

# Centrs MARTA

ANNUAL REPORT  
2018

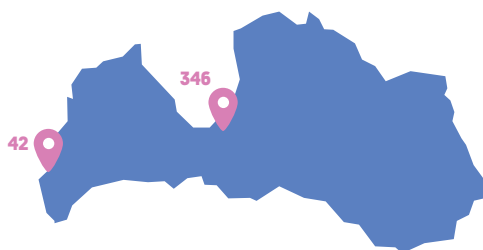




**In 2018, Centre MARTA provided support for a total of 388 women (346 in Riga and 42 in Liepaja).**

**The need and demand for free high quality or expert quality support is constantly increasing.**

**Among the women who turned to MARTA for support, 264 were doing so for the first time.**



## **VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**

In order to provide free support to women facing a crisis, the MARTA team must ensure continuous funding, because the program “*Social rehabilitation services for adult victims of violence*” managed by the Riga social services covers only a half of the services’ costs.

### **THROUGHOUT THE PAST YEAR, MARTA HELPED PROVIDE:**

- more than **1400** consultations with psychologists and psychotherapists
- more than **300** instances of legal counsel and more than **150** legal documents
- nearly **800** consultations with social workers, including more than **500** various documents for clients.

**A total of only 30 legal and psychological consultations were paid for by the clients themselves thereby creating a small but significant contribution to the women in need of free support.**

The personal circumstances of 7 clients prevented them from receiving even partial state funded support, so MARTA must be able to raise funds to provide free support to all women facing critical situations.

## 5 EUR

1 informatīvais buklets  
par iespējām saņemt  
palīdzību vardarbības  
gadījumos



**1+5  
ieguvēji**

Izplatīta informācija  
par iespēju  
saņemt palīdzību

## 20 EUR

1 mēnesim apmaksāti  
"informatīvā  
tālruņa" (helpline)  
rēķini



**50  
ieguvēji**

50 cilvēki saņēmuši  
informāciju par  
pakalpojumiem,  
veikts pieraksts  
uz konsultācijām

## 30 EUR

Viena konsultācija  
sievietei, kas cietusi  
no vardarbības



**1  
ieguvējs**

Emocionālo atbalstu  
un nenosodošas  
attieksmes pieredzi  
saņēmusi sieviete,  
kas atguvusi cerību

## 300 EUR

10 konsultācijas  
sievietei, kas cietusi  
no vardarbības



**1+5  
ieguvēji**

Tīcību pozitīvām pārmaiņām  
ieguvusi sieviete ceļā uz  
neatkarīgu un cieņpilnu  
dzīvi

## 540 EUR

1 mēnesis 2 ģimenēm  
drošā patvērumā -  
anonimajā  
dzīvoklī



**5+10  
ieguvēji**

Dīvas ģimenes  
drošībā  
no vardarbības

## 600 EUR

Pilns rehabilitācijas  
cikls vienai sievietei,  
kas cietusi no  
vardarbības



**1+5  
ieguvēji**

Neatkarīgu no  
vardarbības brīvu  
dzīvi uzsākusi  
sieviete

MARTA received a total of 1463 calls throughout the past year via its info and support lines – +371 67378539 / +371 80002012.

10 women joined support groups, 6 of which were in Riga and 4 in Liepaja, and provided mutual support to each other in difficult situations.

In performing its state program duties, MARTA provides support to all adult persons, however experience suggests that women are more likely to suffer from violence both in Latvia and in the world.

Most of the clients in Riga were between the ages of 36 to 45. In Liepaja - 46 to 60 years. Then – women aged 26 to 35, and a significantly smaller number of women – ages 18 to 25 years old. The women in Riga between the ages of 46 to 60 sought help from MARTA rarely, but the past year has revealed the following tendency – elderly women 60 years old and older suffering from violence at the hands of their relatives have started to seek help more frequently.

There were only 2 cases involving men – both sought support in dealing with aggressive behaviours from their fathers.

## **THE MOST COMMON TYPES OF VIOLENCE HAVE REMAINED THE SAME:**

**emotional and physical violence;**

**financial violence;**

**sexual violence and forced control.**

Most often women experience violence from their loved ones – a partner or husband, father or son, including former partners or former husbands. MARTA has provided support to women who have been victims of rape. There were very rare cases where women were seeking support to get out of a violent relationship with their mother or mother-in-law.

## **A RECENT DEVELOPMENT:**

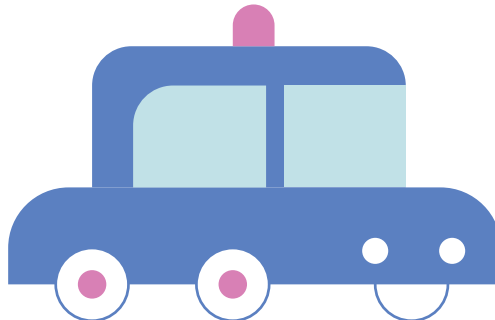
Women seeking help whose violent partners are foreign nationals. Mostly persons from Turkey and India.

## **CONVERSATIONS WHAT WOMEN SAY**

**“He has the money and power to ruin my life.”**

**“He has friends working for the police and the government. It’s as if he can do whatever he wants, and I just suffer.”**

**“I don’t have the strength or will to fight anymore! I feel like I’m living in a lawless state”**



## THE POLICE

Women are still disappointed in the lack of professionalism and the general attitude of the police. They often refuse to come, saying that “they have a lot of work as it is.” They have even advised the victim to “*make up with the perpetrator*” and to understand that “*if that’s the husband you chose, what can you expect?*”..

During their professional exchanges of information, the police force still refers to violence against women as *family arguments*. This view gives rise to attitudes and actions that are not in the interests of the victim – policemen tend to persuade women not to submit applications to the police when identifying the existence of violence, they do not separate them from their partners, and do not suggest that they file an application to a court of law for temporary protection against violence, and do not perform the necessary proceedings to initiate criminal proceedings for personal injuries.

Women often reveal that the perpetrator is working for the police or the military, and that he has “good friends there”.

**“There’s no one that can stop him.  
The social services and child custody  
won’t do a thing, let alone the police.”**

**“I’ve been fighting him for years and  
he keeps trying to destroy my life!  
And I think he’s going to succeed  
because I’ve no money to hire a  
lawyer and protect myself.”**



## THE COURTS

When cases involving female victims are reviewed by the courts, the courts often blame the experiences on the victims themselves, and women often express the view that it is nearly impossible to prove the existence of emotional violence in court. Because the other party can often afford to hire very good lawyers, the courts make unfounded or unlawful decisions.

**“It’s impossible to prove the existence of emotional abuse. Must I really wait for him to strike me to be able to prove to them that I am a victim of violence?”**

**“Everyone believes him because he has a way with words. but they don’t know who he really is.”**



## **SOCIAL SERVICES**

Social workers tend to blame the victim for violence because social workers currently lack effective tools to limit the abuser and seek a solution. Social workers still lack the necessary knowledge and a proper understanding of violence, and the control mechanisms and tactics employed by the abuser. Female victims sometimes find themselves in situations where a social worker threatens them with taking away their children if the victim does not do what the social worker thinks is best for her.

**“It was the social services that tried to make me feel like I have an obligation to fulfil his needs”**

## **CUSTODY COURTS**

It can be concluded that, when it comes to violence, the best interests of the child are not always respected, and the courts fail to understand that the child has also been a victim because he or she was a witness to an act of violence against his or her mother or other family member. Custody courts, too, tend to impose most of the responsibility and obligations on the victim, repeatedly victimizing women. There is a widespread tendency of not taking any action to restrict the actions of men who continue to be violent by using children as a means to exercise manipulation.

**“The child’s not important to him. He wants to take away my child out of principle – to demonstrate his power over me.”**

**“When I told him I wanted a divorce, he began to display a sudden interest in our child so that it would affect the court’s later decision.”**



## INTERVIEWS WITH FOCUS GROUPS

We approached 120 women of different ages from Riga and Latvia to gather information on the experiences female victims of violence have had when dealing with the police. The 24 women who agreed to be interviewed had been in various violent relationships – both long-term and short-term, both married and unregistered relationships, and women, who had been persecuted and stalked.

Although all participants of the interviews had called the police when facing violence, most women admitted that they often chose to *endure the violence because they believed that the police and their arrival would not solve the situation.*

**“In the beginning, when he first started to become violent, I phoned the police twice. But, after I saw their attitude, I stopped...”**

**“I dread the moment when the police will leave and the front door closes. So, I’m very careful because calling the police might escalate the situation.”**

**“At night, for example, when he’s acting crazy, I go outside with the kid but where am I supposed to go? I literally just wait for him to leave and then I go back because I have no clue where I’m supposed to go in these situations, or whether anyone will help because I have no one to turn to.”**

Women point out that they've sometimes waited for the police to arrive for more than 2 hours, and that there have been cases when the police did not arrive despite receiving three interrupted calls, although the caller managed to state her address. Some women reported that the police did not arrive after the call at all. Sometimes, if the abuser realizes his partner phoned the police, he immediately leaves the house to later deny even having been at home.

The female victims admitted that the actions they've experienced from the police have sometimes discouraged them to act at all.

Women say that if there is no blood present at the scene, the police don't bother entering the apartment or searching their apartment or their bodies for signs of violence.

**“He’s assaulting me with knives and they [the police] tell me that they have no reason to do anything until something has happened”, saying that “with all due respect, until there is a victim, we have no lawful right to do anything to this person based only on suspicion.”**

Interviews with female victims reveal that the abuser and the victim are usually questioned while the other is present, and the children, too, are questioned in the presence of their violent parent.

Women are convinced that the support and help they receive from MARTA is crucial to ending violence.

## The lives of women suffering from violence

RENT

MONTHLY BILLS

MOVING

NEW APARTMENT

SEEING A PSYCHOLOGIST

JAUNS DŽĪVOKĻIS

MORTGAGE

WHO WILL LOOK AFTER THE CHILDREN?

LEGAL COUNSEL

THE CHILDREN MEETING THEIR FATHER

BEING LATE FOR WORK

HE BEGS ME TO FORGIVE HIM

DOCTOR'S APPOINTMENTS AND SICK LEAVE

CHILD CUSTODY WILL TAKE MY CHILDREN AWAY

CHILD SUPPORT

DIVORCE

CHILD BAD BEHAVIOR AT SCHOOL

REPORTS TO THE POLICE

HUSBAND HAS HIRED A LAWYER

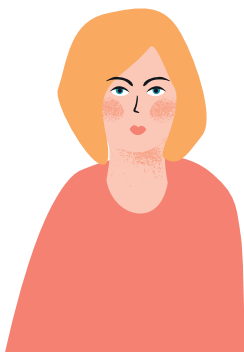
ANOTHER THREATING MESSAGE

CHILD CUSTODY

WHAT WILL MY CLOSE FRIENDS SAY

DO I LOVE  
HIM?

WHO WILL LOOK AFTER THE CHILDREN?



## THE THINGS ELDERLY WOMEN KEEP SILENT

Worldwide, 80% of elderly women who are victims of violence do not report their suffering to anybody. Latvian clinicians who encounter elderly women experiencing violence on a daily basis suggested that it's possible that the percentage of women who do not report violence in Latvia may actually be even higher.

There is a strong tendency among elderly women in Latvia to refrain from calling the police during situations of crisis, and to call the emergency medical services instead. An emergency doctor from Riga, who has been in office for 30 years, acknowledged that she sees women who suffer from violence every day, and in nearly all these cases women ask that their experiences are not reported to the police. Women in rural areas, as well as in cities are afraid to speak up about the violence they've experienced and are reluctant to talk about it even to their family doctors or caretakers. Women ask for medical help, but if their doctors want to notify the police, they threaten the doctors with suicide or say they won't call emergency medical services anymore.

The observations of home care specialists suggest that elderly women are usually the victims of economic, emotional and sexual violence. When the sons and – more recently – the grandsons of elderly women take away their pensions, physical violence is present in about a half of these cases. These cases are reported by medical personnel, not the women themselves, because the victims view their circumstances as *'their fate'*, and don't view it as violence and are unaware of their rights.

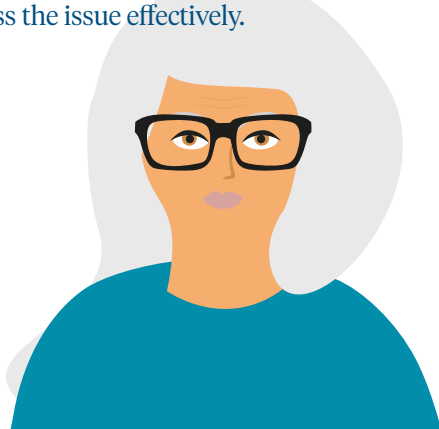
***“Women are taught not to turn against their family members. There are cases when the ones that end up reporting these issues are neighbours or other loved ones – not the victims. In practice, I come across situations where the children and grandchildren of elderly women lack social and communication skills, hence their relationships in the family tend to be destructive, and women take it upon themselves to try and protect the good name of their family by keeping silent,” says one of the interviewed family doctors.***

Specialists working for MARTA organized interviews with elderly women from Riga and other regions who have experienced or witnessed violence, thereby trying to understand the needs of elderly women. Women acknowledge the professional capabilities of specialists, but also report that they usually seek help from their friends and relatives instead, because they don't believe the social services can help them. There is also a lack of trust in the work done by the police "*The police force isn't lacking anything in particular – they simply fail to fulfil their obligations,*" says one of the surveyed women.

When explaining their reasons why women don't seek help, a popular explanation has to do with the attitude of their loved ones and society in general, which often justifies the actions of the perpetrator – "*But your husband is a respectable man!*". Women acknowledge that they have found themselves completely alone in their struggle to end an abusive relationship. Another important factor to always consider is the financial security and financial independence of women.

## IMPROVEMENTS

We received funding from a European project which made it possible to develop specialized educational materials for health care specialists. These materials help recognize violence against elderly women and provide information on the possibilities of assistance. The medical professionals were also given a special instrument – a questionnaire, which helps identify violence in cases where suspicion of violence arises. Specialists have developed recommendations for the government of Latvia and the European Union to address the issue effectively.





## **AN EVENT IN LIEPĀJA**

In 2018, in cooperation with the Liepaja city social services, Klaipeda social and psychological services centre and Klaipeda municipal children and families welfare centre, MARTA aimed at limiting violence in Liepaja and Klaipeda and implemented the project “Droša pilsēta” (Safe city).

The project sought to improve support and counselling services for women and children who have been victims of violence by improving cooperation between institutions so as to address violence more effectively.

## **HUMAN TRAFFICKING**

### **IEVA IN AFRICA**

MARTA received a message in summer about a girl named Ieva who had only recently turned 18. Her relatives were worried after receiving a sudden message from Ieva, who, without prior notification, had suddenly left for Africa. Ieva had patiently been saving up money for a long time to purchase a plane ticket. When she arrived, she was greeted by an African priest.

The girl had suffered violence in the family as a child, especially from her father. Ieva was unable to create mutual relationships with the men in her family.

She was silent, religious, reserved, unable to critically evaluate dangerous situations and often bullied at school. Ieva got into the habit of talking with strangers online.

Ieva had been chatting with an African man on Facebook since she was 15. He claimed he was a priest. “I love you”, “You’re the most beautiful woman I’ve ever met”, “I will marry you. You just have to save enough money for a plane ticket”, said Ieva’s pen pal, adding: “Don’t tell anyone about me!”.

Ieva, who had never received attention and praise like this, was touched and thought it was love. A Latvian woman saw to it that Ieva boards a plane to Africa and then handed her over to the African priest but Ieva ended up staying with other strangers instead. It turned out that the man was posing as a priest and said that the girl would work for him at his newly built church. The prompt actions of MARTA's specialists and Ieva's family led to the girl being quickly found and saved from potential exploitation.

Ieva's family tried to turn to the State police for help before they even notified MARTA about the missing girl. The family's plea for help was rejected because the police thought the girl was an adult and was capable of making her own decisions, saying that "*people in love do strange things*". The police did not take the girl's vulnerability, which made her an easy target for human traffickers, into account.

The day MARTA was first notified of Ieva's disappearance, the team phoned the Foreign Ministry's Consular Department; no one answered, although multiple numbers were tried.

2 weeks later, one of MARTA's specialists greeted Ieva at the airport in Riga. The State police did not initiate an investigation because no exploitation of a person had occurred even though the intent to do so was very clear in the case.

## **SUMMARY**

Free rehabilitation services were provided to 16 victims of human trafficking within the framework of *The National program to prevent human trafficking*. One person was underage.

The victims were subject to labour exploitation, sexual exploitation and fictitious marriages.

## STILL RELEVANT

One of the most urgent human rights debates in Latvia is the legal framework of prostitution and the international obligations for the prevention of prostitution, as well as the vague and hesitant stance of state institutions with regard to this issue.

MARTA has cooperated with foreign experts year after year to explore possible ways of solving problems.

In cooperation with the Canadian Embassy, MARTA organized seminars led by Dominic Monchamp, a Lieutenant of the Montreal Police, at the Latvian Police College and the Ministry of the Interior. Latvian experts and future police officers had the opportunity to learn about Canada's experience in reducing the spread of sexual exploitation, the legal framework adopted in Canada for prosecuting sex purchasers (instead of the people involved in prostitution) and the application of this regulation.



## #CienpilnaDzīve (#DignifiedLife)

MARTA organized an international conference in September titled “RESPECTABLE LIFE – CHOICES in NORDIC AND BALTIC COUNTRIES. Effective policies against sexual exploitation and prostitution”, during which a coalition between the Baltic states was established.

*“The argument that the view on prostitution doesn’t change is a thing of the past,”* Evika Silīņa (the Parliamentary Secretary of the Ministry of the Interior of the time), at the opening of the conference.

Joined by Baltic, European, Nordic, Ukrainian, Georgian, Central Asian, and US experts, government and NGO representatives, the conference examined different practices in various parts of the world, looking for the most effective legal framework to reduce the spread of sexual exploitation, ensure victim protection, and impose responsibility on the true perpetrators - the exploiters. A Prostitution Restriction Bill was to be submitted to the Government of Latvia in the summer of 2018, but it is still in development.

The experts at MARTA have repeatedly pointed out that, in accordance with international laws, to which Latvia is subject to, foreign experience in regulating prostitution, as well as the practice and experience of persons involved in prostitution suggests that the draft bill violates the human rights of the persons involved in prostitution.

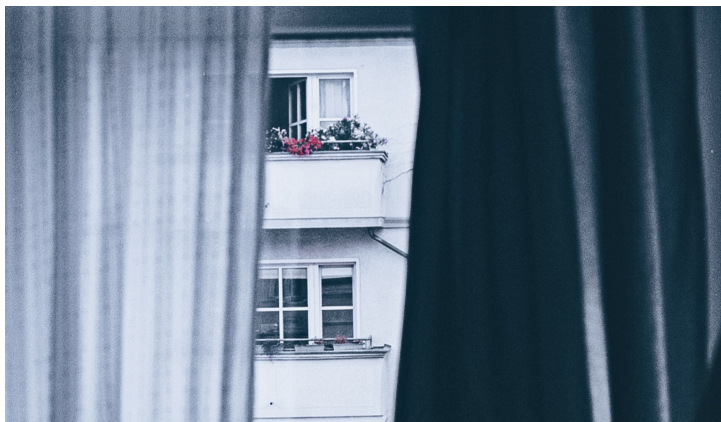
The punishment of sex purchasers by the state would demonstrate a clear stance that women and girls, who are the majority of prostitutes, are not a commodity, and that the act of buying a living person or his or her body to satisfy his or her sexual desires is unacceptable.

In an attempt to regulate prostitution (the persons involved in prostitution), it is not permissible to create a law that allows the use of a person and his or her body or allow the purchase of sex. Responsibility is expected not only for non-compliance with the regulations or restrictions, but for buying sexual activities, emphasizing that prostitution is violence.

On December 11 – Human Rights Day – members of the Baltic Coalition for the Elimination of Sexual Exploitation sent out invitations to their national members of parliament, focusing their attention on the main issues to be addressed in the regulation of sexual exploitation, so as to jointly create a society free from sexual exploitation. The so-called Nordic model has been adopted in the recent years by France (2016), Ireland (2017) and Israel (2018).



## EVENT OF THE YEAR



### AN ANONYMOUS APARTMENT

2018 was a significant year for MARTA, because with the help of its friends and supporters, MARTA established the first anonymous apartment in Latvia – a place that provided safe asylum and security to 2 victims of human trafficking and their children and 1 woman who had received death threats.

The attempts to persuade the Riga city council to establish a safe haven for women whose life is in danger had proved unsuccessful for many years.

The apartment, used to provide safety and other services, was given to MARTA by a congregation. The repair and furnishing of the apartment cost EUR 11 250.60 – a sum donated by contributors from Latvia and Norway.

2018 was also noteworthy because of a significant increase in the number of individual financial donors.

## **REPRESENTING INTERESTS AND TAKING A STAND FOR PEOPLE'S NEEDS**

- MARTA proposed amendments to the law that would allow for the provision of services to juveniles living in orphanages who have been victims of human trafficking, as the current laws do not provide for an opportunity to state funded services for children living in orphanages that have been victims of human trafficking;
- MARTA strongly opposed the amendments to the Law on Prevention of Conflict of Interest in the Activities of Public Officials, which sought to include a provision that would make public officials disclose information in their declarations regarding unregistered partners with whom they share a factual relationship. Including such a provision in the law would mean the actual recognition of a partner relationship, so the state should protect individuals in unregistered partner relationships, not just impose sanctions or additional obligations.

---

23

## **SOLI TUVĀK (A STEP CLOSER)**

In 2018, the EU-funded project SOLI TUVĀK, in partnership with the Ministry of Welfare and the State police, tested and implemented the previously developed cross-institutional, victim-orientated cooperation model for cases of violence against women – the *Coordinated community response model*.

The project developed instruments (risk assessment questionnaires and guidelines for action) and offered them to professionals to help them act more effectively, by taking the needs of the victims into account.

The cross-institutional cooperation started in Tukums and was later implemented in 5 other Latvian municipalities in Cēsis, Balvi, Dobele, Saldus and Valmiera. These places were the pilot projects for the coordinated community response for violence against women.



The pilot projects saw to the creation of an interdisciplinary team in each municipality – comprised of various specialists such as representatives from the social services, state and municipal police, custody courts, district courts and prosecutors' offices, the state probation service, the health care sector and crisis units. From March till June, MARTA's specialists and experts from the Ministry of Welfare, the State police and the Judicial Training centre, organized training seminars for more than 300 professionals – police officers, social workers, probation service representatives, judges, prosecutors and representatives of non-governmental organizations to improve interinstitutional cooperation by providing victims with effective support and demanding responsibility from the victim.

Seminars were held in Jelgava, Riga, Valmiera, Rezekne, Balvi, Kuldīga, Saldus and Liepāja.

The project developed an effective tool for assessing risk of violence – a Risk assessment form, which allows specialists to identify, assess and respond to the needs of female victims of violence.

The police force acknowledged that filling in the form helped them come to a decision about whether the offender should be separated from the victim more effectively.



It is intended that this form will become an integral part of a police officer's daily arsenal and serve as another instrument in improving cross-institutional cooperation and providing support for the victim.

Furthermore, several activities to inform the public were also held within the framework of the project. With the aid of the State police, this project developed informative materials for victims and their peers. Seminars were held for regional media representatives in various regions of Latvia. They were aimed at explaining key issues with regard to violence and sought to reveal how violence is misrepresented in the public space.

In order to evaluate the best solutions to bring about cross-institutional cooperation, MARTA and its partners –the Ministry of Welfare, the Nordic Council of Ministers, the US, Norway, and the Finnish and Swedish Embassies who offered support during the UN's 16 day campaign against gender-based violence, organized a series of events throughout Latvia, including workshops for young people, seminars for specialists, a seminar for judges, and held the annual international conference *“Support net for women – victims of violence. Cross-institutional Cooperation Model in Latvia”*

The chief of the State Police, General Ints Kūzīsis, stated at the conference that Latvia is still highly tolerant towards domestic violence and violence against women.

**“It often appears as a family matter and, unfortunately, the police force sometimes views it as such. The collaborative work seeking to establish interinstitutional cooperation has helped pave the way for educating its employees – raising awareness that violence shouldn't exist and helping to act in such cases.”**

## **LAMPA**

### **DISCUSSION FESTIVAL LOCATION, ENVIRONMENT AND IMPULSES**

We asked the people attending the festival: – what is their understanding of the concept of “freedom” when discussing “free choice” to sell yourself and your body?

Someone’s choice is truly free only if it is free from prejudice, violence, guilt and financial dependency.

There is a real lack of understanding in Latvian society about the actual situation persons involved in prostitution face and how prostitution is a manipulative system of exploitation. There are different reasons why women sell their bodies: their social environment (“A friend talked me into it.”); consequences of previously suffered violence (“I’ve been used ever since I was a child”); a painful crisis in the family (“I was alone and I had a child to raise – I have to earn money so we can survive”). Latvian politicians, on the other hand, do not have the courage to place issues of sexual exploitation on their political agenda.

The discussion “A dignified life. Tradition. Choice.” helped organize representatives of state institutions, international experts, professionals working in the field and representatives of the community to look for answers on this often times uncomfortable issue. The participants compared how different nations have approached the issue. They discussed the Swedish model which dictates that purchasers of sex should be punished along with pimps and other exploiters. The German model, however views sexual exploitation as a matter of free choice of labour.

## **WORK WITH YOUNG PEOPLE THE COURAGE TO NURTURE**

MARTA's youth work leaders have worked extensively with groups of boys and girls, understanding their aspirations, values and needs. This has allowed us to create the first methodology ever orientated towards Latvian culture and its specifics. The aim of the methodology is to prevent violence against children and young people and ensure the training of education specialists for its proper implementation.

The developed methodology consists of 16 classes (2-2,5 h long) and includes topics relevant to young people – self-knowledge and self-reflection; recognizing and coordinating personal and other people's emotions; conflict resolution and discussion making skills; knowledge of gender and sex, the relevance of these concepts to gender roles and societal stereotypes, and the ability to reflect on behavioural patterns expected of boys / men and girls / women; knowledge about sexual reproductive health according to their age; knowledge and skills to build healthy relationships with themselves and their peers; ability to distinguish and react properly to violent relationships, etc.

The group work for launching the methodology takes place at the Riga orphanage "Imanta", Iecava boarding school, Dobeles youth initiative and health centre and Priekuli primary school.

A total of 45 young people aged between 13 and 18 were involved in these classes.

## **THE COURAGE TO SPEAK UP**

In 2018, we continued to organize the youth workshops "Drosme runāt" ("The courage to speak up") and managed to reach and address more than 80 young people aged 12 to 20, encouraging them to think and talk about the things they aren't accustomed to talk about.

We created visually attractive informative materials (titled “This affects us too”) within the framework of the project #RaPaPro in cooperation with the students of the Riga design and art secondary school. The idea of the RaPaPro project was to give future advertising and graphic designers an opportunity to get acquainted with a topical social issue during their studies. This collaboration helped create many different works on topical and uncomfortable societal topics – stereotypes, physical, psychological, emotional, sexual violence, bullying, neglect, harassment and other types of unhealthy relationships. The informative materials included information on the recognition of violence and listed potential ways to seek help.

We created 30 locations near the primary schools of Riga which exhibited 6 posters, encouraging young people to act and express their views.



## #8Marts #Solidaritāte

We created a call for solidarity event on March 8, 2018 titled “MY LIFE. MY CHOICE”, encouraging citizens to show solidarity with the women living in the countryside, as they have a significantly smaller chance of working in a profession which would correspond to their aspirations and skills, it is difficult for them to obtain a desired education, receive quality health care and ask for help when they cannot protect themselves. More than 150 people joined the march for solidarity and equal rights.



## **MARTAs COMPETENCE FOR DEVELOPMENTAL COOPERATION.**

### **EASTERN PARTNERSHIPS**

**Information: Developmental cooperation is a part of Latvian foreign and security policy.**

Developmental cooperation means aiding poor and less developed countries by promoting long-term social and economic development, reducing poverty and ensuring peace and security in the world. <https://www.mfa.gov.lv/arpolitika/attistibas-sadarbiba/kas-ir-attistibas-sadarbiba>

In 2018, 2 human rights activists from Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan selected MARTA as an organization of experience, knowledge and competence. By collaborating with us every day in planning services for young people and representing the interests of young people and organizing their work, our Central Asian colleagues were encouraged to pursue their civic initiatives and democratic ideas.

In March, we hosted specialists on a study visit from NGO's and government institutions from Azerbaijan, Georgia and Kazakhstan. We developed ideas and practical steps to create an interinstitutional cooperation model to reduce violence against women in the Caucasus countries and Kazakhstan. We did this by visiting Latvian crisis centres and service provider organizations, met with representatives of parliament, responsible ministries, representatives from the courts, the police and social services from Riga and elsewhere throughout Latvia.

In April, the European Commission Representation in Dushanbe invited the head of MARTA Iluta Lāce to share MARTA's experience with more than 70 representatives from Tajikistani civil society organizations in promoting law and policy change and responding to the everyday issues and crises that women face.

## **AN EVENT IN THE US**

The head of MARTA – Iluta Lāce received an invitation from the organization “Global Rights for Women” to address more than 500 lawyers and human rights activists in a global forum on women’s rights.

Iluta Lāce held lectures at 2 universities and met with the local Latvian communities in Minneapolis, Milwaukee and Chicago.

## **CONTRIBUTORS**

State programme (via public procurement) “Providing social rehabilitation and support services to victims of human trafficking during criminal proceedings”

State programme (via public procurement) “Providing social rehabilitation and support services to the adult victims of violence and domestic abuse”

“Support groups and crisis intervention for women and children suffering from domestic violence and abuse in Riga and Liepaja” supported by Latvian Ministry of Welfare

“Women and Children - Safe in their City / Safe City” supported by Interreg Latvian- Lithuanian programme for 2014-2024

“Advocacy for women and children rights” supported by the State of Latvia NGO program and administrated by the Society Integration Foundation

“Youth –Dare to Care. Prevention of violence towards and among youth in Latvia” supported by OAK foundation and Latvian Ministry of Culture

“Working with Healthcare Organisations to Support Elderly Female Victims of Abuse (WHOSEFVA)” supported by EU Rights, equality and citizenship programme project

“ONE STEP CLOSER: Coordinated Community Response to Violence against Women” supported by EU Rights, equality and citizenship programme project

Nordic Council of Ministers, Embassy of Finland, Embassy of Sweden, Royal Norwegian Embassy, U.S. Embassy, Embassy of Canada, SISTERHOOD IS GLOBAL INSTITUTE INC, FINLANDS SVENSKA MARTHA FORBUND, Fellesorganisasjonen, Prague Civil Society Centre

MADARA Cosmetics, AS; EAZYBI, SIA; NP Business centre; LLC; Attorneys at Law Office “Sorainen”; Skywind Tech LV, SIA; Microsoft corporation; deac DATA CENTERS; Riga Luther Congregation

More than 200 individual donations.

Hotline Number:

# 80002012

Follow Us:



Visit Our Web Address:

## www.marta.lv

Biedriba "Centrs MARTA"

Matisa street 49-3, Riga, LV-1009

Mail: [centrs@marta.lv](mailto:centrs@marta.lv)

Phone: +371 67378539

Centre MARTA appreciates every donation, ensures its targeted use and hopes for further cooperation and support.

**For donations:**

Association "MARTA Centre"

Matisa street 49-3, Riga, LV-1009 Latvia

LV40008061978

LV95NDEA0000080118417

