



Federal Ministry for
Family Affairs, Senior Citizens,
Women and Youth

Working together to combat domestic violence:

Cooperation, intervention, research.

**Findings of the evaluation research assessing
intervention projects against
domestic violence (German acronym: WiBIG)**

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I. Introduction

Protection from gender-based violence is a question of human rights and of safeguarding individuals' fundamental rights. Thus, all women and men who wish to support the realisation of these rights are confronted with the question of how to ensure that society and its institutions assume responsibility for this violence that occurs predominantly within the supposed safe haven of the family.

In the mid-1970s, the Women's Movement began to agitate publicly against gender-based violence. They set up the first women's shelters to provide refuge for battered women and their children. Since then, new approaches have been explored. Responsibility has been placed on a broader footing and the focus shifted to interaction between different institutions. The complex cooperation practice within the context of intervention projects assigns each institution and agency responsibility for their points of contact with domestic violence within their specific fields of competence.

Intervention projects against domestic violence began to be set up in Germany at the beginning of the 1990s. They brought about a change of perspective in the discussion on domestic violence. An increasing number of perpetrator-oriented intervention strategies were developed. "Hit out and you clear out" became one of the principles underlying a different kind of state intervention. The introduction of the Protection from Violence Act at the beginning of 2002 and the successive expansion of the Police Acts in virtually all German states to include the power of the police to issue a "go-order" banning the perpetrator from the residence reflect how this new way of thinking has changed society's actions.

In Germany, the term "intervention project" refers to institutionalised cooperative alliances that work on an inter-institutional and interdisciplinary basis. Ideally, they bring together representatives of all agencies, institutions, projects and professions in a given region that work specifically with domestic violence or carry social responsibility for it.

As a rule, a central cooperation forum, such as a Round Table, is at the centre of their activities. These differ from the older types of Round Table, which in many places work on a particular issue: Here, participants do not primarily take part in them as individual interested experts but as delegates sent by and mandated by their institutions. The long-term aim is not only that individuals should improve their practice by incorporating interdisciplinary knowledge but that entire institutions should develop the same understanding of domestic violence and the same goals and coordinate their procedures on this basis.

The "Evaluation research on intervention projects against domestic violence" (German acronym: WiBIG) was commissioned to the University of Osnabrueck by the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth to assess the work of ten selected intervention projects over a period of 6 years (1998-2004).

The focus during the first phase of the study was to evaluate the Berlin Intervention Project against Domestic Violence (German acronym: BIG), which at the time was a federally funded model project. The second phase from 2000 focused on a comparative evaluation of other intervention projects of different scales and scope running either at local authority or state level. Furthermore, a total of eight perpetrator programs offered by different organizations were evaluated.

Projects

<i>Berlin:</i>	“Berlin coordination centre for intervention against domestic violence” (BIG), including the BIG hotline and a mobile intervention team, as well as two perpetrator programmes,
<i>Bremen:</i>	“New paths”,
<i>Freiburg:</i>	“Freiburg intervention project against domestic violence” (FRIG) with a perpetrator programme,
<i>Gladbeck:</i>	“Gladbeck initiative against violence in families” (GIP),
<i>Hannover:</i>	“Hannover intervention project against male violence in the family” (HAIP), with a perpetrator programme,
<i>Mecklenburg-West Pomerania:</i>	“Intervention project CORA – Contra violence against women and girls in Mecklenburg-West Pomerania” – with five intervention offices,
<i>Passau:</i>	“Violence in close social relationships”,
<i>Rhineland-Palatinate:</i>	“Intervention project against violence in close social relationships” (RIGG), with a plenary forum of the regional Round Tables,
<i>Schleswig-Holstein:</i>	“Coordination and intervention policy of Schleswig-Holstein against domestic violence towards women” – KIK – includes 12 regional KIK coordination centres and four regionally-based perpetrator programmes,
<i>Stuttgart:</i>	“Stuttgart partnership against domestic violence” (STOP)

The task of evaluating the intervention projects comprised analysing the project processes, in particular the cooperation forums and coordination centres, and assessing changes in intervention and support practice, in particular model projects and innovative practice with a model character.

A summative evaluation approach that analysed the results in terms of outcome would have not have gone far enough for this complex task. In this area of research that is characterised by dynamic developments a process-based approach proved effective, allowing flexible responses to new developments and producing interim findings that could be used to refine current practice. The concept of a formative intervening evaluation therefore includes regular feedback and reflection sessions with the actors in the field and permanent reflection on their own role in the field. A multi-method approach was particularly well suited to recording and summarising the different perspectives and processing them into a form that could be used in practice.

Methods used included quantitative instruments, such as questionnaires, documentation sheets, and analysis of case records, combined with qualitative approaches, such as participant observation, individual and group interviews with experts, victims and perpetrators (overview of the data collection in the annex).

**Project directors, University
of Osnabrueck:**

Prof. Carol Hagemann-White
Prof. Barbara Kavemann

Associates:

Stefan Beckmann (Dipl. Päd)
Ulrike Brandfaß (Dipl. Psych.)
Katja Grieger (Dipl. Psych.)
Beate Leopold (Dipl. Soz.)
Heike Rabe (Ass. Jur.)

II. Starting situation: Violence against women – recognised as a societal problem yet treated as a private matter

For a long time, the treatment of cases of domestic violence by the police and public prosecution services was characterised by the attitude that violence that occurred in private personal relationships should also be dealt with in private. Domestic violence was defined as a family dispute. The predominant response of the police to offences that fell under the scope of criminal law, such as bodily harm, threats or coercion, was to attempt to bring about conciliation. They processed the cases, if at all, under a so-called “simplified proceedings” option, in which the injured party and the accused were not questioned personally but merely requested to make a written statement.

A standard procedure in the public prosecution services was to refer the case for private prosecution. This was tantamount to the state acknowledging to the victim a lack of public interest in prosecuting and left the assertion of rights to their private initiative. A clear deficit in enforcing existing legislation prevailed.

As a rule, perpetrators did not have to worry about sanctions on any level as a result of their actions. The idea of programmes or courses to modify behaviour had not yet established itself in Germany in the sphere of domestic violence.

It was the institution of the women’s shelter that shouldered the entire burden of the violence problem and all its side effects. The problem, which they encountered in practice as structurally entrenched male violence against women, was left to the women’s projects to deal with and thus privatised once more. As a result they experienced much of their work coming to nothing. Confronted with an unabated stream of battered women, they saw little prospect that providing help for victims alone could lead to a lasting reduction of gender-based violence.

Within the police, who often experience first-hand the extent of the violence and the difficult situation of the victims and their children, there had been an increase in awareness of the problem but little possibility of effective action. Repeated responses to the same family, combined with the experience that their intervention was not able to change the situation of the victims in any lasting way, made these attendances unpopular.

Thus, dissatisfaction with the limitations of their own institutions' capacity to act had accumulated amongst the most important professionals involved. The motivation to surpass these limitations was strong, as was the recognition that they would not be able to achieve this alone.

In this situation, the idea of intervention projects made inroads amazingly quickly despite a good deal of scepticism. Out of this the central overarching principles evolved:

- Private and public violence should be treated equally in the state system of sanctions,
- Perpetrators should be held accountable,
- Reliable protection and support should be guaranteed for victims.

To implement these goals, all the projects pursue three strategies: they create the setting needed to improve intervention and support; they develop a paradigm to provide orientation for all parties involved; they organise learning processes within the agencies.

III. Developing workable strategies

3.1 Creating the setting needed to improve intervention and support

In areas of work such as domestic violence, which no institution can adequately deal with alone, cooperative alliances are essential. Within the intervention projects they have evolved into a permanent institutional mode of working, through which lasting changes can be brought about.

I Intervention projects achieve lasting and comprehensive changes, provided certain conditions are fulfilled.

Intervention projects can measure the success of their activities by whether they succeed in,

- linking top-down and bottom-up-strategies,
- ensuring structures and activities at state level that interconnect with regional structures and activities,
- firmly incorporating the results of the work into institutional structures,
- establishing permanent cooperation bodies that are tailored to the needs of the users,
- promoting capacity for innovation within the cooperative alliances.

I An independent coordination body is indispensable even when intervention projects have been working successfully over a long period of time.

Coordination was the key to setting up the intervention projects, and decisive tasks, such as recruiting new cooperation partners, constantly recur. It is also required for an indefinite period and to a varying degree depending on the region, if the processes of change that have been set in motion are to continue to be effective in the long term. The concrete profile of the coordination will depend on what stage of development the project has reached. A survey of professional staff involved in the projects at the end of the evaluation period found that although the majority saw good prospects of achieving the changes initiated, they also felt there was still a need for action on several fronts and did not expect the results to become firmly established without further work. Satisfaction with the coordination was high and the majority of respondents believed it to be an ongoing necessity. Investment in coordination is comparable to investment in quality assurance or prevention.

I Where cooperative alliances have existed for longer a new profile for the coordination work evolves.

It includes:

Quality assurance: Across-the-board implementation within an agency is quite a different process than during model trials. Furthermore, working at Round Tables with highly committed, competent cooperation partners cannot hide the fact that by no means all employees of relevant institutions have these kinds of skills and think and act accordingly in cases of domestic violence. The processes begun need to be continuously observed and evaluated.

Shoring up the results achieved and the quality that has evolved is a task for which permanent responsibility must be taken. Institutions and individuals alike have the tendency to “relapse” - to revert to old ways of working.

Part of the coordination work includes **information management**. In order to be able to monitor and review processes of change and the implementation of agreed action, internal structures within institutions and structures for exchanging information within the cooperative alliance are needed.

Cross-linking between networks: For the cooperation to be economical in its use of resources it is helpful to draw upon existing structures and avoid setting up parallel structures wherever possible. Intervention projects invite participation in their own cooperation bodies but in return can also send delegates to existing networks in order to feed the topic of domestic violence into their work. Approaching existing bodies such as medical quality committees, multidisciplinary working groups on legal issues linked to youth welfare services, or crime prevention councils is to be recommended here.

3.2 Developing a paradigm to provide orientation for all parties involved: The intervention chain

The intervention projects succeeded in firmly establishing the paradigm of the intervention chain – a symbol for interlinked and unbroken intervention – in the public discussion. It became accepted by all participating agencies and institutions. The paradigm promotes a sense of identification with the common idea for all parties involved and fosters motivation for committed action.

Practice has made significant progress through the engagement with and orientation to the paradigm. The challenge for the future will be to keep the symbol of the intervention chain open to accommodate the true complexity of the realities of domestic violence.

3.3 Organising learning processes in agencies

It will only be possible to achieve a broad-based implementation of new approaches if a new awareness surrounding the problem of domestic violence and recognition of the necessity for a coordinated approach are widely shared. For that reason, one of the goals of the intervention projects is to bring about a change in consciousness across the board within the institutions involved. Conferences and in-service training courses on domestic violence tailored to the needs of specific professions are important instruments for establishing the need to address domestic violence and changing perceptions of the problem.

As part of the work of virtually all the intervention projects studied, numerous training events were initiated and held for different target groups (police, justice system, youth services, health professionals, counselling services). The findings of the evaluation, carried out over several years, of police training events on the topic of domestic violence in general and on introducing the new police go-orders in particular give excellent examples of successful learning processes in institutions. However, there is also a clear need for training to continue.

I Training courses encourage professionals to engage with the issue of domestic violence and ensure an institutional basis for its continuation.

It was not possible for the evaluation research to study the impact of training courses over time systematically. However, in the case of the police, it was found that participants were able to discuss the whole problem of domestic violence with experts from other fields and expand their perspectives beyond those specific to their own profession. They themselves have acted as multipliers and fed their insights into their daily work practice. During regular meetings to monitor training they reported on changes in the attitudes of colleagues.

The Berlin training courses engendered initiatives and new work constellations on the topic of domestic violence promoted by senior police management. That ultimately led to recognition of the necessity of institutional establishment and culminated in a system of permanent units with responsibility for domestic violence being set up within the Berlin police force. These units, which are incorporated into every organisational level, can be seen as a result of the training programme.

I Even after broad implementation of training for members of the police force there is still a great need for information, discussion and exchange of experience.

Well-delivered basic knowledge stimulates a need for more precise information. A need for information was established both on the topic of domestic violence and on the possibilities for police intervention. Up to 60% of participants in police training events responding to the survey expressed a wish for more training. The majority were in favour of training events lasting several days. A large proportion (up to 47%) expressed the wish for more time for discussion and to exchanges experiences with colleagues.

Multiplier events were the form of training favoured by the police because they are a time- and cost-effective way of conveying information. However, they are suitable to only a limited extent for introducing new approaches such as police go-orders. The results of the evaluation show that in events of this kind questions ultimately remain unanswered, and doubts and uncertainties cannot be dealt with adequately. For example, only 20% of respondents felt that they were thoroughly prepared for the Berlin go-order pilot scheme. 60% felt they were only prepared in principle and were trusting to practice for guidance. A further 20% did not feel adequately prepared and expressed the need for further information and clarification.

I Along with a broad range of information and further training opportunities, obligatory training courses and firm establishment of the topic of domestic violence in the initial training for different occupational groups should have high priority.

Courses on the subject of domestic violence are an essential part of in-service training. However, they are often taken up by only a small section of people who are already interested in the topic. It is vital that they reach a broad circle within all occupational groups that deal with domestic violence in a professional capacity.

It is also important to establish domestic violence as a separate topic in training in companies, in schools and universities for occupational groups concerned with the problem. This gives domestic violence the importance it deserves both in society and in each relevant professional practice.

Establishing the topic of domestic violence for example in initial and in-service training for the police would also reflect the interest of members of the police force surveyed. Up to 61% of respondents were in favour of it. In some cases, the necessity for it to be firmly established was considered more important by active police officers than by recruits or officers in training.

IV. Lasting change

State intervention in domestic violence – Evolution of police and public prosecution service practice in the context of intervention projects against domestic violence

To investigate changes in practice, WiBIG conducted qualitative and quantitative surveys in the different areas of work covered by individual cooperation partners in the intervention projects¹. The results show what changes are possible; however, they also highlight areas in which putting changes into practice poses particular difficulties. These results cannot be extrapolated to the current state of practice in organisations, institutions and state agencies that do not work in the context of cooperative alliances.

By either taking action or failing to act, the police and public prosecution service reflect the state's attitude to domestic violence. Both institutions are participating actively in cooperative alliances in many places.

To improve police practice, guidelines and checklists were developed as part of the work of intervention projects for use in cases of domestic violence. The idea behind this is, on the one hand, to facilitate precise recording of all relevant information in connection with emergency calls and, on the other hand, to give instructions for dealing with them in order to better adapt police intervention to the specific needs connected with violence in the private realm.

Special units were set up for the police and public prosecution services - in some states across the board. In some public prosecution services internal instructions were issued stipulating that domestic violence cases should no longer be referred for private prosecution and that if possible a public prosecution should be brought even without the participation of the victim.

Since 2002, Police Acts have been amended in almost all German states. To combat domestic violence, police authority to intervene - based on the legal mandate to avert danger - was introduced. This took the form of the power to issue go-orders to perpetrators, banning them from the home temporarily or sometimes for longer periods. The wording used in the legislation is not uniform; there are slight variations in the conditions under which intervention is possible and in how the individual standards have been fleshed out, but essentially they all achieve the same thing:

¹ Detailed results were published in the Final Report, WiBIG 2004, volume entitled "Staatliche Intervention bei häuslicher Gewalt – Entwicklung der Praxis von Polizei und Staatsanwaltschaft im Kontext von Interventionsprojekten gegen häusliche Gewalt." It is available for download from the Internet at www.bmfsfj.de (see under →Forschungsnetz" → "Forschungsberichte").

the authority of the police to ban a violent person from a residence for a certain period of time (between 10 and 28 days, depending on the individual state).

To assess practice the evaluation research project conducted a number of different surveys, including questionnaires to be answered in writing by police officers after responding to a domestic violence call, written questionnaires for women to comment on police attendance, analysis of a total of 959 case records in two specialized prosecution units (overview in the Annex to this paper).

4.1 For the police domestic violence is no longer a private matter

I The police see domestic violence as a criminal offence and are increasingly willing to follow guidelines and intervene against the perpetrator.

Indications of the fact that the police no longer see domestic violence as a private matter include a change in the language used within the police force, preferences in the selection of police means of intervention and acceptance of the new concepts and powers of intervention.

Almost all policemen and -women surveyed were in favour of the new mandate for responding to domestic violence incidents; only a few individual officers rejected it outright. The vast majority saw violence in marriages/relationships as a criminal offence and considered police involvement as completely appropriate.

Surveys of both police officers and abused women indicated that the guidelines drawn up in the intervention projects had been followed in police attendances at incidents of domestic violence. The implementation of the guidelines was particularly successful with regard to treatment of victims and perpetrators.

Most of the 36 women surveyed reported that the police arrived quickly at the scene of the crime with numerous officers. They were often on the scene within twenty minutes, in most cases within ten minutes even. The number of officers present also bears witness to the fact that emergency calls in cases of domestic violence are taken seriously. In three-quarters of 153 police responses evaluated, women police officers were at the scene. Almost always, victims and perpetrators were questioned in separate rooms.

I Issuing a go-order banning a perpetrator of domestic violence from the residence has become an integral part of new police practice.

For a long time, the predominant response when the police attended incidents of domestic violence was to induce the victim to leave the home. As long as there was no possibility of excluding perpetrators from the home for several days this was in many cases the only possibility of creating a safe situation for the victim.

Starting with pilot schemes in individual states in Germany, the police began from mid-2000 to exclude perpetrators of domestic violence from the home for several days or weeks. Since 2002, police go-orders are issued in almost all states in cases of domestic violence. The extent to which they were issued in the documented cases of domestic violence was between 7% (go-order pilot scheme in Berlin) and 60% (pilot phase of STOP in Stuttgart). This broad spread is largely a result of differences in the range of cases included in the total reference group and in the calculation of statistics. In consequence, such quotas can only be interpreted after taking into account the differing legal frameworks in each state, different police procedures and the differences in the way statistics are kept. Thus, a low quota of go-orders does not necessarily mean that the measure is not adequately established in procedures and a high quota does not automatically imply broad application of go-orders. It is only actually possible to follow regional trends. In Berlin an increasing proportion of cases using go-orders was observed. While in 2002 in the regionally limited Berliner go-order pilot scheme a long-term go-order was issued in 7% of cases of domestic violence, that figure rose to 10% throughout the state in 2003.

The introduction of police authority to exclude perpetrators of domestic violence from a residence for a defined period has given officers legal security. After police go-orders had been codified in law, 67% said they were in favour of issuing go-orders.

I Police practice reveals a need for improvement in gathering evidence.

Cases of domestic violence continued to be dealt with under the simplified proceedings option. In 11% to 65% of cases neither the accused nor the victims received a summons to be questioned in person. Experts from the police and public prosecution service now agree that this procedure is not an appropriate response to the needs connected with domestic violence. Requiring the accused and the victim to give an account in writing of the circumstances and course of events relating to the alleged offence is often an obstacle preventing people from reacting. Different levels of articulacy and education increase these barriers.

Following attendance at an incident, the police in some cases did not take any further action to gather evidence. In these cases the accused and the victim were neither required to make a written statement nor were they interviewed at the scene of the crime or summonsed for subsequent questioning at a police station. Notification from the public prosecutor that the case had been dismissed was the next response by the authorities after charges had been filed.

At the time of the surveys the police had only very rarely taken photographs of injuries or the scene of the crime and had noted down only a small number of spontaneous remarks. Depending on the public prosecution service, officers photographed injuries of the victims in only 1% - 3% of cases. Given a quota of over 80% of offences involving actual bodily harm there is vast potential for improvement here.

Further evidence such as spontaneous remarks, which in combination with testimony by officers could eliminate the need for victims to give incriminating testimony in court, were noted only on rare occasions by the police.

4.2 Deficits in applying court sanctions

The criminal prosecution process has not yet been integrated into the implementation of coordinated intervention in the area of domestic violence to the same extent as have the police with their mandate to ensure safety from danger.

State intervention still often ends at the interface to criminal prosecution. Intervention projects have focused on developing and implementing an unbroken intervention chain, which extends from police responses through to civil law protection orders available under the Protection from Violence Act, and also to building bridges to victims through outreach counselling to ensure that all possibilities for permanent protection are exhausted.

However it has not been possible to involve criminal prosecution services adequately in this process and to incorporate them into an overall policy on (state) intervention in cases of domestic violence.

The police and justice system differ in the conditions of their work against domestic violence, in their access to the people involved and the point in time at which they have contact with them, and also in the way they view the problem of domestic violence. While in violent situations the police have immediate contact with victims and perpetrators and can document their reactions, the criminal prosecution agencies do not have contact with victims until weeks later and then only in the form of files. The public prosecution services have a different perception of victims and accused than that of the police.

The criminal prosecutions agencies know people affected by violence as witnesses not victims, while police officers clearly see them as victims. This has an effect both on expectations and on the perception of their need for support. While the police are more likely to meet with positive responses from victims if they apply new measures such as go-orders, the criminal prosecution agencies often meet with rejection. This may reduce their commitment to addressing domestic violence.

I The public prosecution services rarely impose sanctions in cases of domestic violence. The goal of a decisive change in direction to include consistent prosecution has not yet been achieved.

A study of investigation proceedings in two different public prosecution services has shown that the majority of cases were dismissed. In 95.8% (347) and 81.7% (488) of cases, no action was brought against the accused. In both studies, the quota deviated from the statistics kept by the agencies themselves: both agencies claimed a smaller proportion of cases dropped. According to their statistics, the figures were 89.8% and 69.8% respectively. However, the fact remains that, even based on the lowest official number of cases dismissed, the public prosecution services dismissed at least two-thirds of cases of domestic violence.

The figures cover all types of dismissal. The form for dismissing a case chosen most frequently was that provided for under § 170 Sec. 2 of the Code of criminal procedure. A case dismissed in this way has absolutely no legal consequences for the accused.

I Implementing the demand to affirm a particular public interest in prosecution and desist from referring cases of domestic violence for private prosecution creates an adequate framework for trying these cases in court but does not alone solve the problem of the high dismissal rates.

A clear difference between the two studies can be seen in the question as to why the public prosecutors did not take legal action against perpetrators. One of them was following standing instructions. There the criterion that a criminal prosecution has to be in the public interest was usually deemed to have been met and cases were rarely referred for private prosecution. These aspects did not play any part in why cases were dismissed. Here the reason most frequently cited for dismissal under § 170 Sec. 2 of the Code of criminal procedure was a lack of sufficient evidence of the alleged offence (83% or 342 of 408 dismissals under § 170 Sec. 2 of the Code of criminal procedure). The heads of department in the other public prosecution service justified their dismissals predominantly by saying that there was no particular public interest and referred a third of cases for private prosecution. Nevertheless, the level of cases dismissed was similar in the two studies. Contrary to expectations, the changes in procedure in one of the public prosecution services were not able to solve the problem of high dismissal rates.

I The connection between the decision of the victims to be involved in criminal proceedings and the outcome of the case has proven significant. As a rule, the course the case takes follows the wishes of the victims.

In many cases, public prosecution services refused to pursue criminal proceedings against the wishes of the victim; they interpret failure to make a statement for the prosecution as an expression of the victims wish that the case not continue. Aspects such as the safety of the victim, respecting her decision, but also insufficient grounds for punishment play a role here. In addition, in most cases, the departmental heads considered the victims testimony to be indispensable for pursuing a public prosecution.

I Latitude for the public prosecution services and a need for clarification become evident.

Public prosecution services often deal with cases of domestic violence in a field of tension created by two conflicting interests. For a certain proportion of victims, the circumstances of their lives, their plans and needs are in opposition to the objective of consistent criminal prosecution. For this reason, a certain proportion of “unsuccessful” legal proceedings will probably have to be accepted. On the other hand, in many cases, the victims are subject to

direct pressure from the perpetrator to act so that the prosecution is not continued. The fact that a woman is not prepared to take part in criminal prosecution can even be an indication of a higher level of threat.

What seems to be helpful in dealing with the dilemma is to record the situation of the victims in such a way that it is possible to precisely clarify the extent of her willingness to be involved. Through personal contact it is possible to further the cause both of motivating her to be a witness and protecting her as a victim. Forms of victim protection arising from past penal reforms have already stressed the area of victim protection, but most of them do not come into play until the trial and thus do not go far enough.

Thus at the end of the evaluation period there was seen to be need for clarification on several levels:

- How do criminal prosecution agencies intend to deal with the failure of victims to cooperate by acting as witnesses?
- How can support for witnesses be incorporated into the preliminary proceedings at an early stage?
- What organisational measures can be taken to ensure that public prosecution services focus more on contact with victims, i.e. potential witnesses?

V. Weaving a closer web of assistance – Developments in the support system in the context of intervention projects

The change in police practice has given rise to a high demand for counselling and also to new counselling requirements.

State intervention has consequences for the victims of domestic violence and their children and does not always correspond to what they expect or wish for from intervention, something they are not usually entirely clear about. Intervention can even cause or aggravate crises if decisions have to be taken or it becomes necessary to take action. Thus, the conviction has gained ground that services should not only wait until victims of violence take the initiative to seek counselling or refuge, but that instead information and counselling must be offered in a proactive way. People working in support agencies or the police who follow this objective take encouragement from examples from abroad. The support system for domestic violence in Germany, which was developed under the premise that victims will actively seek support, has thus been expanded to include other approaches.

As part of the evaluation of the intervention projects, we were able to follow the development of innovative counselling services for domestic violence. The results presented here are the outcome of an evaluation of two new kinds of proactive support². In Mecklenburg-West Pomerania intervention centres with a proactive counselling service were set up. Following police intervention in incidents of domestic violence, data is automatically passed onto them and they contact the victims directly and offer them counselling and crisis intervention. They were set up based on the Austrian model as a link between police intervention and possibilities for protection afforded by civil law. In Berlin, the BIG hotline has set up a mobile intervention team, which offers outreach counselling and support for women in crisis situations. Mobile intervention is available daily from 9.00 a.m. to midnight and will, if requested, offer counselling to women in their own homes or at another meeting place; it was often requested in the context of police intervention.

The evaluation research puts these services - the intervention centres and mobile intervention teams - into one category under the heading of proactive services, because they provide active support for victims of domestic violence either by overcoming any access difficulties they might have (mobile intervention teams) or by taking the first step to make contact (intervention centres). The research results are based, amongst other things, on an analysis of counselling case documents for 1,194 clients in five intervention centres, a written survey of clients (87 questionnaires) and an analysis of 335 requests for mobile intervention and 240 instances of mobile intervention that were actually carried out.

² Detailed findings were published in the Final Report WiBIG 2004, volume entitled "Neue Unterstützungspraxis bei häuslicher Gewalt." It can be downloaded from the Internet at www.bmfsfj.de (see under → "Forschungsnetz" → "Forschungsberichte").

I Proactive support services are appropriate to meet needs that arise following changes in police practice and new options under civil law.

Reservations that women affected by domestic violence would reject a proactive approach or that it could have a destructive effect because the women would feel disempowered or made to feel like victims again have proven to be unfounded. On the contrary: proactive counselling has contributed to empowering the victims by expanding their scope for making decisions or taking action, by increasing their personal power and helping them to regain control over their own lives.

Only 35 of 809 clients at the intervention centres with whom contact was made (5%) rejected counselling outright. The timing of the contact seems to be significant. The more time had elapsed before contact was made, the more frequently counselling was rejected: in 23 of 35 cases, three to seven days had already elapsed since the police attendance. Proactive counselling was able to provide information and support to victims of domestic violence who would not have otherwise sought support of this kind. There are a number of reasons for this:

- I Subjectively, they did not see themselves as needing support, even though they had suffered violence and did not have sufficient information about their legal rights.
- I They believed that their case was “not serious enough” to deserve support.
- I They were very frightened or resigned to their lot, were no longer actively seeking help or no longer held out any hope of being helped.

Mobile counselling and support services proved to be essential for some target groups and for others they were of great help.

- I As a back-up measure, outreach is important for many women who find it particularly difficult to seek out services (e.g. women with small children, women who are wheelchair users or who have other disabilities that restrict their movements).
- I Mobile counselling helps smooth the path into the support system for certain groups of victims. For women who, due to acute crisis, permanent emotional or physical limitations or other kinds of limited resources, would not have had the strength to move forward of their own accord, it clarifies the next steps they need to take.

It is only through proactive counselling that many victims receive the information they need to be able to take competent decisions about their future. It helps many women in a crisis to gain the level of stability required to even be able to take in information and advice.

I Proactive services reach new target groups.

The new services were also able to establish contact with those victims of domestic violence who had no information on possibilities of intervention and protection and knew little about their rights and local counselling services. An analysis of counselling documentation in the intervention centres showed, for example, that over a third of victims had had no previous contact in connection with domestic violence with any kind of counselling or support agencies.

Proactive counselling services are also helpful for incorporating child protection and youth services into the process, for establishing the support needs of girls and boys in the context of domestic violence and passing on the information to the responsible agencies. The outreach counselling provided by mobile intervention teams, for example, made it possible to record the situation of the children involved and where necessary call upon the emergency child protection team.

Proactive counselling has also proved extremely valuable for immigrant women – in particular those who have little knowledge of German. It is far easier to organise the interpreting services required if the request for counselling is not unexpected, but can be scheduled by the counsellor. If the fax received from the police already indicates that language assistance will be needed, an interpreter can personally accompany the counsellor to visit a client or be involved in a three-way telephone call. It is also an efficient way of meeting the counselling needs of those immigrant women who are socially isolated and do not understand the structures of the German support system.

I Proactive services need to be incorporated into the support system; they do not make other facilities such as women's shelters superfluous.

The new proactive services complement existing facilities and cannot replace them. On the contrary: They rely upon them. Stationary facilities such as women's shelters have not become superfluous: Instead, the proactive approach and outreach counselling have made it easier for many women to access them who would not have had the strength to find them on their own.

Wherever these services work through a proactive or outreach approach they reach victims for whom the protective measures by the police and legal system are not sufficient. They need the opportunity to find accommodation in a refuge, for example because they are so frightened that they need to go for a brief time to a safe place, from where they can return home as soon as they have got through the crisis or organised safety measures, or because they are under a permanent threat and have to seek refuge in a safe place from where they can apply for longer-term protection measures and/or find themselves a new place to live.

I The proactive support services identify structural obstacles within the support system and lower barriers. They contribute to the smooth functioning of the intervention chain and help identify and eliminate its weak points.

Professionals working in outreach crisis intervention and accompanying programmes see victims in their personal environment and accompany them through the various stages of seeking help. In this way it is possible to gain insight from the perspective of the victim into what kind of changes might be helpful and according to what subjective criteria the stages along the intervention chain are used or not used. Structural barriers within the support system, such as a lack of language support, complicated bureaucratic procedures or lack of clarity about responsibilities, can be identified by the person accompanying the clients.

The new services lower the barriers involved in accessing the support system and improve the chances of victims choosing the form of protection, advice and counselling best suited to their needs, their particular risk and their personal situation.

I Proactive counselling services reduce pressure on the police.

In the acute situations they are called to respond, the police often see a great need for support for the victims and their children. They have neither the competence nor the remit to provide this. The police have a considerable need for a crisis intervention and counselling service for victims that they can call upon at any time. In places where this is not available the police often attempt to achieve it in a roundabout way, e.g. through bilateral agreements with individual agencies.

If the police are able to pass information on to an intervention agency and assume that contact will be made the next day or if they are able to call upon an outreach crisis intervention team in cases of immediate necessity, the officers are far better able to do their job, knowing that the victims are well provided for. They are then less likely to experience conflict due to time pressure.

Proactive counselling can succeed in organising safety measures even when those provided by the police or the courts are not sufficient to give victims a sense of safety.

VI. Holding perpetrators accountable – Work with perpetrators in the context of intervention projects

As cooperative alliances against domestic violence started to emerge, increasing calls were made for perpetrators of domestic violence to be held accountable for their violent behaviour. However, for a long time, there was no consensus on what form this process of accountability should take. Domestic violence often cannot be, or at least under current legislation is not usually, punished by a custodial sentence and imposing a fine can mean that the victim suffers a second time if she and the perpetrator have joint finances. Based on models from abroad, a court obliging offenders to take part in so-called social training courses or perpetrators programmes has been proposed as the preferred remedy.

In Germany, perpetrators programmes are a relatively new and innovative field of work that is experiencing an extremely dynamic development. Incorporating work with perpetrators into cooperative alliances against domestic violence has been growing especially since 2002. A small number of agencies can now look back over several years of experience in the provision of social training courses in the context of intervention projects. However, many are in the very early days in this field.

Men were the exclusive target group of the perpetrators programmes evaluated. The exact form the work takes varied from programme to programme. Binding national standards for work with perpetrators in Germany are under development. Perpetrators programmes share a focused and structured approach to acts of violence by men towards their partners or ex-partners. Methods used are varied, but on the whole they are best described as being based on cognitive behaviour therapy. The courses evaluated by WiBIG comprised between 12 and 26 weekly group sessions.

Judicial orders based on different legal foundations have started to be used, especially in the context of intervention projects, albeit not in a uniform way throughout Germany. They have gradually become more significant. At present, orders by the public prosecution services prior to court proceedings have the greatest practical relevance. Public prosecution services decide independently on their procedures and criteria for issuing orders. If they consider a perpetrator suited, he is offered the opportunity to take part in a perpetrators programme. If he agrees and completes the programme, there are usually no further sanctions against him. If he terminates the programme before completion or is excluded from it, the idea is that he should be prosecuted.

WiBIG has evaluated work with perpetrators by eight agencies over a period of three years. Six agencies work directly in the context of intervention projects against domestic violence; the other two are closely linked to intervention projects. The analysis is based on a total of

1,201 questionnaires (client and group report forms) as well as interviews with group leaders, participants and some women whose partners took part (overview in the annex)³.

Participants who entered the programmes via a prosecutors or court order were as a rule accused of bodily harm. The most frequent crime of which participants stood accused was actual bodily harm; a third of participants were charged with grievous bodily harm.

I Almost two-thirds of men who begin a programme complete it.

Data in the form of social statistics was available for 322 perpetrators who established contact with the agencies. Of that number, 213 began a perpetrators programme and 137 (64%) completed it. 76 participants did not complete the courses; 56 dropped out of the programme of their own accord and 20 were excluded by the course leaders. 77% of participants who dropped out did so in the first half of the course.

Of all the documented perpetrators of domestic violence who contacted a perpetrator programme (322), 29% (94) chose not to participate and a further 15 (5%) were not accepted into the programmes by the agencies.

I The perpetrators documented are characterised by a relatively low level of schooling.

Over half the documented perpetrators (52%) had a Hauptschulabschluss (most elementary of German school-leaving qualifications, usually after year 9). A further 12% left school with no qualifications whatsoever. Assuming that in Germany level of education is an indicator for social class, the data reveal the following pattern: Access to a perpetrators programme working in the context of police intervention and the justice system was predominantly arranged for men from the lower social classes. It is probable that they are recorded and face sanctions for domestic violence disproportionately more often. By contrast, men from a middle-class background remained on the courses and completed them significantly more frequently. Potential for improvement was identifiable for both aspects of this discrepancy. The police and justice system could pay closer attention to ensuring that domestic violence in a middle-class context is recognised and prosecuted to the same extent. The agencies working with perpetrators could refine the concepts of their courses in order to achieve greater success with men from less educated backgrounds.

I Several social characteristics have a positive effect on completion of a perpetrators programme.

The connection between the following factors and completion of a programme has been shown to be statistically significant:

Level of school-leaving qualifications: Participants with a higher level of qualifications on leaving school were more likely to complete. The higher the qualifications, the greater the probability of completing a programme.

³ Detailed findings were published in the Final Report WiBIG 2004, volume entitled "Täterarbeit im Kontext von Interventionsprojekten gegen häusliche Gewalt". It can be downloaded from the Internet at www.bmfsfj.de (see under → "Forschungsnetz" → "Forschungsberichte").

Income: Men who completed a programme were more likely to be earning their own living than those who dropped out of the programme.

I Perpetrators mandated to a perpetrators programme by public prosecutors or court order are significantly more likely to complete it than men who participate without involvement of the justice system.

A legally framed order can evidently increase motivation to adhere to the requirements of a perpetrators programme. Men who had committed acts of violence against their partners only rarely of their own accord approached agencies offering targeted behaviour modification programmes. For that reason, external pressure is often required to induce them to begin a perpetrators programme.

I There are indications that perpetrators programmes can bring about behavioural changes in participants that in turn lead to a decrease in the use of physical violence towards their partners. Thus work with perpetrators is a useful addition to measures/services of intervention against domestic violence available in the past, provided that the work fulfils specified quality standards.

From the perspective of group leaders, most of the participants demonstrated positive changes in their attitudes to their (ex)-partner or towards women in general. By the end of the course, the course leaders documented that the men showed greater acceptance of the wishes and needs of their partner as well as a greater acceptance of responsibility for their violent behaviour. Furthermore, in the case of participants completing the course, general social skills, an understanding of their own needs and the ability to deal with conflict was considered to be better than at the beginning of the course. Several partners of participants, who were interviewed during the course of the evaluation, described similar impressions.

VII. Lasting successes of intervention projects – From regional innovation to societal change

Intervention projects were the first cooperative ventures to be able to find and firmly establish a concrete organisational form for inter-institutional collaboration. In this they played a **pioneering role**⁴.

Intervention projects are an appropriate organisational form for dealing with the issue of domestic violence at **different levels**. The improvements within the problem area of domestic violence that can be initiated and achieved by intervention projects are situated:

- on the level of primary and secondary legislation. These results that have been codified in law (Police Acts, Protection from Violence Act, etc.) will have a permanent effect on both the action of important institutions and the public discussion of domestic violence.
- on the level of organisational structures. Major state institutions such as the police or public prosecution services have incorporated special units responsible for domestic violence into their structures. The topic was also incorporated into initial and in-service training. The support system was expanded to include outreach services and ways were found of challenging perpetrators to change their violent behaviour.
- on the level of the personal commitment, mind-set and action of relevant actors

Beyond that, intervention projects have also proved to be fruitful in bringing together ingrained **contrary points of view**. An exemplary case is the field of protection of women and child protection. Persuading representatives of youth services, family courts and child protection agencies to become cooperation partners was one of the most difficult tasks of the cooperative alliances. The sphere of work involving **support for women** in cases of domestic violence focuses on women as the victims of violence, defines violence against the backdrop of an analysis of the gender relationship as violence by men and sees children and adolescents as suffering in this context. The sphere of work involving **child protection and youth services** focuses on children and adolescents as the victims of violence, defines violence against the backdrop of the relationship between generations as violence by adults and sees women as potential perpetrators in this context. It was necessary to overcome historically entrenched differences and to link up the work with different groups of victims. First steps were taken here in many places. Thus an opportunity was created to look for the first time in a single forum at how children are affected by violence to their mothers (and sometimes also at the hand of their mothers). A step was taken towards reaching the goal of the intervention projects - to establish greater cooperation between counselling and protection agencies for women on the one hand and for children on the other.

⁴ Detailed findings were published in the Final Report WiBIG 2004, volume entitled "Von regionalen Innovationen zu Maßstäben guter Praxis – Die Arbeit von Interventionsprojekten gegen häusliche Gewalt". It can be downloaded from the Internet at www.bmfsfj.de (see under → "Forschungsnetz" → "Forschungsberichte").

The work of the intervention projects has a **spillover effect** into other fields of work. The dynamics of the change brought about by cooperation in the sphere of domestic violence, which was set off in the intervention projects, can be taken up by related institutions, agencies and fields of work and lead to independent initiatives to bring about a change in practice. For example, the idea of establishing inter-institutional cooperation on domestic violence was successfully introduced into the health care system. Although it is not yet clear whether intervention projects as a working model will prove to be the most suitable form for cooperation in that area, many attempts are being made to create an effective contact point for an “intervention chain” within the health service and it was not left to a health institution to take the initiative and assume responsibility for bringing about changes; instead trust is placed in inter-institutional cooperation. This is a spin-off effect of the successful work of the intervention projects.

Overall, with their organisational structure and democratic way of working, the intervention projects have prepared a **feasible way** of dealing with **crosscutting issues**. They can therefore be a model for societal change in other problem areas for which an interdisciplinary and inter-institutional approach seems the obvious solution.

Intervention projects have smoothed the way for the **development of standards of good practice** in the area of domestic violence. Through the coordinated inter-institutional approach and the development of exemplary good practice it was possible to create a basis for reaching an understanding about domestic violence that facilitates the development and acceptance of standards of good practice. On the basis of the findings, the research project can present a catalogue of elements that constitute good practice and can be the first step towards actual standards.

VIII.

Elements of good practice and recommendations for the future

On the basis of the studies carried out, the evaluation research project is able to issue the following central recommendations centring on **selected elements of good practice**.

I Clear legal foundations for improved intervention and protection from violence

I Special standards should be included in the Police Acts of all the states throughout Germany regulating the use of go-orders banning perpetrators from the residence following incidents of domestic violence. Special standards promote legal certainty for officers responding to such incidents. They are the distinctive expression of the political will to intervene against domestic violence.

I Practice that is tailored to issues of safety

I Any action taken in the context of domestic violence must be examined in the light of whether it increases or jeopardises the safety of victims and their children.

I The aim of work with perpetrators in the context of intervention projects is to protect victims. Agencies working with perpetrators should establish contact with (ex)-partners as a fixed part of their practice.

I Special units in institutions to deal with cases of domestic violence

I In order to establish addressing domestic violence permanently in the police force it is necessary to set up structures independent of individuals. Coordinator/multiplier models have proved successful (for example in Berlin and Rhineland-Palatinate), and also other fixed units (e.g. in Mecklenburg-West Pomerania and Hannover).

I Public prosecution services that have not yet done so should set up special units to deal with cases of domestic violence. They should join a regional cooperation network on domestic violence or initiate collaboration if it does not yet exist.

I Specific protection and support provision tailored to the needs of victims of domestic violence

I It is essential that proactive counselling be offered after every incident of police intervention in the context of domestic violence.

I The structure of counselling agencies based on the expectation that clients will approach them should be complemented by an outreach counselling and accompanying service.

I Proactive counselling and crisis intervention in cases of domestic violence must be incorporated into a dense support network, which continues to include live-in protection facilities such as women's shelters.

I Separate support provision for children and young people living with domestic violence

- I It is vital that the particular needs of children and adolescents for protection, information and counselling in the context of domestic violence be recognised. The question of whether children and adolescents are suffering or are at risk must be clarified by talking to them directly and not merely by hearing the assessment of parents or third parties.
- I The youth welfare service must be involved in cooperative alliances.

I Provision of programmes for behavioural change for perpetrators of violence

- I Agencies working with perpetrators should regularly cooperate with the criminal prosecution services and women's support agencies. This will ensure that the goals of accountability and of the safety of victims are met.

I Institutionalising cooperation between institutions and agencies involved in intervention and support

- I Inter-institutional cooperation needs a particular venue within which it can take place, specific forums and independent resources.
- I Coordination must continue to be an integral part of the work of cooperative alliances and must be guaranteed. It must confront the new challenges presented by ongoing refinement of practice.

I Developing and expanding skills

- I Initial and in-service training on the topic of domestic violence should be firmly established in all relevant institutions. Its continued existence should be guaranteed. The contents of the training should be modified to take account of constantly evolving understanding of the complexity of domestic violence.
- I The public prosecution services should optimise access to victims of domestic violence in order to secure their willingness to be involved in the prosecution as early as the preliminary proceedings.

I Documentation and monitoring of processes of change and implementation of new practice

- I Standardised documentation of police attendances at incidents of domestic violence must be developed in consultation with the public prosecution services and civil and administrative courts.

I Evaluation of practice

- I Sustainability and quality assurance require internal documentation and external evaluation.

ANNEX: OVERVIEW OF DATA USED IN THE EVALUATION				
	Quantitative data		Qualitative data	
Data collection	Questionnaires/ documentation sheets	Time period	Interviews/group discussions	Time period
Intervention projects				
Evaluation of intervention projects	398	1998 - 2004	143	1998 - 2004
New support practice				
Evaluation of intervention agencies, Mecklenburg-West Pomerania	1,194	01/2002 - 06/2004	16	2001 - 2004
Survey of clients of intervention agencies	87	05/2003 - 10/2003	7	07/2003 - 08/2003
Surveys in women's shelters and contact and counselling services, Mecklenburg-West Pomerania	912	05/2002 - 04/2003	2	2002 - 2004
Evaluation of mobile intervention, Berlin	335	05/2001 - 05/2003	12	2001 - 2003
New support practice overall	2,528	2001 - 2004	37	2001 - 2004
State intervention: practice within the police and public prosecution service				
Evaluation of initial and in-service training for police in Berlin, Mecklenburg-West Pomerania and Thuringia	2,262	1998 - 2003	-	-
Survey of policemen and women on police attendances, Berlin	153	09/2003 - 10/2003	-	-
Survey of women on police attendances, Berlin	45	05/2001 - 10/2002	14	06/1999 - 07/1999
Evaluation of the go-order pilot scheme, Command Unit 7, Berlin Police	380	01/2002 - 07/2002	4	2002
Analysis of case records in the public prosecution services in Berlin, Flensburg and Hannover	1,043	2001 - 2004	7	2002 - 2004
Police and public prosecution service overall	3,883	1998 - 2004	25	1999 - 2004
Social training courses for perpetrators of domestic violence				
Evaluation of social training courses	1,201	2001 - 2003	36	2001 - 2004
Interviews with course participants	-	-	10	2001 - 2003
Interviews with participants' partners	-	-	8	2002 - 2003
Social training courses	1,201	2001 - 2003	54	2001 - 2004
Data sets overall	8,010	1998 - 2004	259	1998 - 2004

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Postfach 48 10 09
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Tel.: 018 05/77 80 90*
Fax: 018 05/77 80 94*
E-Mail: publikationen@bundesregierung.de
Internet: www.bmfsfj.de

Project directors:

Prof. Carol Hagemann-White
Prof. Barbara Kavemann

Associates:

(Dipl. Päd.) Stefan Beckmann
(Dipl. Psych.) Ulrike Brandfaß
(Dipl. Psych.) Katja Rieger
(Dipl. Soz.) Beate Leopold
(Ass. Jur.) Heike Rabe

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