

MOLDOVA

Preventing gender-based partner violence among youth with a new school-based course: “Harmonious Couple Relationships”

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BACKGROUND

Gender-based partner violence is a widespread problem in the Republic of Moldova. The most recent national survey on gender-based violence (GBV), conducted in 2011, found that 6 out of 10 Moldovan women, experienced at least one form of partner violence since the age of 15.

A number of Moldovan civil society organizations, public authorities, and other stakeholders are making efforts to provide and strengthen services for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence. For example, the Moldovan legislature adopted new legal provisions providing for protection orders against domestic violence aggressors and improved other relevant criminal procedure provisions. Other efforts focus on assistance to victims of domestic violence, including legal, psychological,

and other protection measures to victims. On-going social awareness programs focus on eliminating societal stereotypes about gender and gender roles and are raising awareness about different forms of violence and their negative consequences. However, there are no primary prevention programs that address relationship risk factors that trigger partner violence targeting young people.

To address this gap and to ensure a sustainable long-term prevention effort for young people in all regions of the country, in 2014-2015 the International Center “La Strada” developed the concept for a new school-based one-year course on preventing violence entitled “Harmonious Couple Relationships.”

PROJECT AIM

The project aim is to fully develop, roll out, and properly measure a new school-based youth education course “Harmonious Couple Relationships” to prevent gender-based partner violence among youth. With this project proposal, International Center “La Strada” will finalize the development of the course materials, roll out the course to a critical mass of schools and students, measure the effects on student learning, and provide recommendations to help improve course design and implementation.

In 2014-2015, “La Strada” developed the concept of a new course for young people. The course was designed to address relationship-level risk factors of gender based partner violence among youth, including behaving according to gender stereotypes and accepting them as the norm, insufficient exposure, understanding, and knowledge of positive relationship models, inability to solve conflict, lack of self-confidence, and influence of others (negative peer pressure). To address these selected relationship risk factors, the school-based course

will build students’ capacity in three broad competency areas, with specific knowledge, attitudes, and behavior improvements in each of the competency areas. Specifically, the course will teach students to develop and follow positive relationship values and models; will improve their capacity to be assertive and deliberate in their relationships; and will build students’ capacity to prevent risky behaviors at the beginning of their relationships.

The development of the new course is a work in progress. The course passed the experimental phase and was preliminarily approved, as a concept, by the Ministry of Education of Moldova. Currently it includes a draft curriculum, a methodological guide, and the student notebook. To finalize the course development, International Center “La Strada” needs to develop a Teacher’s Manual, to roll-out the course in Moldovan schools, to measure the effects on student learning.

PROJECT METHODS

The course roll-out and implementation phase includes the following steps:

1. Approval of the course Curriculum & Methodological Guide by the Ministry of Education of Moldova.
2. Pilot an abridged version of the course in selected schools to ensure that the course design is appropriate for the established learning objectives.
3. Roll out the course in 21 schools (5% of functioning high schools in Moldova), providing for sufficient diversity of schools, participants, and teachers.

4. Measure effects on student learning and develop recommendations to help improve course design, implementation and national scale-up.
5. Finalize all materials and make them available for use by all functional high schools in Moldova.

Steps one and two have been completed: preliminary approval by the Ministry of Education was received in 2014, and the pilot study was conducted in 11 schools in five districts of Moldova. This project is focused on bringing the course development and implementation efforts to a successful conclusion.

PROJECT OUTCOMES

Within twelve months, the project will achieve the following:

1. The course accessibility will be tested, by means of rolling-out, on whether it responds to the needs of Moldovan young people and teachers’ training capacity enabling Teacher’s Manual development, training of teachers and delivery of course in preselected schools along with the distribution of Students Notebook;
2. The effects of the course on young people’s attitudes towards domestic violence are measured enabling delivery of recommendations

to improve the course design and implementation; ultimately, all course materials (Curriculum, Methodological Guide, Student Notebook, and Teacher’s Manual) are designed and submitted to the Ministry of Education for final approval.

3. When fully developed, evaluated, and approved, the course will be offered as an elective one-year classroom-based course (34 academic hours) to all high school students aged 16 to 18 years old.

