WAVE WORKING GROUP ON GENDER NEUTRALITY

MALTA

22-24 OCTOBER 2018

ABOUT THE QUESTIONNAIRE

- THE WAVE WORKING GROUP ON GENDER NEUTRALITY IN WOMEN'S SPECIALIST SERVICES WAS CALLED INTO CREATION BY THE WAVE ADVISORY BOARD AT THE BI-ANNUAL MEETING IN 2016.

- THE PURPOSE FOR THE GROUP WAS TO REVIEW RECENT PRACTICE BY GOVERNMENTS TO FUND GENDER NEUTRAL OVER WOMEN'S SPECIALIST SERVICES.

- THE QUESTIONNAIRE WAS MEANT TO BE EXPLORATORY TO UNDERSTAND CURRENT PRACTICES AND EMERGING CONCERNS REGARDING GENDER NEUTRAL POLICY AND PRACTICE.

ABOUT THE QUESTIONNAIRE

THE QUESTIONNAIRE COVERED THE FOLLOWING AREAS:

- DEFINITION OF GENDER NEUTRAL

- OVERVIEW OF THE IMPACT SUCH POLICIES WERE HAVING

- IMPLEMENTATION AND ENFORCEMENT OF GENDER NEUTRAL POLICY AND PRACTICE

- ISSUES REGARDING THE SUSTAINABILITY OF EXISTING PROVISION

- KEY PRESSURES AND CONCERNS WOMEN'S SPECIALIST ORGANISATIONS WERE FACING

- PRIORITIES TO ADDRESS GENDER NEUTRAL POLICY AND PRACTICE

DEFINITION

GENDER NEUTRAL IS THOSE SETS OF POLICIES AND REGULATIONS GOVERNING FUNDING AS DEFINED BY THE STATE AND GOVERNMENTS THAT REQUIRE PUBLIC SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED TO BOTH MEN AND WOMEN.

THE PROBLEM WITH GENDER NEUTRAL POLICY

GENDER NEUTRAL PRACTICES AND POLICIES HIDE OR DIMINISH THE ROOT CAUSES OF GENDER INEQUALITY AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE BY PLACING WOMEN ONLY SERVICES UNDER THREAT.

THE IMPACT OF GENDER NEUTRAL POLICY

- GENDER NEUTRAL IS A WAY OF THINKING THAT SPECIFICALLY TARGETS WOMEN ONLY ORGANISATIONS TO PROVIDE ACCESS TO SERVICES TO BOTH MEN AND WOMEN WITHOUT CONSIDERATION OF HISTORICALLY UNEQUAL POWER RELATIONS BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN.

- GENDER NEUTRAL THREATENS TO DISMANTLE THE ETHOS OF WOMEN ONLY ORGANISATIONS THAT CHALLENGE PATRIARCHY AS A ROOT CAUSE OF WOMEN'S INEQUALITY AND VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

- GENDER NEUTRAL DENIES WOMEN ACCESS TO SAFE WOMEN ONLY SPACE.

IMPLEMENTATION AND ENFORCEMENT PRACTICE FOR GENDER NEUTRAL PROVISION AND POLICY

GENDER NEUTRAL POLICIES AND PRACTICES

33% SAID THEY HAD GENDER NEUTRAL POLICIES AND/OR LEGISLATION IN THE COUNTRY AFFECTING THE WAY SERVICES WERE BEING DEVELOPED AND DELIVERED. THE EXAMPLE OF A GENDER NEUTRAL POLICY IS THAT WOMEN ONLY SERVICES WILL HAVE TO BECOME GENDER NEUTRAL TO ACCESS FUNDING.

EXAMPLES OF CONTENT

- USE OF THE TERM 'NATURAL PERSON' BY SOCIAL SERVICES WITH NO DISTINCTION OF THE NEEDS OF WOMEN SUBJECTED TO VIOLENCE AND THEIR SPECIFIC NEEDS.

- LACK OF GENDERED APPROACH TO TRAFFICKING AND THE NEED FOR GENDER SPECIFIC RESPONSE GIVEN THE RISK OF VIOLENCE TO WOMEN WHO ARE TRAFFICKED OR HAVE INSECURE IMMIGRATION STATUS.

- LACK OF GENDERED APPROACH ON SPECIFIC LAWS INCLUDING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE.

- LAWS REGARDING VIOLENCE IN FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS MAKING NO SPECIFIC GENDERED DIFFERENTIATION.

- NO SPECIFIC LAW ON VAWG.

- NO STATE FUNDING TO WOMEN ONLY ORGANISATIONS AND NGOS.

- IN IMPLEMENTING THE ISTANBUL CONVENTION, GENDERED REFERENCES WERE REMOVED. THIS MEANT THAT SERVICES WERE REQUIRED TO BE GENDER NEUTRAL AND GENDER NEUTRAL LANGUAGE WAS FOUND IN POLICIES.

- NO REFERENCE TO VAW IN AGGRAVATING LAWS.

SOME EXAMPLES OF 'POSITIVE' PRACTICES

- IN TERMS OF THE SOME OF THE POSITIVE CONTENT IN SOME OF THE POLICIES/LEGISLATION, THE FOLLOWING EXAMPLES WERE PROVIDED:

- WHILE LAWS DID NOT RECOGNISE THE GENDERED NATURE OF VIOLENCE, GENDERED APPROACHES ARE TAKEN BY POLICY MAKERS AND PRACTITIONERS AND THEY RECOGNISED THAT VIOLENCE AFFECTED WOMEN DISPROPORTIONATELY.

- THERE WAS SOME PRIORITY GIVEN TO WOMEN'S ORGANISATIONS FOR FUNDING HOWEVER OVERALL, THE FUNDING ALLOCATIONS ARE LOW, INSECURE AND UNSTABLE AFFECTING SUSTAINABILITY OF WOMEN'S ORGANISATIONS.

- IN ONE INSTANCE, BOTH GENDER AND GENDERED LANGUAGE WAS USED IN LAWS SPECIFICALLY COVERING VAW.

- IN ANOTHER INSTANCE, VAW LAWS AND POLICIES WERE CONSISTENT WITH CEDAW.

ENFORCEMENT OF GENDER NEUTRAL POLICY AND PRACTICE:

- SHIFT IN LANGUAGE FROM VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS (WHICH RECOGNISES THE BROAD CONTEXT IN WHICH VIOLENCE OCCURS) OR GENDER BASED VIOLENCE TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE.

- NO RECOGNITION OF VICTIM/SURVIVOR NEEDS BEFORE THE LAW

- COMPETITION FOR PUBLIC MONEY

- CONFUSION AMONG COMMISSIONERS

SUSTAINABILITY OF EXISTING PROVISION

INEQUALITY

- INEQUALITY AND BARRIERS FOR WOMEN

- EROSION OF SAFE SPACE

- DISAPPEARANCE OF SPACES FOR MINORITISED WOMEN

- CLOSURE OF WOMEN'S ORGANISATIONS

LOSS OF PROVISION

- CHANGES IN FUNDING
- CHANGES IN ORGANISATIONAL ETHOS AND SERVICE DEVELOPMENT
- WOMEN ONLY REFUGES UNDER THREAT
- WOMEN ONLY SERVICES UNDER THREAT

SYSTEMIC FAILURE

- GOVERNMENT FAILURE TO RECOGNISE WOMEN ONLY SERVICE ETHOS LEADING TO FURTHER SYSTEMIC INSTITUTIONAL AND STRUCTURAL DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN.

- POLICY FAILURE TO RECOGNISE THE SCALE OF VAW.

MAPPING THE WAY FORWARD: PRIORITIES TO ADDRESS GENDER NEUTRAL POLICY AND PRACTICE

WORKSHOP

WHAT MORE CAN BE DONE THROUGH WAVE TO ENSURE ALL WOMEN'S SERVICES INCLUDING BME, REFUGEE AND MIGRANT WOMEN, LBT, AMONG OTHERS ARE SUSTAINED AND PROTECTED?

PRIORITIES FOR ACTION IN ORDER OF RESPONSE (TOP HALF)

- 88% FURTHER CAMPAIGN WORK PROMOTING A GENDERED APPROACH

- 82% POLICY DEVELOPMENT WORK PROMOTING EQUALITIES

- 82% SUPPORTING INTERSECTIONAL WORK

- 76% ADDRESSING STRUCTURAL AND SYSTEMIC BARRIERS THAT PRODUCE INEQUALITY

- 76% SUPPORTING ALL FORMS OF FEMINIST CONSCIOUSNESS RAISING

- 76% RIGHTS BASED CAMPAIGN WORK

- 70% BETTER INCLUSION OF VOICE OF SURVIVORS ENSURING REPRESENTATION OF ALL WOMEN

- 70% ADDRESSING ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

PRIORITIES FOR ACTION IN ORDER OF RESPONSE (BOTTOM HALF)

- 64% MORE WORK ADDRESSING ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION INCLUDING RACIAL DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

- 58% ADDRESSING OTHER DISCRIMINATION AND OPPRESSION EXPERIENCED BY WOMEN

- 52% ENSURING REPRESENTATION OF DIVERSE GROUPS OF WOMEN

- 52% MORE PROMOTION OF EQUALITIES ISSUES WITHIN THE SECTOR

- 47% IMPROVED COLLABORATION ACROSS WOMEN'S ORGANISATIONS ENSURING ALL WOMEN BENEFIT FROM PROTECTION

- 47% ADDRESSING INTERSECTIONALITY AND WAYS OF WORKING

- 47% ADDRESSING RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

- 47% ADDRESSING HOMOPHOBIA AND HETERO-SEXISM

FEEDBACK