

"DA Foundation - United Against Violence" **Annual Report 2023**

"DA Foundation - United Against Violence" (DAF) is a non-profit organization, established in 2011, based in Plovdiv, Bulgaria. Our mission is to work towards promotion, protection and empowerment of women and girls in all spheres of public and private life so that they realize their potential in a just and unbiased society. Through our guiding principle, we strive to address a number of structural inequalities which are layered in social organization and mindset, and present the building blocks of gender-based discrimination and violence.¹

The main objectives of DAF are:

- Supporting women and girls in difficult social and economic situation, victims of violence and discrimination, those in need for protection and help for their social integration.
- Promoting and protecting the Universal and European standards for human rights and taking up initiatives for bringing Bulgarian legislation in conformity with these standards;
- Working with young people to secure meaningful youth participation;
- Raising public awareness and understanding on gender-based violence and discrimination;
- Networking, mutual learning, identification and dissemination of good practices.

DAF Team: a network of 10 lawyers, 2 psychologists, 2 social workers and an accountant.

DAF Target groups: We work with women and adolescent girls victims of gender-based violence and discrimination. Among our target group there are women and girls from rural areas, who are from the minorities; victims of human trafficking and sexual exploitation, foreign and migrant women; there are Bulgarian women married or having relationships with foreigners; disabled women; elderly women; and women victims of multiple discrimination.

DAF's work:

Consultative Center: We implement specialized programs in help of victims of domestic violence and multiple discrimination. The services are free of charge and are provided by our team of qualified lawyers, psychologists and social workers in the DAF's Counseling Centre. They include: Psycho-social counseling, Legal counseling, Job search consultancy, Special married and couple counseling service, Special program for perpetrators of domestic violence, Legal representation before national, european and international courts, Group sessions for survivors of violence, Program for children at risk.

¹ The name of the organization was acquired in December 2022. The initial name of the NGO was Gender Alternatives Foundation (GAF).

Women's Resource Center: The center is a place where vulnerable groups of women gain access to skills-building trainings on Information and communication technology (ICT) and English language courses. They also benefit from legal consultations on their socio-economic rights. Through these activities, we strive to raise their confidence in order to meet market demand in a globalizing economy. The safe environment helps women to analyze the causes of poverty and violence, voice their concerns, and build their capacity to participate as equals in society.

National and International Advocacy and Campaigning: DAF advocates for women's rights through drafting and presenting state of the art reports on women's human rights, statements, hearings, proposals for amendments in the national legislation and other actions at a number of national and international forums and platforms.

Research - Conducting legal, social, and economic research, studies, publications, and monitoring in order to keep and promote the human rights and the standards of equality.

Work with institutions – Organizing round tables, seminars, trainings and other forms of discussions on the issues of gender and human rights.

Networking - Activities towards setting up human rights networks in the Republic of Bulgaria and the region and their integration within the international and European structures and other kinds of activities for the purposes of the Foundation within the frame of the Bulgarian legislation in force

Contacts and networking:

Internationally, IWRAW - Asia Pacific, ASTRA and ASTRA YOUTH, You ACT, WAVE, AWID, European Women's Lobby, ESCR-Net, INTERIGHTS, European Integration and Human Rights Association.

At national levels, we are members of the National Council on Equality between Women and Men to the Council of Ministers, we also collaborate with representatives of the following governmental institutions Regional and District Court – Plovdiv, Court of Appeals – Plovdiv, Regional and District Prosecutors' Office - Plovdiv District Police Directorate-Plovdiv, Plovdiv Municipality, National and Local Commission for Combating trafficking in Human Beings, University of Plovdiv, Plovdiv Municipality, Execution of Penalties Regional Office - Sector "Probation", "Social assistance" Plovdiv.

Among our NGO partners are Animus Association Foundation, Bulgarian Red Cross – Plovdiv district, The Bulgarian Platform of the European Women's Lobby, Bulgarian Fund for Women, For Our Children Foundation, Roma Foundation, Amalipe Center for Interethnic Dialogue and Tolerance, Panacea Foundation, IGA Fond Foundation, Zonta Club, National Network for Children, Bulgarian Family Planning Association, Bulgarian Lawyers for Human Rights, Bulgarian Helsinki Committee.

Information on DAF's activities under Article 38 of the Law on Non-Profit Legal Entities

I. **Provision of Specialized Support Programs to Persons Victims of Gender-based violence, Domestic Violence, Sexual Violence, Trafficking in Human Beings and Discrimination**

More than 300 counselling sessions were provided to victims of gender-based violence, domestic violence, sexual violence, trafficking in human beings and discrimination during the period 01.01.2023 – 31.12.2023 in the process of implementation of the DAF projects.

1. **WomEmpSports (WES)** with № 2022-1-ES01-KA220-ADU-000087751, funded by the European Commission. The main object of the project is to provide women who have different profiles, but similar needs (migrant women, women with mental health problems, rural women, women of different ages, etc.) with tools and resources to improve their integration and social participation through personal and physical activities. The duration is 26 months (01.01.2023 – 28.02.2025). The project involves 5 partner organisations from different European countries – Guarani, IASIS, DAF, Amigos de Europa and Per Esemplio. The program includes 4 different work packages: "Project Management", "Manual and tools for professionals in intervention with women", "Development of accessible tools for women" and "Dissemination and communication", which are lead by every organization.
2. **Preventing Honour Related Violence against women through Social Impact Projects and Peer Learning led by young men (FATIMA2)** with № 101095877, is a project funded by the European Union. The aim of the project is to end honour crimes against women by promoting attitude and behaviour change among young men in contexts where women and children are most at risk, such as segregated migrant communities. The duration of the project is 24 months (01.02.2023 - 31.01.2025). The project includes 9 participants, organizations from different EU countries - Rinova Málaga, DAF, ZRS KOPER, DIMITRA, etc. The program includes 5 work packages with different objectives, which will be performed as a non-formal education programme, directed specifically at young men, in dialogue and cooperation with their community, local authorities, NGOs and civil society.
3. **TEAMWORK 2** with № 101094241, is a project which aim is to counteract sexual harassment at the workplace as a form of gender-based violence by enhancing the multi-stakeholder approach for prevention and handling of this issue. The project methodology is based on three pillars: capacity-building of professionals (business associations and unions as multipliers), awareness raising and provision of services to both employers and victims, and advocacy for systemic change combined with communication for reframing the issue in the wider society. Partners of the project are Greece, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Italy, Spain. It is funded by the European Union. The duration of the project is 24 months (01.02.2023 - 31.01.2025).
4. **"In defense of human rights" funded by the ACTIVE CITIZENS FUND BULGARIA 2014-2021.** The aim of the project is to improve the implementation of the international human rights standards, provide legal assistance and counseling for victims of discrimination and human rights violations, conducting human rights awareness campaigns. The duration of the project is 33 months (09.07.2021 - 08.04.2024).

5. **"Supporting the DA Foundation – United against violence in its efforts to achieve gender equality through consultations, conducting strategic affairs, organizing conferences, seminars and trainings, conducting research and monitoring"** (NoOFIL-20-096) funded by the OAK Foundation for the period July 2020 - June 2025.

II. **Cooperation Agreements, Trainings, Partnerships and Advocacy**

From the very establishment of DAF, we have signed partnership agreements with key institutions and organizations at local level, aiming at effective implementation of the programs, related to persons victims of domestic violence. These are Regional Directorate of the Ministry of Interior, Implementation of Punishments Regional Body – Plovdiv, Plovdiv Municipality, as well as with several regional municipalities, Regional Commission on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, Social Assistance Directorate, Medical services. In addition, agreements for cooperation were signed with Regional Court and Regional Prosecutor's Office Plovdiv, Municipal center for delinquency prevention. Non-governmental organizations with which we cooperate are: Bulgarian Red Cross, For Our Children Foundation, National Alliance for People with Rare Diseases, Bulgarian Family Planning and Sexual Health Association, Big Brother Big Sister Association, Zonta Club Plovdiv, Svetlina Community Center – Trud Village, IGA Foundation, Bulgarian Fund for Women, as well as experts.

DAF is also cooperating with the European College of Economics and Management – Plovdiv, Paisii Hilendarski Plovdiv University and Ivan Vazov National Library.

Throughout the year, the team participated in various international and national trainings and work meetings that corresponded to the objectives and mission of the organization.

We also got involved in media and advocacy campaigns for popularization of women's rights, eradication of gender-based violence and encouragement of volunteering.

March 2024

