

## THE PROJECT OF LIONS IN DISTRICT 118-Y FOR “VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN”

### 1. Brief description

Violence against women is considered as an ordinary act by a larger section of the society, including women who are victimized by violence, and it is not conceived as a problem.

World Health Organization defines violence by spouse as any kind of behaviour leading to physical, psychological or sexual harm in close contact. Besides, these women do not reveal the violence they suffer because of shame feelings, and therefore can not get any help, and this situation goes on in a vicious circle. Another important issue is that women have no knowledge of what to do or not, when violated.

In our country the general situation is summarised below:

25% of all women are physically violated

75% of these women are violated by their husbands

40-70% of women who died of murder, are murdered by their husbands.

One out of every 4 girls is sexually harassed.

As it is a worldwide problem, and it is stated in our purposes “ To take an active interest in the civic, cultural, social and moral welfare of community” we Lions, couldn’t have ignored this problem.

Istanbul is a very crowded city with the population of 15 million.

Different economic, social and cultural groups live in the city and in our district. People having different living status, eventually leads to diverse needs. However, combating violence against women is an issue which does not distinguish among women’s social and economic status, and which also concerns human rights for women. Here, as in most regions

in the country , violence against women is overlooked, its existence is not accepted, and its importance as a problem is ignored.

In 2009 we decided to establish “Women Support Unit” in our district 118-Y Istanbul. First, we wanted to have a place of our own, to organize our activities, all our seminars, workshops, and trainings; so we rent a small flat . We furnished it. We prepared posters, brochures and guidebooks

-Local media was informed through press conferences,

Our target group is mostly the ones who have migrated from villages to the city, longing for a better life but couldn't meet any of their social, cultural and economic expectations, and whose living conditions get worse. Women who suffer under poverty, lack of education, traditions and ethics are also subject to violence. Poverty and traditions shape their lives showing violence as something allowable, legitimate.

The objective of our project is to create awareness to these women for “violence against women” within the boundaries of our district. At the same time we aim contribute to improving social coherence and the quality of life for the victimized survivors of violence and/or young girls and women who are under risk, giving psychological, sociological and cultural support through the activities within our project.

## OUR OBJECTIVES AT WOMEN SUPPORT UNIT

- Most victims of violence assume that they are the only ones who confront violence; they feel lonely. So share the experience, and the reality that violence is a social phenomenon, and make victims psychologically, culturally, and socially stronger also improve their self-confidence.
- We organize workshops and trainings. “Awareness seminars” for them to regain their self-confidence.

We Prepared a guidebook about what women should do before and after they are victimized. Women will accept the problem and try hard on resolutions.

- Give them psychological and legal support
- Improve public support, create awareness through collaboration and cooperation with the women's NGO and local governments.
- Organize courses to make them talented on certain subjects in order to earn money to have financial independence and to stand on their own feet. With the help we got from the local government, we have already set up an atelier for ceramic objects. There they learn how to make these objects and earn their living .
- We have 10 computers to teach them how to use and earn their living.
- Some of them take English Courses
- Some take speaking and diction lessons
- Leos help their school children at weekends

.. Many of the clubs and committees, in our district support this unit. We have formed the project team. Each day one of our members is responsible for the "unit". It is a long term project. We have some expenditures such as : rent, electricity.

We organize some fund raising activities there with our members, e.g. language courses, make up courses, diner parties. It is a very successful Project we have reached 1202 women so far. When we think about their families and friends, we could multiply this number by two.

Now our goal is to establish another unit in another part of our district where it is needed. If you support us we'll appreciate. We believe that violence against women is not a problem only in Turkey but all over the world. I believe with this project once more we'll show our strength to the society.

