



Social Policy Commission 2019/20
KPS Meeting 6
KSU Betsson Common Room

Tuesday 11th February 2020

Katrina Farrugia | Social Policy Commissioner:

Hello, thank you for coming for today's KPS meeting, first of all, Naomi Deguara the Social Policy Officer is not here because she is currently on a short Erasmus traineeship in Portugal, however, Christian Aquilina will be here to replace her. First of all, we will start with the approval of the minutes. All against, abstentions, and the vote has passed. The minutes have been approved.

Minutes Approved

Now we move on to the approval of the agenda, all against, abstentions, agenda has been approved.

Agenda Approved

Upcoming events: Drive-in is going to be held next Friday, tickets at the cost of 5 euro, available for purchase at the KSU office during office hours, we have also opened the applications for the Egypt trip, so those who are still interested can still apply, and we also have 5 events for the Sexual Health Week held on the 14th, 17th, 18th 19th and 20th of February, so beginning at the end of this week and ending Thursday of next week. Now, moving on to the topic that we will be discussing today which is domestic violence and gender-based violence, first of all I will be





introducing topics and the laws surrounding these topics, and what currently is being used such as protection, the agency which is being used for people who are victims of abuse and then we will split into groups and we will be discussing ; 1 **Education**, what the education system can do and can improve on to possibly decrease the chances of abuse occurring. 2. The **laws** that can be adjusted and the policies that can be done for domestic violence and gender-based violence and 3. **Protection** that can be used on victims and perpetrators both before and after the victim has been to the police and has reported that he is a victim of domestic abuse. As for the definition of domestic violence according to the rule of Malta It means that; All acts of emissions including verbal, physical, sexual, phycological or economic violence using physical and/or moral harm and suffering including treats of such acts or emissions, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty that occur within family or domestic unit, whether or not the perpetrator shares or had shared the same residence with the victim and shall include children who are with are victims of domestic violence within the family or domestic unit. So, the forms of violence as per law, are emotional, physical, sexual psychological financial abuse, someone who has held victims against their own will, and all types of harassment and stalking. As for the family and domestic unit it includes both current and former partners, people who have been living with the person, or have previously lived with that person recently, according to the law within a period of 3 years of receiving offence, the person can be married or not, they may also have an informal or formal relationship being that they were married dating or anything of the sort. And also, persons who have had a child in common. The definition of gender-based violence according to the law means; All acts or emissions that are directed against a person because of their gender that result in or are likely to result in physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm or suffering including treats of such acts coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty whether occurring in public or private life. Now, as you may have heard we have a new Commissioner for gender and domestic violence which is Audrey Friggieri, basically the commission's duties are to advise the Minister and state and state with issues related to gender-based and domestic violence, they are to implement the Action Plan, they are to





support research in the field, they are to monitor the national standards and the rates of reporting, awareness raising campaigns and programmes, and to cooperate with the educational authorities to educate students. The organisation supporting domestic violence currently is Agenzija Appogg, and their duties are mainly to provide, therapeutic programmes for victims and the perpetrators, to have a public help line for emergency use, to have professionals who are ready to assess the needs and risks of victims of violence and to make sure that the rights of these victims are being upheld and they are being known by the victims themselves. Now as for what is happening in Malta the domestic violence cases are increasing, this may be due to various factors, such as; the population is increasing, there is more awareness etc. So, in reality there are many reasons as to why these cases are increasing. Unfortunately, between 2010 and 2014 there were 9,882 cases reporting domestic violence. So, although we have a span of time where we hear a lot about domestic violence unfortunately it is something that a lot of people go through throughout their lifetime. As for agencies that are available to the victims, there are Agenzija Appogg, Support Malta, Dar Merhba Bik. There are also support groups such as; Sore. As for the law, mainly the protection of victims is mainly making sure people abide by the laws, making sure that there are legal aids, and shelters and they also have the protection to withdraw their report. The reasoning that was found behind why people do not report as much is due to the tarnishing of the family's reputation, because of their children, not wanting to see their partner be punished, the fear of facing the perpetrator in court, being financially dependent on the perpetrator, and fear that there will be further violence. Unless there is something that anyone else would like to add, we can split into groups and discuss sort of improve the current Education, Law and Protection of these victims.

Ok, so there will be three groups, group 1 will be looking at the education system, group 2 will be looking into policies and law, and group 3 will be looking into protection.



GROUP 1: EDUCATION

- Children will find it difficult to go against their parents, trusting police etc.
- It is not easy for the abused children to recognize whether or not they are actually being abused.
- Nurturing classes, case by case basis, not in all schools.
- Appropriate education for educators and teachers, to recognize signs of domestic violence in children.
- National curriculum regardless of type of school.
- Seminars for parents.
- National strategy of education for the general public.
- Education about openness and speaking up (example in schools with counsellors) -
Bernice JEF

GROUP 2: POLICIES AND LAWS

- Not enforced or implemented, multi-disciplinary level, structure in place, from children to professionals, training for police to tackle and detect these cases.
- Harsher sentences, unfortunately the cases are usually hard to prove (fake allegations)
- Whether the aggressor should be separated from society In prison or rehab. What constitutes to being serious allegations - case by case basis -.
- Difficult to change mentality and attitudes of aggressor.
- Culture - can get away with anything - the enforcement is lacking - lack training in psychological aspects. Extreme cases get noticed more. Evidence rather than remedy.
- Long term rather than ad-hoc or through shocking news.



Commentary:

Louanne Grima | Betapsi: Penalties for non-reporters.

Jake Alex Gauci | MMSA: Reporting backlash, sensitive nature, how anonymous can anonymous be?

George Grima | Third eye: Discrepancy depends on those aggressed.

Nicholas Aquilina | MHSA: Strategic use of media is beneficial. Removing over-sensationalism.

Clayton Seguna | Betapsi: Online counselling and therapy (kellimni.com example).

Nickolas Aquilina | MHSA: Using new media which is relatable.

Roxanne Grillo | DESA: new media is used to make money.

Celine Bartolo | KSU: That is beneficial.

Yacopo Baldacchino | KSU: Who and the how – shocking.

Celine Bartolo | KSU: Exploiting the case.

Policy recommendation - Use of media only when allowed.

Faith | ESO: Short term and long term.



GROUP 3: PROTECTION

Protecting the victims before and after cases of violence are reported.

Police reports more seriously, not followed up.

Tracking the reports.

First priority, education, protecting victims before they are victims.

Stigma - male vs female domestic violence - should be addressed.

Shelters for safety.

Importance mental health first aid to schools (signs of emotional fatigue - picking up on cues).

- Police as beneficial - specialized department would be better than general, targeted training for inter-disciplinary approach
- Reporting to NGOs versus police. (George Third Eye)
- Reporting at familiar places - work, university, shops.
- Role of doctors - systems in place to notice any signs.
- Raising penalties for domestic abusers, for hinderance.
- Rehabilitation into society.
- Constant follow ups - scheduled appointments with counsellors, therapists.

Commentary:

Daniel Farrugia | UESA: Phycological help to victims as well as perpetrators.

Clayton Seguna | Betapsi: Police enforcement sensitivity training.

Nicole | GHSL: Monitoring.





Julia Zammit | SHS: *Realizing signs to help the helpless within society.*

Yacopo Baldacchino | KSU: *discreet ways of asking for help.*

Jake Alex Gauci | MMSA: *It is very hard to get that information from the aggressed victims, especially when the aggressors also know how they can protect themselves.*

Julia Zammit | SHS: *There is a need for stricter penalties.*

Jurgen John Gauci | TSA: *Work institutions who have failed.*

Daniel Farrugia | UESA: *Possible form of punishment for those who do not take action.
Early onset - like animal killing is to serial killers what are the signs of an abuser.*

ELSA: *A system is in place to protect the children.*

Julia Zammit | SHS: *Re: Power to the children*

Katrina Farrugia | Social Policy Commissioner: The meeting has come to an end. Thank you all for coming and participating.