behaviour change programs, **the development and implementation of early rehabilitation programs aimed at changing the violent behaviour of perpetrators and providing psychological or social assistance to those for whom a protective or restraining order has been issued remain a significant challenge** to date.

Human Rights Center’s 2018 report emphasizes that it is necessary to implement behaviour change programs for this category of perpetrators²⁰.

In 2018, 2019, 2020 parliamentary reports on the behaviour change programs for perpetrators, the Public Defender of Georgia still considered the issue of involvement in perpetrator’s violent attitudes and behaviour change mandatory training courses as a problem, due to the non-mandatory nature of the course, and the **lack of evaluation study of already introduced behaviour change programs in the country**²¹; whereas there are several evaluation reports/researches and meta-analysis of perpetrator’s behaviour change programs in different countries of the world.

In addition, the State Audit Office Performance Audit Report of 2019 emphasizes that the delayed implementation of the statutory behaviour change courses for perpetrators reduces the efficiency of the

19 Parliament of Georgia, Committee on Human Rights and Civil Integration, 2-7618/20 13-07-2020. p. 9, available at - <https://info.parliament.ge/file/1/BillReviewContent/257853>. If in 2017, 67 people participated in the Rehabilitation Program for Violent Behavior Management and underwent full training, while 21 probationers underwent awareness-raising training. In 2018 their number increased to 117 convicts and 240 probationers. A slight increase in the number of beneficiaries was also observed in 2019 - 125 probationers underwent behaviour change-oriented training, and 30 probationers underwent awareness-raising training. Furthermore, in 2018-2019, the National Agency for the Execution of Non-custodial Sentences and Probation system was renewed, and a joint “Behaviour Correction Program for Perpetrators” was developed for the penitentiary system. In 2019, the program was piloted - 10 beneficiaries in N16 and N17 penitentiary institutions were involved in the “Behaviour Correction Program for Perpetrators”.

National Action Plan on Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and Measures to be Implemented for the Protection of Victims (Survivors) for 2018-2020, p. 4, available at - <http://myrights.gov.ge/uploads/files/docs/3660EVAW%E1%83%90%E1%83%9C%E1%83%92%E1%83%90%E1%83%A0%E1%83%98%E1%83%A8%E1%83%982018.pdf>

20 Prevention of Violence Against Women - Problems and Challenges. Human Rights Center, 2018, p. 14, available at - <http://hrdc.org/admin/editor/uploads/files/pdf/hrcprep2018/angarishi-%20qalta%20mimart%20zaladoba-qart.pdf>

21 Report of the Public Defender of Georgia on the Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms in Georgia, 2018, p.133, available at - <https://www.ombudsman.ge/res/docs/2019042620571319466.pdf>;

Report of the Public Defender of Georgia, 201, p.196, available at - <https://www.ombudsman.ge/res/docs/2020040215365449134.pdf>;

Report of the Public Defender of Georgia, 2020, p. 202, available at - <https://www.ombudsman.ge/res/docs/2021040110573948397.pdf>

violence prevention measures.²² The report indicates the need for identification of responsible authority and timely introduction of behaviour change courses by the interagency commission.

1. BEST PRACTICES

The perpetrator's behaviour change programs in Europe are mainly directed at probationers and prisoners. However, there are studies discussing the benefits of voluntary involvement in programs (at an early stage). Program providers are either state institutions (e.g., the Ministry of Justice, which manages and fully funds the process), civil society organizations, or both of them (for example, CSOs are service providers, while the state institution provides program funding and monitoring in full - Sweden, Spain, England, Wales or, to a less extent - Denmark). The greater the number of program beneficiaries (the perpetrators), the more human and financial resources the program requires, and the more agency cooperation is needed.

The **Scottish experience** is quite interesting **in terms of structure**. The perpetrator's behaviour change program includes the following three interrelated parts: a program for men, service for women, and service for children (as the primary victim of a domestic conflict)^{23,24}. This example demonstrates the need for a complex approach - **combating domestic violence in one direction is not enough**.

Australian experience: In 2015, the behaviour change program evaluated in 2017-19, was introduced in four locations. The program objectives were: to ensure women and children's security, coordinate the work of various agencies for a systematic response to violence; develop skills in men that would change their violent behaviour, providing services tailored to the beneficiaries' individual needs. The duration of the program was 12-32 weeks and consisted of 4 modules. Each session lasted for 2-4 hours. All programs had "open groups" **where the perpetrator could join the program at the initial stage of any module**. The service providers noted that this approach **allowed new beneficiaries to be involved in any module with individuals who had already done any of the other modules and from whom they had information that joining the program was safe and problem-free** (so-called peer influence). This factor increased the involvement in a behaviour change program. After the program completion, the perpetrator men's (ex) partners indicated a significant improvement in communica-

22 State Audit Office of Georgia, "Performance Audit Report", 2019, p. 7, 21, 42, available at -

https://sao.ge/files/auditi/auditis-angarishebi/2019/ojaxuri_dzaladobis_efeqtianobis_auditis_angarishi.pdf

23 Probation and prison based programs for perpetrators of domestic and sexual violence: A European overview. Expert paper by Sandra Jovanovic (OPNA). WWP / European Network, p. 4-11, available at - https://www.work-with-perpetrators.eu/fileadmin/WWP_Network/redakteure/Expert%20Essays/Expert_paper_prison_and_probation_final.pdf

24 Probation and prison based programs for perpetrators of domestic and sexual violence: a European overview. WWP EN Expert Paper | European probation and prison based programs for perpetrators of domestic and sexual violence, p. 14, available at - https://www.work-with-perpetrators.eu/fileadmin/WWP_Network/redakteure/Expert%20Essays/Expert_paper_prison_and_probation_final.pdf

tion²⁵. Besides, **supporting perpetrators' involvement in behaviour change programs at an early stage by service providers** facilitated the continuation of the programs in which beneficiaries participated voluntarily. Partnership agreements (Memorandum of Understanding) have been signed between government agencies providing services regarding domestic violence cases to ensure the programs' sustainability and development.

In **Queensland**, programs are well-funded. For example, 24 services related to perpetrators' behaviour change were funded. In addition, a pilot program Walking with Dads has been launched to work with and support abusive fathers to realize the responsibility and impact of their violent behaviour on mothers and children, focusing on strengthening their role as father/parent ensuring their involvement. The program was aimed at families at high risk of violence and included reforming child and family welfare services.

Spanish experience: There are a variety of perpetrator behaviour change programs. They are mainly related to penitentiary institutions (developed in 2001-2002), enshrined in organic law (LO 1/2004). Penitentiary institutions take appropriate measures in case of gender-based violence. In 2004, they started implementing programs that were an alternative to imprisonment. Since 2010, the state has developed a more precise strategy and developed the program "Gender Strength-Perpetrator Rehabilitation Intervention Program"(PRIA). The program covers almost the entire country, is based on the cognitive-behavioural approach, and consists of 25 group sessions over six months (duration: 2.5 hours, once a week). The program's subsequent analysis showed that those beneficiaries, who positively evaluated it, were more satisfied with their lives after its completion (80-85%). Notwithstanding the above, one of the program challenges is the resistance of men to joining the program. **Therefore, it is essential to develop a strategy that will motivate involvement in the program.** For this purpose, different types of strategies are used, for instance, one of them is to convince the abuser that he will be able to control his behaviour and aggression and improve his mood²⁶. The approach built on security with the involvement of police officers is essential as well. In particular, it is an Internet program where police officers enter detailed information about the facts of violence and the perpetrator himself, which is provided to them by the victim or his relatives/family members. The police then assess general risks and risks of recurrence of violence. This information facilitates effective response and communication between law enforcement agencies and those dealing with domestic violence. In addition, there is an information campaign for women victims of violence, such as the brochure «You are not alone», which collects information on all interventions concerning domestic violence²⁷.

25 MEN'S BEHAVIOUR CHANGE PROGRAMS EVALUATION SUMMARY. PREPARED BY Research, Performance and Evaluation Women NSW, p. 3-6, available at -

https://www.women.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/777809/MBCP-Evaluation-Summary-Report.pdf

26 Programas de rehabilitación para agresores en España: un elemento indispensable de las políticas de combate a la violencia de género. Available at - https://www.scielo.cl/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S0718-33992015000100010

27 Integrated System of Monitoring Cases of Domestic Violence - Spanish experience. Publication edited by Marzena Kordaczuk-Wąs and Magdalena Putka. Warsaw 2011/2012. p. 8- 29; 53

Polish experience: The behaviour change program implemented in Poland is based on the so-called Duluth model, according to which violent behaviour is learned through socialization and, consequently, it is possible - to get out of it. The program uses a cognitive-behavioural approach. The perpetrator can choose to either serve a sentence in prison or join a behaviour change program.

There are two methods to participate in the program: **voluntary involvement** and **direct or indirect coercion**. For instance, if the perpetrator has committed a crime and been punished and/or has no other choice. Even when the mechanism for suspending the execution of a sentence is activated (when a person does not serve a sentence in prison for a certain period, although he is found guilty), the perpetrator may be obliged by the relevant agency to join the behaviour change program. The so-called Blue Card System (introduced in 1998) has been launched for voluntary involvement in the program. **Combating domestic violence will not be effective without expanding voluntary programs. Comparing these two methods of joining the program shows that voluntary programs are much more effective because the perpetrator participates in the programs voluntarily or on his initiative or on the advice of another, which means that the person has acknowledged the problem and necessity to participate in the program. In contrast, compulsory participation in a program applies only to convicts serving sentences in prisons or who have been sentenced on probation²⁸.**

Notable is the example of Opole (the administrative centre of the municipality, located in southwestern Poland), where the role of local government was highlighted by getting involved in educational programs to change the behaviour of perpetrators. In 2011, by the decision of Opole City Council, an interdisciplinary team was set up in the municipality to combat violence. It aimed to develop an action plan and program to protect victims of violence and increase the motivation of perpetrators to get engaged in behaviour change programs. Consequently, the number of assistance and Blue Card recipients has quadrupled in the last eight years (i.e. those who volunteer for the program).

The perpetrator's behaviour change program consists of three categories of beneficiaries:

- Persons who are known as "official" perpetrators - those who have committed a crime and are serving a sentence, or who have been sentenced to probation;
- Perpetrators who treat substance abuse;
- Persons wishing to participate in the program voluntarily.

The behaviour change program mandatory course is conducted in a penitentiary institution and units under the Family Assistance Center in case of voluntary involvement. **The centre's staff selects the program beneficiaries. The central figures are the social workers who coordinate the working groups in this case.**

The behaviour change program includes various components:

Program duration: 60-120 hours. **Methods:** Partner, ART (Aggression Replacement Training aimed at working with individuals with aggression, anger, and inadequate behaviour), Family, Nonviolent

28 "Programs of Work with Domestic Violence Perpetrators. Polish and Georgian Experience", HumanDoc, Polish Aid, 2020, p. 8, available at - <http://humandoc.ge/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/ოჯახში-ძალადობის-ჩამდენ-პირთან-მუშაობა.pdf>

Communication, and Solution-Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT) for those who cannot cope with anger and aggression. **The main objective** is to teach the abuser self-control and to stop looking for ways to justify the victim's guilt and violence. **The program is funded from the state budget, regardless of who is the service provider.** Behaviour change programs mustn't be conducted in the same place where victims of violence are assisted (e.g., daycare centre). **Program effectiveness assessment:** it is carried out after the behaviour change program completion (for three years, according to the law), based on various evaluative studies, by observing the behaviour of the "graduate". **Program Continuation:** Psycho-Therapeutic Program (PPT) - based on working on the psychological causes affecting the perpetrator's behaviour. Such programs have been implemented in Opole since 2018²⁹.

Georgia: Family mediation - the role of mediation, in particular family mediation, should not be overlooked when considering a model for changing the perpetrator's behaviour at an initial stage. Mediation is an alternative method of conflict resolution (dispute resolution) in which an impartial party (mediator) assists the disputing parties to reach a mutually acceptable agreement. The mediation process focuses on the emotional side of the conflicts, i.e. issues that are not regulated by the law and which cannot be resolved through the courts. Focusing on the "emotional" (psychological) side should be one of the means of identifying perpetrators at an early stage, attracting and involving them in a behaviour change program. Referrals to court mediation are more common in Georgia (due to a lack of financial access to private mediation). We are interested in the process structure: the case is transferred to the mediation centre in case of a dispute between the parties. The mediator is involved when the fact of violence may have already occurred (physical, psychological) or will occur in the future. Through the mediator, the parties "indirectly" (e.g. through projection techniques, etc.) realize the problem essence (to identify the problem of violence, which is the main challenge): the mediator has no right to interfere directly in the decision-making process, even give some advice. However, s/he allows the party to think over and analyze the situation through particular questions related to the situation preconditions, and conflict resolution measures (whether s/he has taken any action or whether s/he intends to do so), informing the parties about conflict resolution ways and protection of their rights. The mediator has a psychologist's functions (although in some cases, psychologist mediators are also involved) - one of the central figures in the behaviour change program, especially at an early stage. The mediator meets the conflict parties and their lawyers separately. The meeting time is set as well. S/he should pay the same amount of time to both parties. The extent of problem realization, self-identification, and firmness of decision identifies the main achieved result. A unilateral settlement will not be reached if one of the mediation parties fails to understand/identify its actions or manipulates the other party. The mediator offers to continue working or return the case to court³⁰.

Working with vulnerable families: the women's Fund "Sukhumi" 's experience includes working on conflict prevention with vulnerable families, which is impossible without changing behaviour at an

29 *ibid*, p. 10

Educational programs for perpetrators of domestic violence, implemented by Opole administration. Georgia, Tbilisi, December 2020, available at - <http://humandoc.ge/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/prezentacja-leszczy%C5%84ska.pdf>;

Poland's perspective and experience in preventing domestic violence and tasks in the context of perpetrator's assistance. available at - www.humandoc.ge.

30 In-Depth Interview respondent - Veko Dodashvili, mediator, Tbilisi

early stage. Conflict and violence prevention refers to gradually understanding the risks and facts of violence and coming to the problem recognition. Vulnerable families are identified in different ways, e.g., through mobilizers; by the fund's psychologist and lawyer, during informational meetings with women (partner involvement in the program via women); meetings with kindergarten and school teachers (identifying vulnerable families as a result of a student's problem) and young people. Beneficiaries in some cases were families where no violence had been reported yet, although the couple acknowledged tensions and misunderstandings in the relationship. There were also conflicting families, including those in the process of divorce, litigation, etc. Since the main challenge is to involve and attract men, the conversation during the meetings indirectly refers to violence. The main focus is on strengthening the family and improving communication, eliminating conflict risks, and managing the relationship properly. This method/technique motivates the perpetrators (and the victims) to get involved in the program. As for the methods and approaches, they are selected individually (based on a single case). It is possible to start with group work or individual therapy and continue with couple therapy. Vulnerable families are served by individual specialists and a multidisciplinary team (psychologist, conflict resolution specialist, lawyer). There are specific examples where, for example, in a mixed group of women and men, problems related to violence were jointly discussed. Consequently, the perpetrator may have asked to continue individual consultation. While working with the child, if the psychologist found a problematic relationship between the parents, helping the child might become a motivator for the father (perpetrator) to get involved in therapy with the help of the mother. In this case, the work with the family was carried out simultaneously by different specialists (a psychologist who worked with the child, a conflict resolution specialist - with the parents). The Fund has had successful examples of so-called "survived families" since analyzing the conflict risk results means saving relationships (which happened right after men's involvement). As a successful example of conflict de-escalation and prevention of violence, we can consider examples of couple separation in a civilized manner (without expressed aggression and conflict).

MONITORING FINDINGS

2. ATTITUDES TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Quantitative survey data from 10 regions indicate that violent behaviour is still a severe problem. According to a quantitative study, **the most common and recognized form of domestic violence** is psychological (71.9%) and physical violence (61.3%). However, economic (41.9%) and sexual violence (28.4%) have a significant share as well.

According to the data, the population, field specialists, and experts' attitudes toward **domestic violence and its causes can be mainly narrowed down to the following three characteristics: economic, psychological, and socio-cultural**, for example, a traumatic childhood experience (the perpetrator was a victim of violence and ill-treatment) which is reinforced by cultural stereotypes (in masculine culture) and turns the future «ex» victim into a perpetrator who cannot control behaviour and anger. **An essential factor is substance abuse and gambling - Ludomania** (considered in the context of psychological-traumatic experiences). *“Only substance abuse does not lead to violence ... Why does he beat his wife?! It's not because he has something against her. He tries to cover up his weakness so that someone else is to be blamed for his failure” - Maia Kamushadze, Imereti Development Center, Social Worker.* All of the abovementioned is closely linked with **low economic opportunity and level of education**. Consequently, a violent environment is created, which leads to the widespread use of violent methods of upbringing and the “reproduction” of new perpetrators: *“There may be childhood traumas provoking these actions, the environment in which the child is, as well as the upbringing... abusive people are weak people, and they use it to cover up their weakness” - Men's group discussion, Bagdati.*

Qualitative data are supported by the quantitative survey results, **where economic and psycho-social factors** are considered domestic violence triggers. All average scores are within the high evaluation field (higher than «3» on a 5-point scale). However, the following three are relatively evident: **substance abuse (mean = 3.8), economic status (mean = 3.7), psychological problems of the perpetrator and/or victim** (e.g., inferiority complex/low self-esteem, desire for self-determination/dominance, violence experienced at an early age, inability to control anger, etc. (**mean = 3.7**)). Similar trends were observed according to gender.

As a result, **we get a vicious circle one can get out of only through an institutionally established and well-designed system/program**. Therefore, apart from support programs for victims of violence, **the perpetrator's behaviour change program at an early stage is considered it's (program's) essential part**.

«Those who have been abused in childhood are at a 40% risk of becoming aggressors in the future. Potential perpetrators grow up in a violent society (family, neighborhood, friends), where aggressive behaviour is so normalized that they often do not even consider it to be a problem» - Tamar Bebia, psychologist of the association «Mercury».

Cultural stereotypes and violent models of upbringing, in addition to encouraging violent behaviour, trigger: a) attachment/tolerance towards the perpetrator (Mercury's psychologist compares it to Stockholm Syndrome), which is complicated by b) **low public sensitivity to female victims of violence**; c) **low level of awareness** (for instance, men in a group discussion noted that women victims often do not know how to protect their rights, or to whom to apply); d) **economic dependence of a woman victim of violence on a man**. Affected by these factors, **the victim develops a fear of independent decision-making and the beginning of a new life**. The same is evidenced by quantitative study data when the surveyed population reported economic and psychological factors as primary obstacles to the elimination of violence: **unemployment/low pay** (56.7% of cases); **lack of housing** (to the victim of violence) (48.8% of cases); **attachment/tolerance towards the perpetrator** (or victim) (42.3% of cases); **fear of starting a new life in victims** (38.5% of cases). Subtle differences were identified according to different sections. For instance, for men and the unemployed/those out of the workforce, lack of housing (to the victim of violence) is a leading factor, whereas, for IDPs/residents along the ABL, attachment/tolerance towards the perpetrator (or victim) has the highest share.

As a human rights defender and expert on gender-based and domestic violence, Goga Khatiashvili points out that **the biggest problem in the perspective of domestic violence is the lack of a unified policy and simultaneous services for working with victims and perpetrators**. In addition, he emphasizes the short-term effect and temporary nature of the punishment imposed on the perpetrator, which fails to provide adequate protection for the victim once the perpetrator has been released. *“The victim addresses the law enforcement agencies for help. They respond, and then, in a short time, the perpetrator returns to the community, and it turns out that justice has become very temporary. As a result, all the tools necessary to protect the victim are involved and used again”*. It highlights the need to introduce and enhance perpetrators' behaviour change programs.

In addition, due to the pandemic-induced restrictions, even the existing Perpetrator's Behaviour change Program (including the existing Perpetrator's Behaviour change Program) was fragmented – has been suspended due to pandemic restrictions³¹. In addition, program monitoring and evaluation were not carried out. the lack of human resources and (qualified) personnel

31 UN WOMEN, Georgia. Available at:

<https://georgia.unwomen.org/ka/news/stories/2021/05/meeting-initiated-by-un-women-on-strengthening-perpetrator-behaviour-correction-programmes>

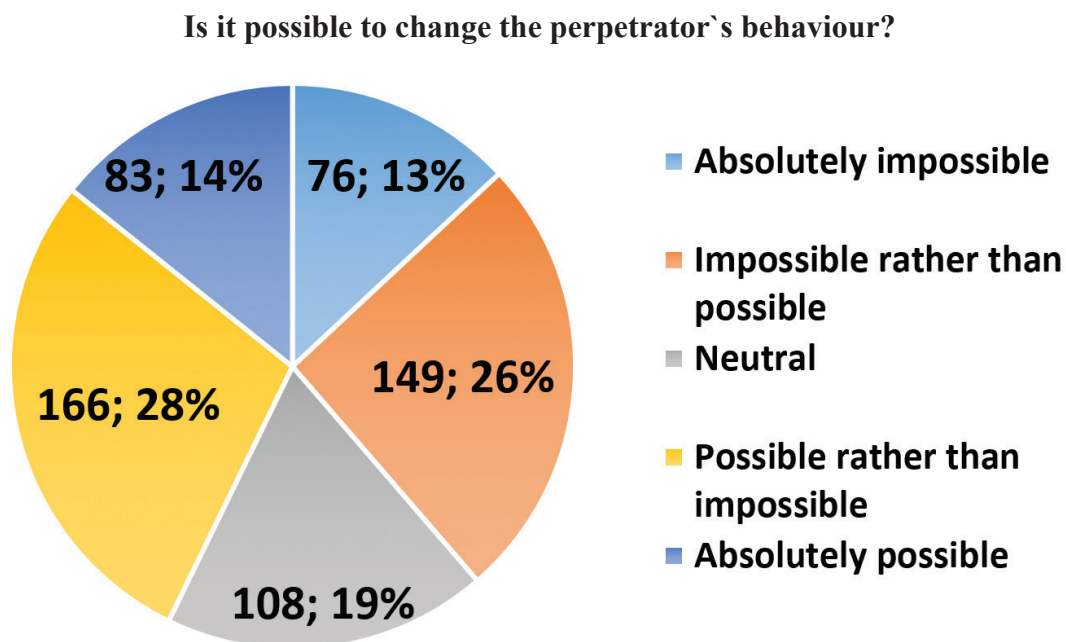
was also a problem for the program’s effectiveness³². For example, the probation bureau program included a limited number of beneficiaries and nine psychologists throughout Georgia. Therefore, existing experience shows that it is necessary to find relevant staff and create a staff unit that will only be involved in the program. At the same time, social workers **should not have any other related responsibilities**.

3. IS IT POSSIBLE TO CHANGE THE PERPETRATOR’S BEHAVIOUR?

People have different opinions about the discussion of **whether it is possible for the perpetrator to “change/correct” and be able to control his aggression**. The cognitive-behavioural approach assumes that violent behaviour is learned and can be changed (Duluth model). 2018-2019 the perpetrator’s behaviour change programs were implemented by the National Probation Bureau and the Penitentiary Service. However, since these programs have not been evaluated, there is no evidence-based data on their effectiveness. Therefore, positive outcomes (throughout Georgia) can be judged only by examples based on individual and personal experience. Almost all participants in the qualitative research note that **it is necessary to address the problems of vulnerable families promptly** before escalating conflict situations.

According to quantitative research data, **the prospect of changing the perpetrator (behaviour) is more positive**. The average score on the 5-point scale slightly exceeds the neutral point of the scale - 3 and is within the high evaluation field (mean = 3.1). The percentage distribution is as follows (*see Diagram # 3.1*).

Diagram №3.1



32 Public Defender Report, 2019. p.196, available at: <https://www.ombudsman.ge/res/docs/2020040215365449134.pdf>

According to the research data, the inability of changing the perpetrator's behaviour is affected by: **a) past negative experiences (was a victim of violence); b) the perpetrator's psychological condition:** the perpetrator always thinks that he has done nothing wrong and blames the victim (56.8% of cases); the perpetrator does not want to (considers shameful) admit that he needs help (54.1% of cases)³³; **or c) service delivery deficiencies - lack of human resources and/or professionalism.**

In quantitative research, **men are more likely to indicate that the perpetrator does not admit the need for help. That is why it is essential to involve and strengthen the psychologist services. Consequently, both the victim and the perpetrator get aware of the actual situation.**

4. ATTITUDES TO PERPETRATOR'S BEHAVIOUR CHANGE PROGRAMS

According to the data, **the general attitude towards the perpetrator's behaviour change programs is positive** - the majority perceive **the need for the development of this program**. Moreover, they believe that the state should use all means to change the perpetrators' behaviour and fight against addiction: *“If it is called measures aimed at strengthening families, more families (both victims and perpetrators) will dare to visit a specialist to overcome the problem”* - Tamar Bebia, a psychologist, the association «Mercury». However, victims of violence, experts or ordinary citizens, point out **that all the resources spent on the victim's rehabilitation are a one-sided solution to the problem, and it is necessary to work simultaneously with the perpetrator:** *“No one remembers the other side - the perpetrator. Therefore, providing simultaneous psychological services to both the victim and the perpetrator is one of the essential solutions to change his behaviour and work actively with him ... for example, in a shelter-like facility”* – Women's group discussion, Zugdidi.

An officer at the National Agency for Crime Prevention, Non-custodial Execution and Probation points out **that the early detection of perpetrators will reduce domestic violence convicts**. Noteworthy is the question asked by a 34-year-old woman – a victim of violence, who was aggressively treated by her ex-husband after her divorce: *“Why can't the programs that address “officially recognized” perpetrators exist until they become “perpetrators”?” And why can't a social worker and psychologist work with a vulnerable family before the apparent violence occurs?”* (Interview was recorded in 2020).

“Unfortunately, everything done by the state aimed to strengthen the victims turned out to be vain. If we do not work on changing the perpetrator's behaviour, if we do not modify the environment, the result will be the same. I had a case where the victim finally refused to reconcile. In just one month her ex-husband married another girl. After a while, he started abusing her in the same way. If we cannot help this person, it turns out that one woman replaced another, and in the end, the number of results would not change” - Irma Bregadze, Kutaisi Crisis Center and Shelter psychologist.

“Somehow, the main focus is on the need for victim rehabilitation programs, and we pay less attention

³³ **Notice:** The data are counted from the respondents who believe in impossibility of changing the perpetrator's behaviour.

to the perpetrator rehabilitation program. If we say we want to change the reality, then the organizations and government agencies working on these issues need to work with both sides of the conflict to prevent escalation and protect the victims” - E. Sh., the youth council member, group discussion, Zugdidi.

Research participants recommend what needs to be done to involve (to increase their motivation) the abusers and strengthen perpetrators’ behaviour change programs. **Both quantitative and qualitative data highlight the services of a psychologist and the need to raise awareness. In addition, to increase effectiveness, the perpetrator’s behaviour change Program should focus more on prevention, e.g., working with adolescents with violent behaviour in schools and identifying and involving unidentified perpetrators. The latter should be done by working with vulnerable families:**

According to the qualitative research, it is necessary to:

- ❖ **Train psychologists** (e.g. on a municipal basis), if necessary, train psychiatrists and social workers and involve them in a program **where they will work with vulnerable families, especially at an early stage:** *“Work should be done at an early stage when there are still conflict situations. Prevention will be more effective ... Potential perpetrators and victims grow up in conflict families, so such families should be identified as soon as possible” - Men’s group discussion, Bagdati;*
- ❖ Increase the role of social service, district inspector, and mayor’s representatives in **vulnerable families:** *“**Social service needs to be activated.** Social workers need to work with [vulnerable] families” - Goga Khatiashvili, a human rights defender, and an expert on gender-based and domestic violence. “The district inspector or the mayor’s representatives in the villages should compile a list, and they should be referred to be involved in this program” - Women’s group discussion, Zugdidi.*
- ❖ Ensure territorial access to the services provided by the behaviour change program;
- ❖ Provide vocational training to perpetrators and make them interested in employment promotion, involvement of an employment specialist in the program;
- ❖ Work in schools, especially with antisocial boys and teens, and have a psychologist on the staff (e.g., some men in the study consider that the program would work more effectively with individuals under 30, while it is challenging to work on behaviour change with people over 30). *“**Preventive measures are effective and result-oriented, which reduces further complications, and saves both human and financial resources. For early prevention, I think it is essential to start work with boys from 5-6th grades in schools to correct their attitudes, behavior, and mentality**” - Tiko Chelishvili, World Vision Social Worker;*
- ❖ Public outreach campaign - introduce positive examples/success stories, conduct program evaluation research, and share the results with the public;
- ❖ Involve a pastor for religious people (will sometimes replace a psychologist).

The quantitative research data trends coincide with qualitative research data. It should also be noted that the victim/family members' patience and tolerance to the violent **behaviour are within the low evaluation field, indicating that this factor is no longer/less considered to change the perpetrator's behaviour for the majority of respondents.** All other measures are essential, but two factors have been highlighted: the involvement of a **psychologist** (mean = 4.1) and **the inclusiveness of specialists who will release the perpetrator from the addiction** (mean = 4.1).

Gender section data revealed, that to **contribute to the perpetrator's behaviour change**, the involvement of specialists to relieve the perpetrator of substance/gambling abuse was found to be **more important for women** (more likely/will contribute 78%) than for men (more likely /will contribute 58%). Also, **for women** (more likely /will not contribute - 51.1%) rather than for men (more likely /will not contribute - 35.1%), the patience of family members/victims and tolerance to violent behaviour **is less likely to be contributing factor to change perpetrator's behaviour.** (See Table#4.1)

Table №4.1

To what extent will the listed measures help to change the perpetrator's behaviour?		Mean
1	Interference of family members/relatives/acquaintances/friends	3.3
2	Legal punishment of the perpetrator (including imprisonment)	3.3
3	Promoting the employment of the perpetrator	3.8
4	Involvement of a social worker	3.8
5	Church/pastor involvement	3.8
6	Involvement of a psychologist	4.1
7	Involvement of police officers (working with the perpetrator)	3.4
8	Involvement of specialists who will release the perpetrator from the substance (alcohol, drugs) and gambling abuse	4.1
9	The patience of family members/victims and respond less to violent behaviour	2.6
10	Conduct an awareness-raising campaign	3.9

Note: The data is counted on a 5-point scale, where the number "1" means "will not help at all" and the number "5" - "very helpful". The neutral point of the scale is the number "3". Accordingly, data higher than "3" are within the high evaluation field, and data below "3" are within the low evaluation field.

Most qualitative and quantitative survey participants feel that at this stage, **neither perpetrators nor their family members/community are ready to participate in the perpetrator's behaviour change program** (in the quantitative research, the average rate is within the low evaluation field **mean = 2.9**³⁴, i.e. tends to be a negative evaluation). *“Society does not consider [domestic] violence a serious crime, such as murder, theft, robbery ...” - Women's group discussion, Terjola.*

This circumstance is reasoned by the lack of information about the perpetrator's behaviour change program, and **the lack of appropriate policies and is reinforced by stereotypes**. As a result, perpetrators associate psychologist intervention with mental health problems and **refuse to receive services. Besides, there is no social worker involvement at the initial conflict stage (before identifying the fact of violence). Overcoming these factors will increase the society's readiness and acceptance of the perpetrator's behaviour change program:** *“People with disabilities used to be hidden in the family. They were not integrated into society. They were not acknowledged by their parents. However, today they are integrated and successful as well. Why?! Because the program started working on them, funds were spent to bring these people to the community, and many are fully integrated. I think it will be the same in this case ... we will slowly reach the result” - Tornike, 38 years old, athlete.*

Notwithstanding the above, qualitative and quantitative research data show that the **security of a victim of violence is linked to the introduction of a perpetrator's behaviour change program and the involvement of the perpetrator in it** (in the quantitative research, the mean is within the high evaluation field – **mean = 3.93**³⁵, i.e. it tends to be a positive evaluation).

Some field specialists and experts in the study indicate that **a perpetrator/potential perpetrator often has difficulty realizing his responsibility in domestic conflicts**. So it is necessary to **integrate a «mandatory» component into the behaviour change program:** *“Although there is a need and our organization has offered this service, many men have refrained from coming to a conflict resolution specialist or psychologist voluntarily. However, the experience of working with ‘couples’ already shows how effective this work is in preventing conflict escalation and violence” - Khatuna Gogua, a conflict resolution specialist, Women's Fund “Sukhumi”.*

34 On a 5-point scale, where the neutral point is the number “3”

35 On a 5-point scale, where the neutral point is the number “3”

4.1 WHAT KIND SHOULD BE THE PERPETRATOR'S BEHAVIOUR CHANGE PROGRAM? WHAT TYPES OF SERVICES SHOULD THE PROGRAM BENEFICIARY RECEIVE?

Several key approaches to the perpetrator's behaviour change program and its purpose have been identified among the qualitative and quantitative research participants:

- ❖ The program should be free (according to the experts, this factor may motivate them to get involved in it). *“They offer to talk to a psychologist for free, and I did not think I would refuse ... I got involved. I liked it very much, and I did not miss any sessions. First, everyone was obliged to participate, but after that, they did not want to leave the sessions.” - G.P. Male, 37 years old, perpetrator;*
- ❖ The program should be individual and tailored to the specific characteristics of the perpetrator (case);
- ❖ Both parties (the perpetrator and the victim) should be involved in the program from the very beginning (victims of violence also support this view);
- ❖ The program should include group therapy, the so-called “companion effect” when an individual becomes more honest with people with similar life experiences (it is especially emphasized by former probationers, the behaviour correction program former beneficiaries);
- ❖ All participants in the study highlight **the psychologist's involvement** in the perpetrator's behaviour change program **and its positive role**. In addition, an important part indicates **a social worker's** necessary involvement (to identify the perpetrator's needs) and the need to provide **legal services**;
- ❖ Some experts and victims of violence point out that a **crises centre should be set up for perpetrators**, where they will receive all the necessary services (psychological and legal services; a social worker will assess the needs).

As for the quantitative component, **psychologist services (55.5% of cases)**, **release from addiction (59.3% of cases)**, and **joint consultation of the perpetrator and the victim (44.7% of cases)** are a **priority in this case**.

Differences were observed according to the gender section. For instance, psychologists' assistance and release of the perpetrator from substance abuse is essential for women. Whereas men think that joint psychological consultation of the perpetrator and the victim is essential in addition to substance abuse. *(See Diagrams №4.1.1 and №4.1.2)*

Diagram №4.1.1

What type of services should the perpetrator receive?

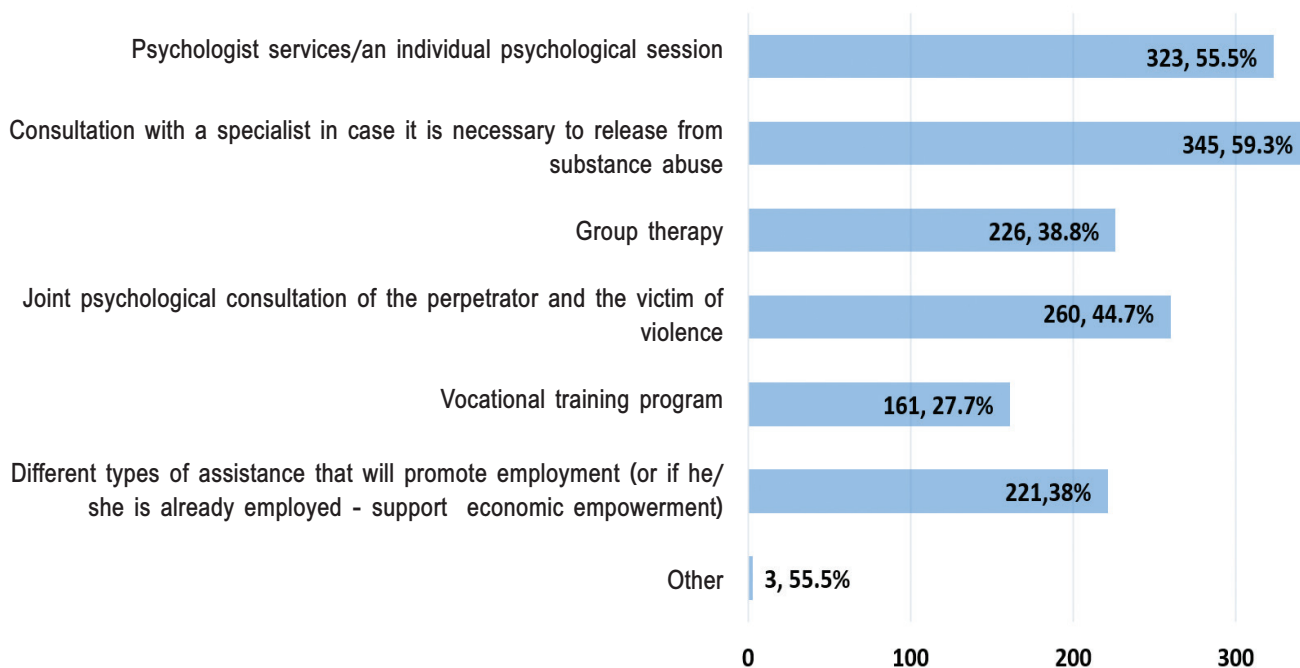
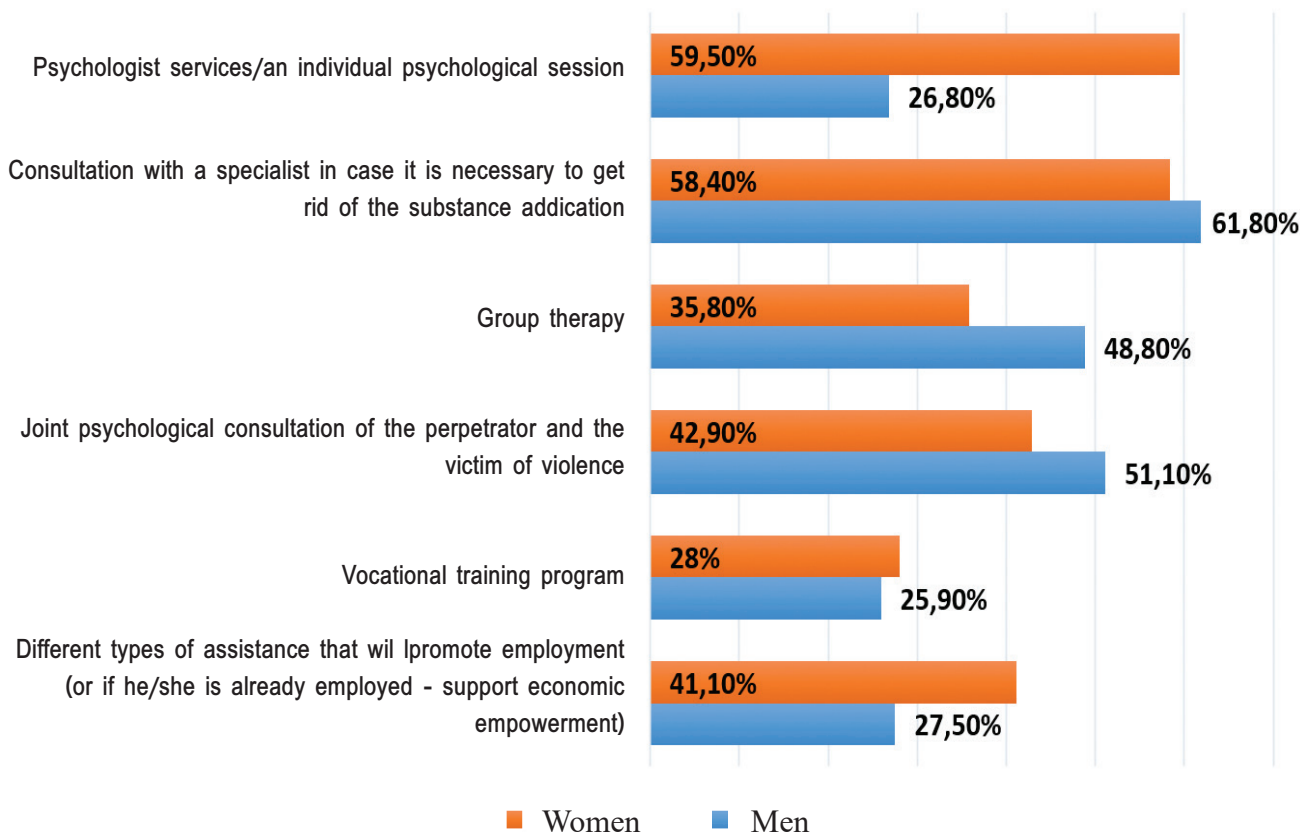


Diagram №4.1.2

What type of services should the perpetrator receive?(By gender)



Based on the international experience of perpetrator's behaviour change programs, the field specialists and experts in the study think that the Polish model should be introduced in Georgia. However, they also pointed to the effectiveness of the Spanish and American models.

5. EVALUATION OF THE PERPETRATOR'S BEHAVIOUR CHANGE PROGRAM CHARACTERISTICS

5.1 INVOLVING THE BENEFICIARY IN THE PROGRAM

The effectiveness of the perpetrator's behaviour change program is significantly affected by **the ways and means of involving the beneficiary in the program**. According to qualitative survey data, the opinions were divided, and the following ideas were expressed:

- ❖ **Only voluntary** – according to the argument, it is impossible to make a perpetrator change against his will: *“We cannot permanently force the perpetrators to participate in the program. It will not work.”* - Khatuna Gogua, a conflict resolution specialist, Women's Fund “Sukhumi”. We should either encourage him to do it (e.g. through vocational training and employment promotion) or demonstrate positive examples”, indicate some of the group discussion participants;
- ❖ **Only mandatory** – those “supporting” mandatory involvement think that influenced by the public mentality and prevailing stereotypes, almost none of the perpetrators voluntarily join the program, because the perpetrators and sometimes their family members/relatives/community do not see the need for rehabilitation. For example, when one of the victims offered her husband a visit to a psychologist, he responded with double violence. *“He considered that I was trying to improve his behaviour.”* - S. D., Khoni. One of the former behaviour change program beneficiaries indicates that he would not get involved voluntarily, but after being “obliged” to participate, he became interested and satisfied. According to experts, **using the coercive form will be effective towards the representatives of law enforcement agencies with violent behaviour**. According to the association “Mercury” representative, no one has the illusion that the perpetrators will be involved in the behaviour change program immediately. According to the Polish experience, “access” to perpetrators was achieved through the involvement of the penitentiary system probationers. And the following step is to integrate the perpetrators beyond the system into the program at an early stage.
- ❖ **Combined** - some formally prosecuted perpetrators' involvement in the program should be mandatory, while it should be voluntary for others. (For example, in the case of issuing a restraining order, a social worker or police representative should be involved, and with their help, the perpetrator should become a behaviour change program beneficiary). Alternative – **applying the indirect coercion principle**: the perpetrator should be offered a choice of punishment/legal liability or involvement in a behaviour change program;

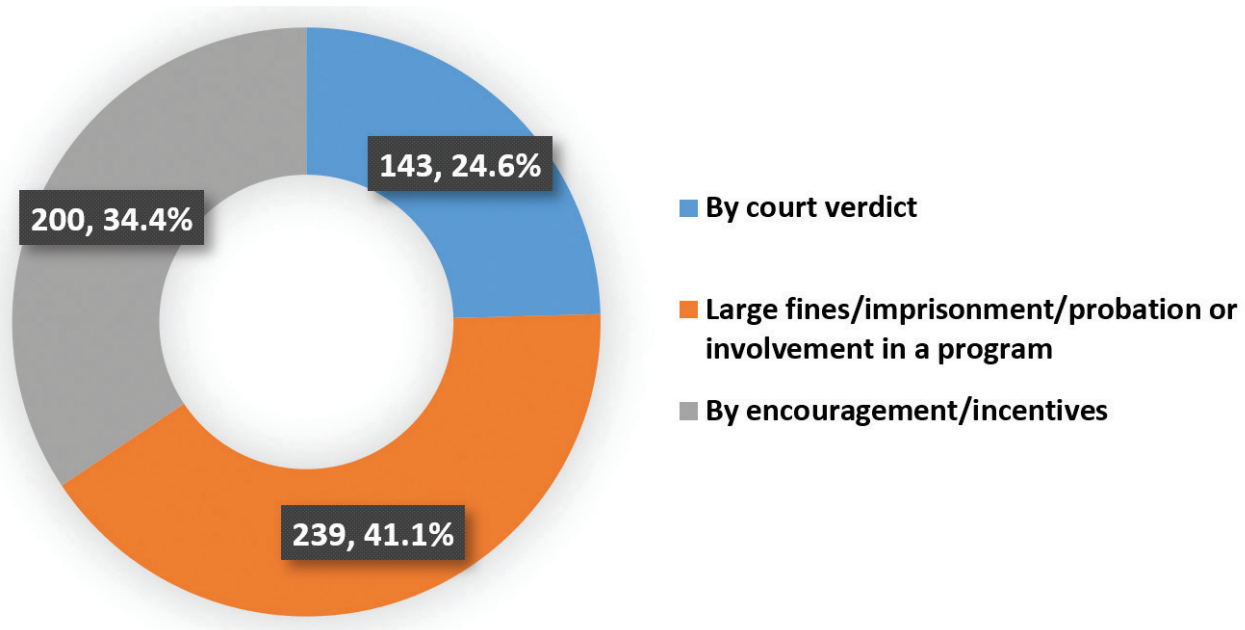
- ❖ **Involvement in the program as an additional measure** – this should not be considered as an alternative to responsibility/punishment.

According to the quantitative data, 86.3% think that involvement in a behaviour change program should be mandatory for the perpetrator. **However, almost 44% of the same group believes that involving a convict of domestic violence in the program by offering an alternative is more desirable** (e.g. huge fines/imprisonment/probation or involvement in the program). The share of using **incentives** is essential as well (34.4%). Slight differences were revealed according to the sections.

A more significant proportion of those with higher education preferred the form of incentive to involve the perpetrator in the program (40.5%) while offering an alternative and encouragement/incentives are equally important to employed respondents (approximately 37%). *(See Diagram #5.1.1)*

Diagram # 5.1.1

How can we force an abuser convicted of domestic violence to join the program?

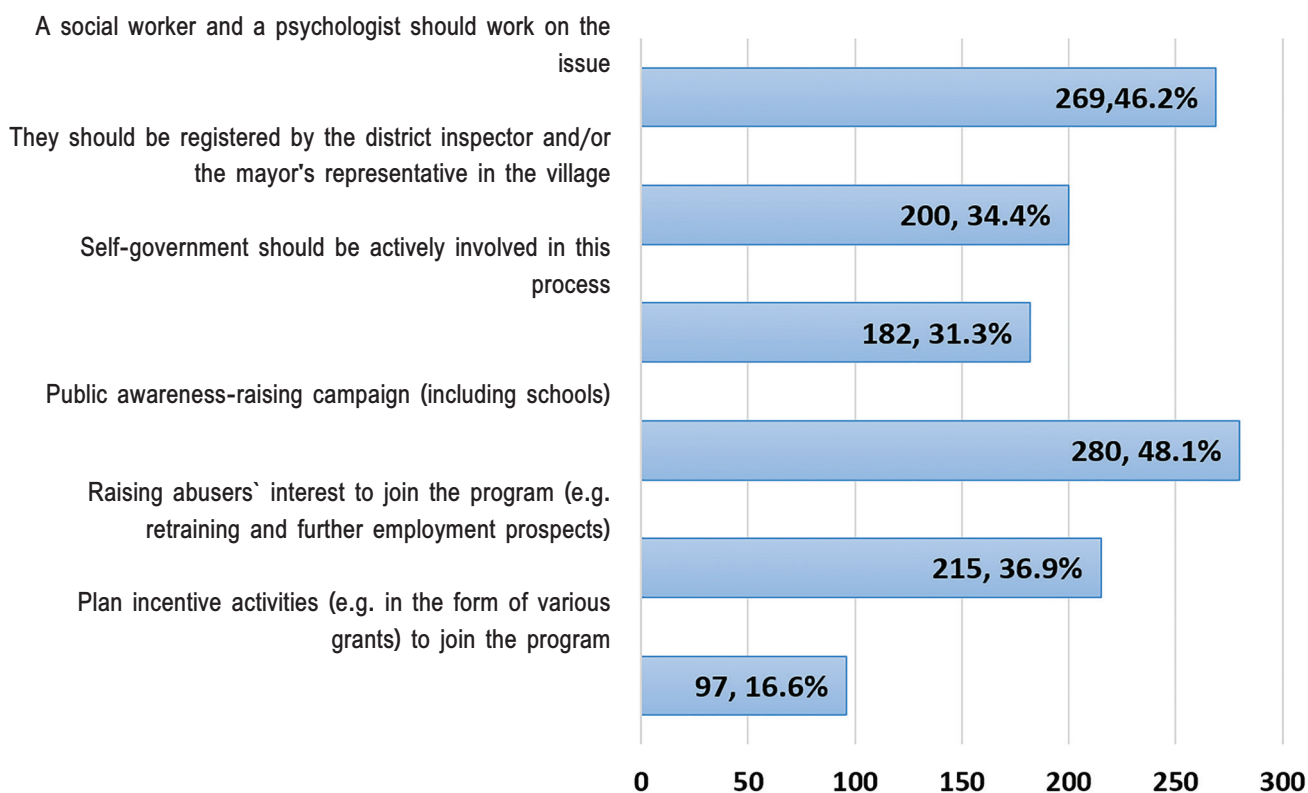


As for **persons who are not convicted for violence** (so-called «silent perpetrators») but are observed in violent behaviour against family members, there are two ways to attract them to the behaviour change program (according to qualitative and quantitative data): **awareness-raising campaign for the population** (e.g. law enforcement agencies, teachers, doctors, students, etc.) as well as in schools (48.1% of cases) and **increase the social worker and psychologist role in identifying vulnerable families and potential perpetrators** (those who can hardly manage aggression and anger) and further work with family members (46.2% of cases). *(See Diagram # 5.1.2)*

Diagram # 5.1.2

How should the so-called "silent perpetrator" get involved in the program?

(Number of responses)

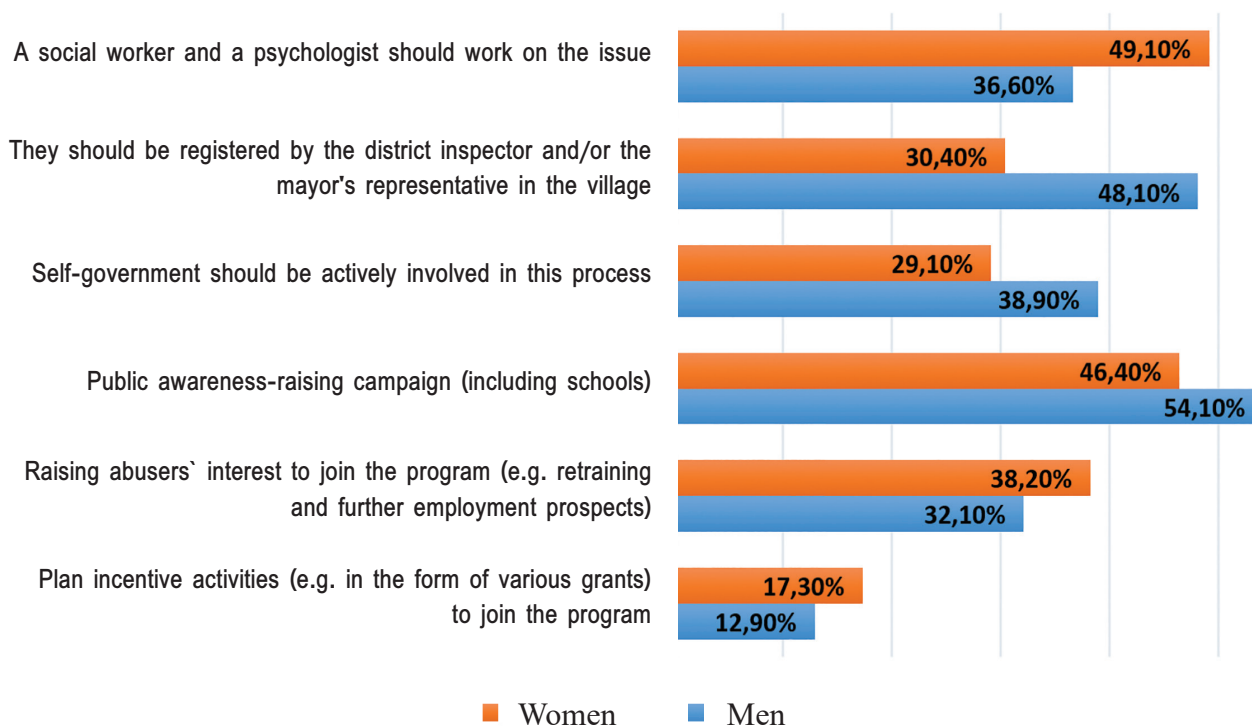


According to sections, differences were identified that are specific to the mentioned groups:

- ❖ Women, those with higher education and employed, prefer the work of a social worker and a psychologist (49.1% of cases) to attract “silent perpetrators” to the program, while men prefer an awareness-raising campaign (54.1% of cases) and their registration by a district inspector and/or mayor’s representatives in the villages (48.1% of cases);
- ❖ Vulnerable group representatives (mother of many children, single woman, victim of violence, socially vulnerable, repatriated emigrant, disabled person) report that the district inspector and/or mayor’s representatives in villages should register them and actively involve the self-government in the process (approx. 42-43%). *(See Diagram #5.1.3)*

Diagram #5.1.3

How should the so-called "silent perpetrator" get involved in the program? (Number of replies by gender)



5.2 PERPETRATOR'S BEHAVIOUR CHANGE PROGRAM SERVICE PROVIDERS AND IMPLEMENTATION FORMS

Perpetrator's behaviour change program's successful implementation at an early stage requires **multisectoral cooperation**. Field specialists, experts, and others indicate that **the program can not be effectively implemented only by the state**:

- ❖ If the private and non-governmental sectors will be the service provider, self-government can be involved through full or partial program funding. It means that the program can be implemented "under the umbrella" of the state and using any qualified resources (e.g., **working with vulnerable families** (by CSOs, or providing psychological group therapy services by a specialized psychological service);
- ❖ Some survey participants indicated that due to limited financial resources in self-governments, it is advisable to establish cooperation between the Ministries of Health, Internal Affairs, Justice, and the private/non-governmental sector;

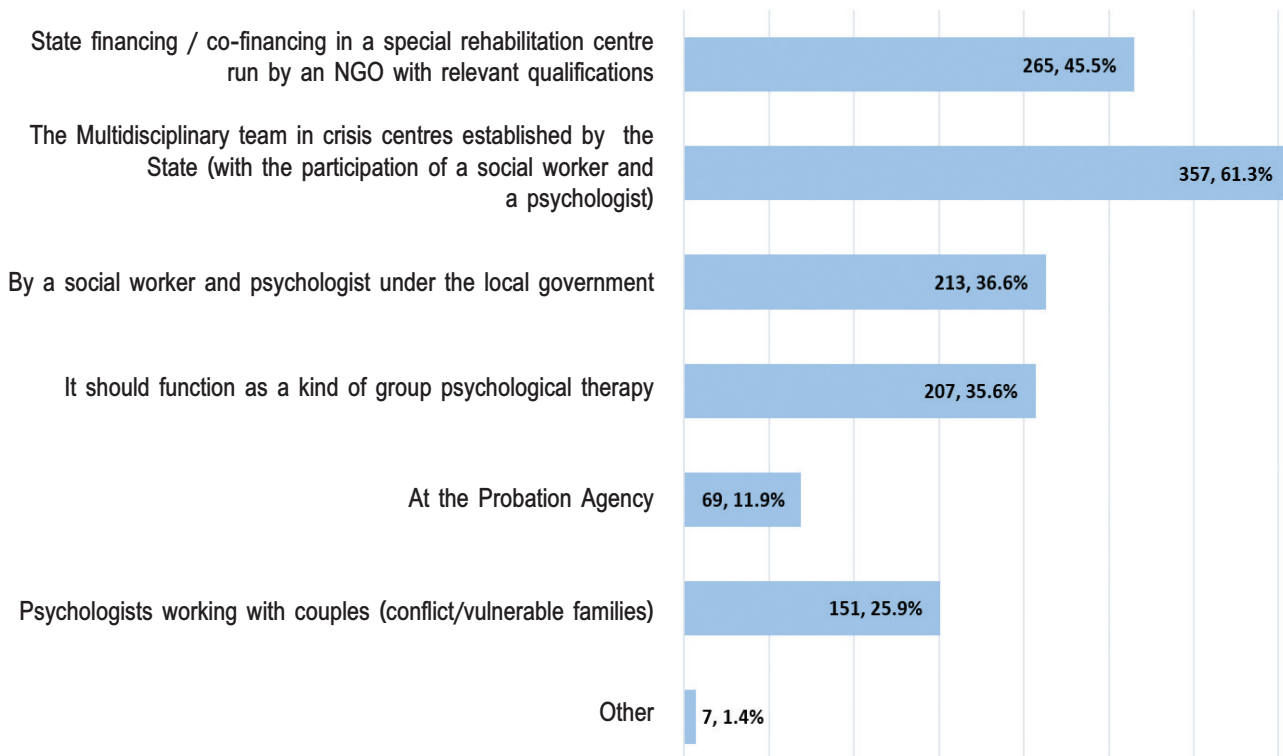
- ❖ It was suggested that **government agencies set up a multidisciplinary team** at the initial stage of the perpetrator's behaviour change program, which will work in different directions (e.g., establishing a specialized crisis centre, attracting beneficiaries, providing services, etc.);
- ❖ Beneficiaries' involvement in the behaviour change program can be identified by: a) the municipality relevant department (**a vulnerable family identification and integration of a potential perpetrator or a couple in conflict**, in the program with **social worker** involvement on the ground); b) **a multidisciplinary team involving a social worker, a psychologist, a lawyer/district trustee/police officer**³⁶. The multidisciplinary team should identify the program format, terms, and cycle duration for a specific category of perpetrators based on an **individual approach. Besides, they should use the civil sector resources after attracting and involving beneficiaries in the program;**
- ❖ Based on the qualitative data, NGOs can start piloting the program and then continue it with a state institution, and/or the state may fund it;
- ❖ According to the quantitative research data, in terms of the first and second-line service providers were named the state multidisciplinary group in crisis centres (61.3% of cases) and a state-funded/co-financed special rehabilitation centre managed by an NGO of relevant qualifications (45.5% of cases). (*See Diagram #5.2.1*)

«In cooperation with the agencies, there should be a group, consisting of a social worker, municipal employees, and a psychologist. Qualified personnel from state and non-governmental agencies should be involved in coalition work. The state should be the supervisor, and the rest of the listed should be the implementer»- Women's group discussion, Terjola.

³⁶ According to the qualitative data, the recommendation to join the program should be issued only by a psychologist or a group of psychologists; only by a social worker; by law enforcement officials; by the shelter/crisis center representatives; by family members.

Diagram #5.2.1

Which agency should implement the program? (Number of responses)



The behaviour change program implementation should include group and individual therapy (the qualitative research participants mainly emphasize group therapy effectiveness):

- ❖ Men and victims of violence emphasize the **benefits of group therapy** in terms of increasing the level of sincerity and engaging a more significant number of beneficiaries quickly. However, a **deficiency** in group therapy was also noted. In particular, a negative attitude or indifference on the part of one beneficiary towards the issue of violence may lead to mistrust of other beneficiaries or a desire to leave the program. Therefore, it is essential to focus on positive examples;
- ❖ Some participants emphasize low financial availability/unavailability of **individual psychological therapy**, and give preference to family therapy;
- ❖ If the perpetrator is severely aggressive, some study participants believe it is better to have **individual, and later, - group and/or family therapy** (to improve the family environment/background).

5.3 PERPETRATOR'S BEHAVIOUR CHANGE PROGRAM TARGET GROUPS

It is necessary to **identify the program target groups**. The qualitative research materials mainly have revealed the following:

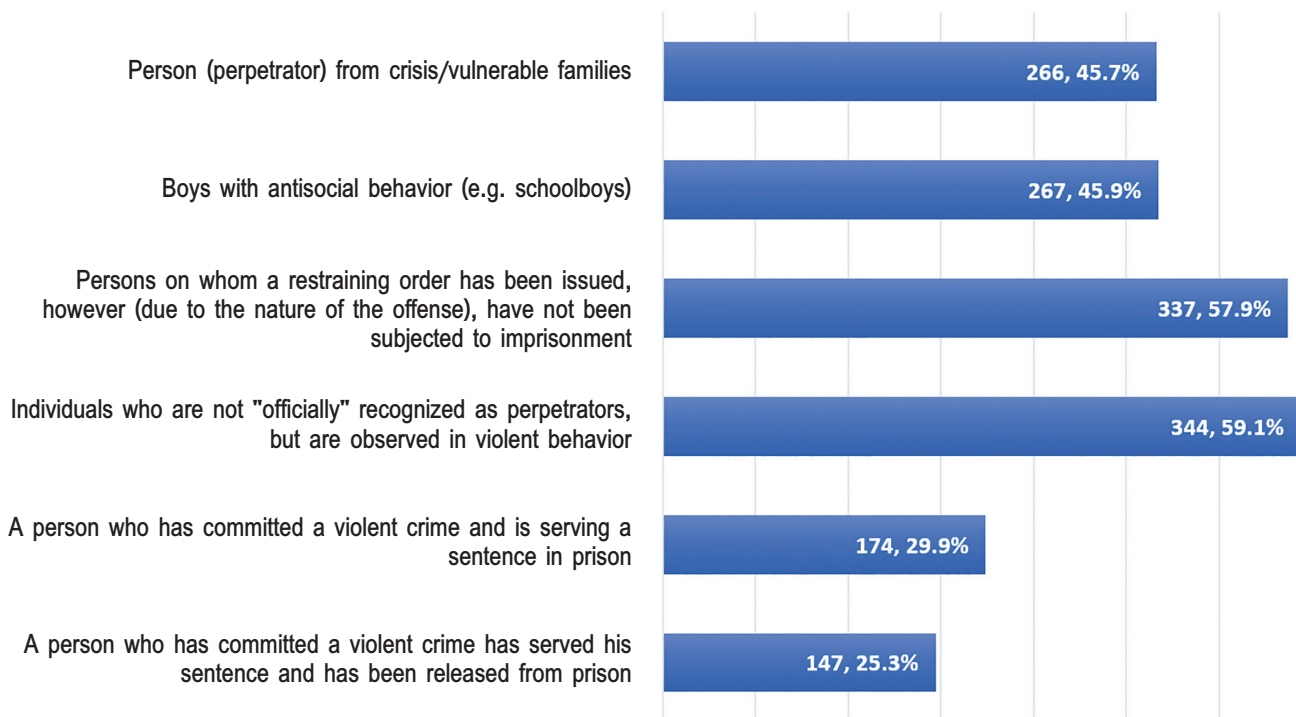
- ❖ **Identified perpetrators:**
 - Perpetrators who have been imposed legally liable (are convicted, or have served a sentence);
 - Perpetrators against whom a restraining order has been issued (they have been granted a perpetrator status);
- ❖ **Unidentified perpetrators** - those who have not been imposed legally liable and resort to relatively “mild” violence - persons from vulnerable/conflict families;
- ❖ Field specialists and experts have pointed out the need to study **law enforcement officers and their families**. A tense and stressful work environment negatively affects their attitudes and behaviour and makes them commit acts of violence (therefore, it is necessary to monitor and involve them in the rehabilitation program periodically);
- ❖ Some of the study participants (including men participating in the group discussion) named **boys and juveniles with antisocial behaviour** at school as target groups of the program, against whom a restraining/protective order was issued.

According to the quantitative research data, two groups of beneficiaries have been identified: **unidentified perpetrators (observed in violent behaviour) - 59.1% of cases and persons on whom a restraining order has been issued**, however (due to the nature of the offense), have not been criminally prosecuted, or have not been subjected to imprisonment (57.9% of cases).

Perpetrators from vulnerable/conflict families and boys with antisocial behaviour also have a significant and equal share (approximately 45% of cases). **The need to change the perpetrator's behaviour at an early stage is also emphasized by the fact** that women consider unidentified (“silent”) perpetrators (60.4% of cases) as the first-line beneficiaries. However, men report that persons having a restraining order (64.1% of cases) are the top priority beneficiaries. *(See Diagram #5.3.1)*

Diagram #5.3.1

Who should be the program beneficiary? (Number of responses)



5.4 PERPETRATOR`S BEHAVIOUR CHANGE PROGRAM MONITORING

97.9% of the participants in the quantitative survey indicated that the perpetrator`s behaviour change program needs to be monitored.

The qualitative study participants stressed **the importance of monitoring the perpetrator`s behaviour change program at an early stage, providing assessment and sustainability of the program, as well as a kind of warning to the abuser that he is under observation and attention** (*«During the monitoring, I realize that I am still under control and surveillance. All this makes you not repeat the mistake you once made» – G.P., convicted of violence, Zugdidi, 37*). It helps to prevent the recurrence of violence. In addition, the monitoring can assess the impact of the rendered work and identify additional needs.

In the group discussions, participants expressed opinions **on the monitoring form** (provided that no action violates the perpetrator`s rights):

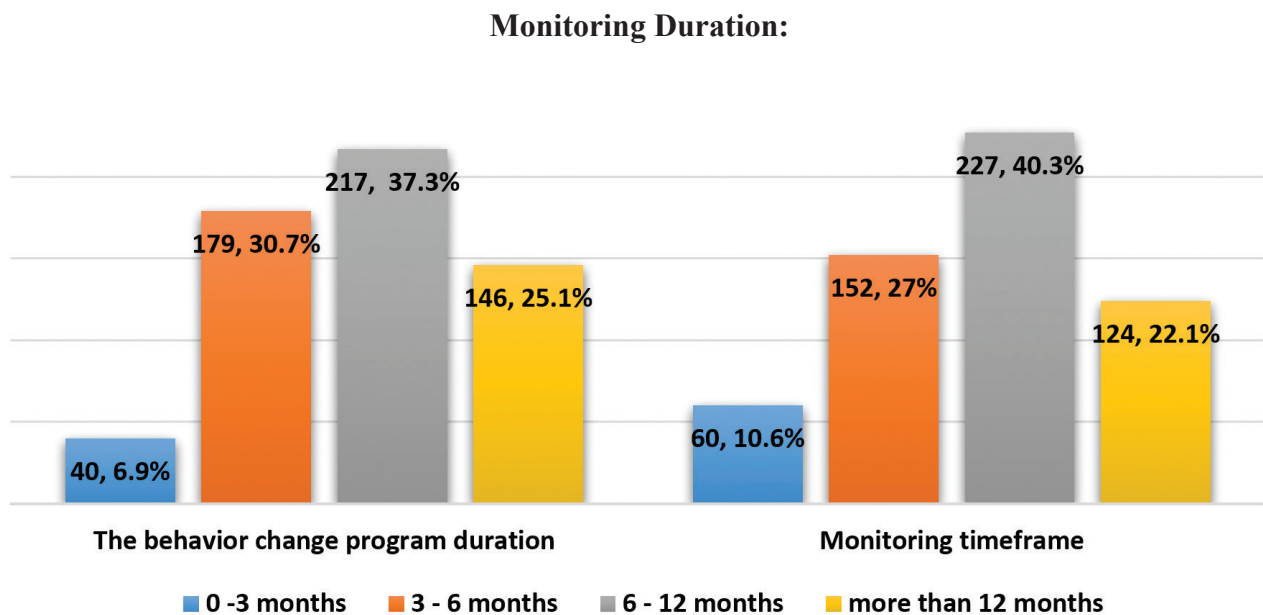
- ❖ **Monitoring and conducting testing to evaluate risks** at the beginning, interim evaluation, and at the end of the program. As well as individual interviews with perpetrators;
- ❖ **Monthly monitoring** - interviews with the perpetrator`s family members, neighbors, with kindergarten/school teachers in case of minor children;

- ❖ After some period of the program completion, providing a **psychologist consultation** to check the perpetrator's general psychological state;
- ❖ **Controlling/monitoring the perpetrator's behaviour once a week after the program completion.**

As for the specific question of **who should conduct the monitoring**, the role of social worker and psychologist was mainly highlighted (social worker - 52.6%, psychologist - 27.7%) in the qualitative and quantitative data. Participants also mentioned CSOs and police officers. Some of them reported that the monitoring should be carried out by a **multidisciplinary team** (for example, the Social Service Agency, with the involvement of a social worker or non-governmental organizations). They stressed the need to grant a monitoring mandate to the Public Defender.

The study participants identified **the duration of behaviour change program implementation and monitoring**. In the qualitative study, 3-6 months and 1-2-year program duration frames were named. Approximately the same indicators were observed in the quantitative data. The most desirable duration of the program and the monitoring are 3-6 months (approximately 27-30%) and 6-12 months (approximately 37-40%). (See Diagram #5.4.1)

Diagram #5.4.1

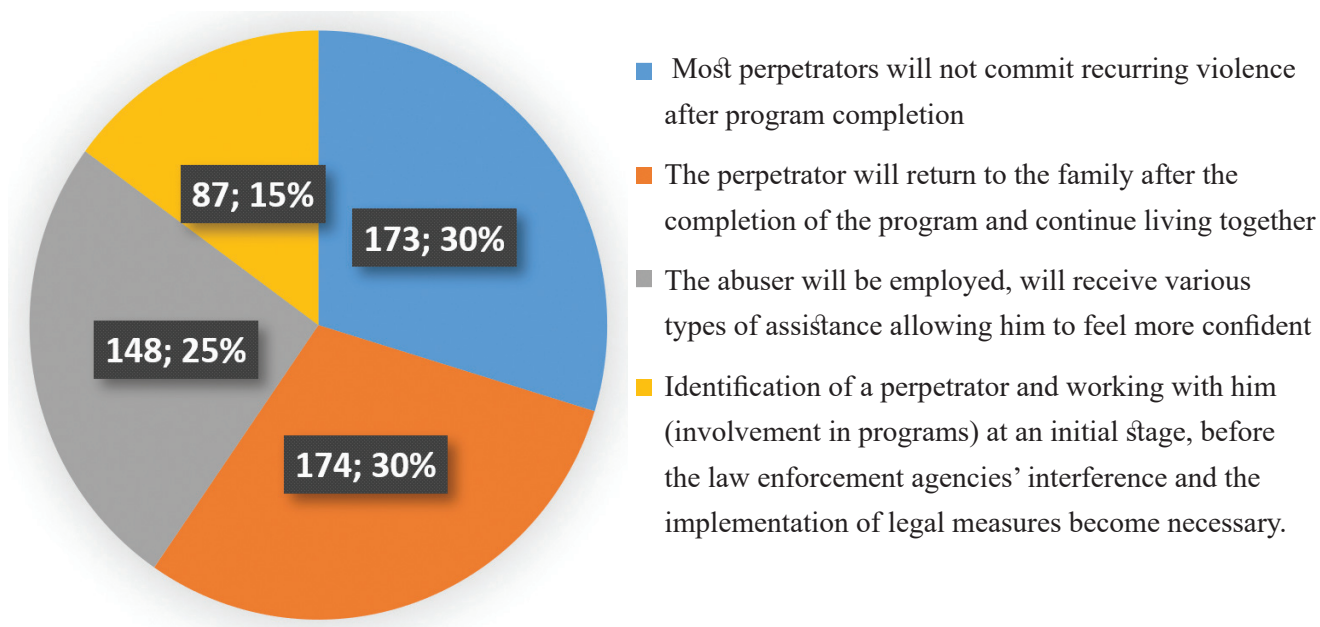


6. WHAT DOES A PERPETRATOR’S BEHAVIOUR CORRECTION SUCCESSFUL PROGRAM MEAN?

The data show that the population believes that a perpetrator’s behaviour change program’s success depends on preventing recurrent acts of violence and ensuring peaceful cohabitation (approximately 30%). Differences have been identified according to sections: Employed women and those with higher education emphasize the prevention of recurrence of violence (data vary from 32 to 35%), while men highlight the perpetrator’s return to the family and cohabitation (data vary from 34 to 42%). *(See Diagram #6.1)*

Diagram #6.1

Successful completion of the program means...



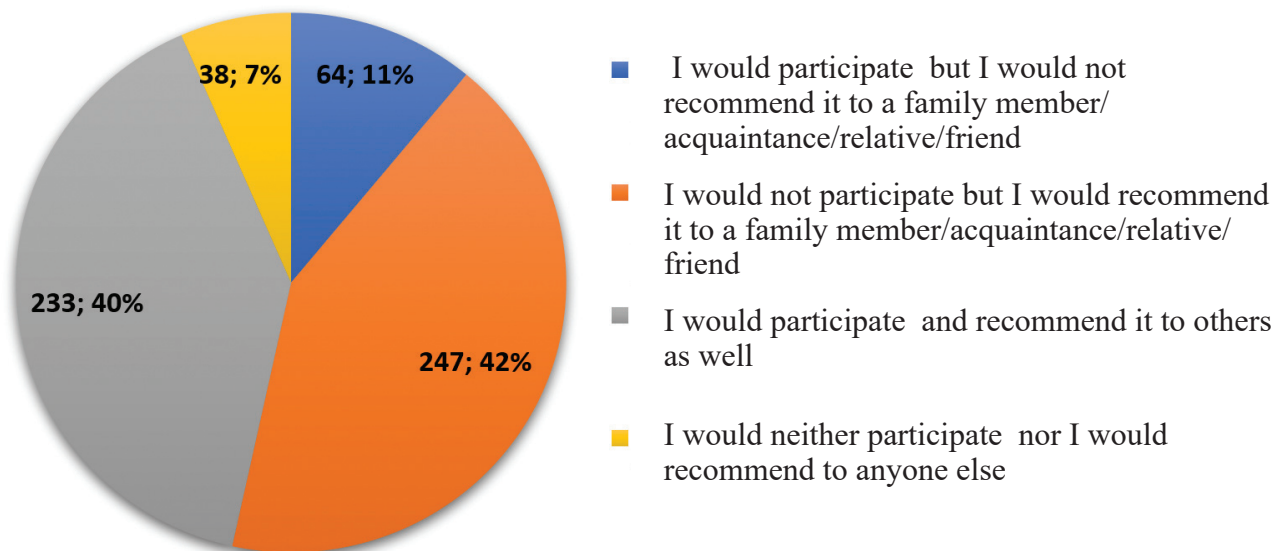
Qualitative data show that the participants would recommend acquaintances/relatives/friends to participate in such a program. However, they refrained from expressing their opinion on whether they would join or not, which can be explained by the impact of stereotypes. On the one hand, the level of stigmatization of visiting a psychologist/professional is still high in society today. On the other hand, it is explained by superstition when visiting a psychologist was perceived as a mental health disorder. *“When some people advised their relatives to get a psychologist’s service, they got upset” (Women’s Focus Group, Tkibuli).*

On the other hand, part of the society finds it difficult to acknowledge the problem openly and perceive itself as a perpetrator’s behaviour change program beneficiary. However, a quantitative survey showed a significant share (40%) of the respondents who would join the program and advise others to be in-

volved as well. **Men would rather choose not to participate in the program but advise others to do so (49.6%),** while those with higher education and employed prefer to participate (about 44-47%). (See *Diagram #6.2*)

Diagram #6.2

Would you participate in the program, or would you recommend it to anyone else?



CONCLUSION

Issues related to the elimination of domestic violence and the empowerment of women victims of violence should not be limited to measures focused only on victims. It is essential to start working with the perpetrator at an early stage and involve them in a behaviour change program to prevent the violence. Since the leading reasons for domestic violence are linked to psycho-social, cultural, and economic factors, behaviour change programs (whose ultimate goal is to modify the abusive environment by changing the perpetrator`s attitudes) should include:

- ❖ Different methods of attracting and involving perpetrators in the program: voluntary, mandatory, and combined, which contain elements of indirect coercion;
- ❖ Agencies that will be responsible for involving beneficiaries in the program, as well as for directly implementing and monitoring (the need for inter and intrasectoral cooperation for the program effectiveness);
- ❖ Program structure, human resource qualifications, etc.;
- ❖ The component of raising public awareness to realize the need for the program and form the population`s positive attitude towards it.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study results show that the development of perpetrator's behaviour change programs at an early stage requires further steps to strengthen multisectoral cooperation and coordinated efforts. Given the monitoring clear findings, it is recommended to:

To the Government of Georgia - Interagency Commission on Gender Equality, Violence against Women and Domestic Violence

- Adoption of a decree of the Government of Georgia which would define the specific measures to be implemented to change the perpetrator's attitudes and behaviour, as well as rules and forms of their implementation;
- Identify the agency in charge and as well as partners responsible for developing and implementing a mandatory program of perpetrator's behavior change at an early stage (at the stage of issuing a restraining and protective order), develop and implement the program;
- Identify the entities implementing the perpetrator's behaviour change program at an early stage, define its duration and monitoring timeframes (not less than 6 months);
- Establish transparent licensing criteria for implementers of the perpetrator's behaviour change program;
- Ensure cooperation and coordination of state agencies implementing actions directed to the change the perpetrators' violent attitudes and behaviour. The joint work of the Health Care (Social Service Agency), the National Probation Agency, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and other agencies is important in implementing the perpetrator's behaviour change program. Coordinate implementation of victim support programs and perpetrator's behaviour change programs;
- Develop specific guidelines and curricula for the perpetrator's behaviour change program, which include a multi-faceted approach to the issue of perpetrator and victim programs. It is advisable, that the perpetrator's behaviour change program is tailored to the abuser's individual needs. The need for individual, group, and/or family therapy should be identified individually and not according to a similar, strictly prescribed standard for all beneficiaries;
- Set up a multidisciplinary team (e.g., social worker, psychologist, lawyer/district trustee), identifying the need to involve the beneficiary in the perpetrator's behaviour change program at an initial stage. It is essential to differentiate social worker functions focused on working with perpetrators, who will be free from bounding responsibilities and will have the obligation of identifying, assessing, and working with vulnerable families;
- It is advisable, that perpetrator's behaviour change programs are funded and implemented simultaneously with programs for rehabilitation of victims of violence (providing a non-violent environment is impossible only through funding the victim's empowerment and support projects). Consequently, it is advisable, for social workers, conducting activities with victims of violence to assign the referral function to the perpetrator's behaviour change program;

- A new Action Plan for Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and for the Protection of Victims (Survivors) should have more focus on strengthening and promoting perpetrator's behaviour change programs at an early stage.

To municipalities:

- Oblige child protection and support departments in municipalities to identify a potential perpetrator in vulnerable families, assess his condition, prevent family conflicts, consult a psychologist, and plan other interventions;
- Accelerate establishing an Interagency Commission for the Prevention of Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, Protection and Assistance to Victims of Domestic Violence at the Municipalities. It will be responsible for developing an action plan and program for the protection of victims of domestic violence and increasing the motivation of perpetrators to participate in educational programs regarding behaviour change (based on the best practices of Opole Municipality in Poland);
- Introduce a hybrid model (online and offline programs) of perpetrator's behaviour change programs in the municipality. Ensure the involvement of potential perpetrators/unidentified perpetrators in the program, based on the recommendation of a municipal social worker or psychologist, by offering incentives. For instance, encourage them to participate in the program through vocational training and/or employment promotion (that will increase the motivation of potential perpetrators to integrate into the voluntary program);
- Sign memoranda of understanding between municipalities and various professional private institutions or non-governmental organizations that can provide qualified psychological or social assistance in changing the perpetrator's behaviour, with funds allocated to the local budget. The perpetrator identified in the municipality should be referred to the relevant institutions through outsourcing;
- Develop a mechanism for monitoring and evaluation of the perpetrator's behaviour change program impact (by identifying the responsible agency, monitoring tool, and timeframe) and ensure its regular implementation;
- Promote the professional development of those working with perpetrators and share advanced international practices.

To Ministry of Internal Affairs

- It is essential to create a unified database, which will include different categories of perpetrators (probationers; those in penitentiary institutions; those with suspended sentences; persons on whom protective or restraining orders are issued; persons released from penitentiary institutions; persons reported by the victim/family member (unidentified perpetrator), etc.). The database should be available to service providers and agencies involved in the program under the condition of confidentiality, to ensure systematic data collection, program impact evaluation, and identify recurrence;
- Conduct periodic monitoring of law enforcement personnel and their families and, if necessary, involve them in the rehabilitation program;
- The district trustee/law enforcement inspector should collect information about vulnerable families and interview the perpetrator at an early stage to prevent violence and refer them to the appropriate institution.

To Ministry of Education and Science

- Conduct a public awareness-raising campaign;
- Organize events against domestic violence in schools, introducing positive examples/success stories;
- Work with adolescents, especially boys with antisocial behaviour, and strengthen the psychologist staff unit.

To National Probation Bureau

- Actively implement and continue the existing program for the perpetrator's behaviour change program;
- Ensure that new beneficiaries involvement in the perpetrator's behaviour change program at any stage (during the module), e.g., with individuals who already have participation experience. This approach will increase the trust and involvement indicator of the beneficiaries;
- Develop and expand a behaviour change program for different types of perpetrators (e.g., those in penitentiary institutions, probationers, perpetrators with protection or restraining order, etc.) according to crime specifics (voluntary or compulsory, for services of penitentiary institutions and National Probation Agency).

To the Parliament of Georgia

- The Law of Georgia on Elimination of Violence against Women and/or Domestic Violence, Protection and Assistance to Victims of Violence should specify a state agency and service form that will implement activities to change the perpetrator's attitudes and behaviour and ensure the involvement of different types of perpetrators in the behaviour change program;
- The law should identify the preconditions and grounds for mandatory and voluntary participation in the perpetrator's behaviour change program. It is advisable to involve perpetrators in the program at various stages (for instance, pre-trial detention, issuing a restraining or protective order, staying in a penitentiary institution, after release from a penitentiary institution, or probation). If the perpetrator has a substance abuse or is addicted to gambling or has mental health problems, they should be provided with appropriate services.

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