

**ECPA 2007
Poland Entry**

1. Project title.

STUDENT INFORMATION POINTS (SIPs) for Victims of Family Violence and Minor Members of Families Threatened by Social Pathology
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2. General project description.

<p>Starting date of the project: May 2001 with subsequent editions in the following years Project website: www.podlaska.policja.gov.pl Project manager: Chief Superintendent (<i>Nadkomisarz</i>) Adam Petelski - Head of the Crime Prevention Department at the Police Headquarters for the Podlaskie Voivodship in Białystok (<i>Wydział Prewencji Komendy Wojewódzkiej Policji w Białymstoku</i>) Address of the party in charge: Wydział Prewencji Komendy Wojewódzkiej Policji w Białymstoku, 65 Sienkiewicza St., 15-003 Białystok, phone no. +48/085/677-36-35, e-mail: prewencja@podlaska.policja.gov.pl;</p>

The Podlaskie Voivodship (*Województwo Podlaskie*), spanning over the territory of 20 180 sq. km, remains under the supervision of the Police Headquarters for the Podlaskie Voivodship in Białystok and its subordinate units: municipal and local Police Stations. Moreover, in the structure of the Police forces in the Podlaskie Voivodship, there are two separate units: the Police Prevention Squad (*Oddział Prewencji Policji*) and the the Independent Anti-Terrorist Police Squad (*Samodzielny Pododdział Antyterrorystyczny Policji*). Over 3,000 policemen serve in the garrison for the Podlaskie Voivodship.

Number of inhabitants of the Voivodship is 1,221,000, 714,000 of which live in the cities and 507,000 in the country. The Voivodship borders with Lithuania and Belarus. The capital city of the Voivodship is Białystok (295,000 inhabitants), that is also the location for the SIP project.

When did the problem appear for the first time?

Only in the recent years has family violence begun to be perceived as a problem in the social awareness and has become a subject of preventive actions. In 1998, a special procedure for policemen dealing with family violence was introduced in Poland, named Blue Cards (*Niebieskie Karty*).

Data depicting the problem:

QUANTITATIVE DATA:

Total number of crime victims in the Podlaskie Voivodship diminished in the last three years – from 22,000 in the year 2004 to 15,500 in the year 2006. Simultaneously, it must be stressed that the percentage of minors in the total number of crime victims remained stable, equaling about 900 people a year.

The majority of crime victims suffered as a result of deeds involving violence. Most criminal deeds were reported in the following categories:

- maltreatment (2004 – 656, 2005 – 664, 2006 - 678)
- health impairment resulting form a crime (2004 - 605, 2005 - 501, 2006 - 518).

Crimes against sexual freedom and morality constitute a significant percentage:

- rape (2004 - 69, 2005 - 68, 2006 - 51),
- sexual contacts with a minor under 15 years of age (2004 - 38, 2005 - 30, 2006 - 25).

A significant percentage of victims of the above crimes are children:

- maltreatment (2004 – 161, 2005 – 230, 2006 - 244)
- health impairment resulting form a crime (2004 - 79, 2005 - 77, 2006 - 92).

Analogous tendencies are observed in particular administrative units (*powiaty*) of the Podlaskie Voivodship

and in its capital city.

Taking into consideration that crime statistics never depict the full scale of criminal activity (the number of unreported crimes is particularly high in relation to family violence), all attempts at estimating the extent of the problem in the Podlaskie Voivodship are based on the number of home interventions caused by violence. And so, the number of such interventions in subsequent years equaled: ● 2004 – 3321
● 2005 – 3434 ● 2006 – 3791.

QUALITATIVE DATA:

- Independently from the level of education or knowledge of the respondents, unfavorable convictions concerning violence remain very common in the society and to a great extent hinder or disallow efficient diagnosis of the problem and future intervention.
- In spite of increased publicity given to the issue of violence, not enough preventive actions are taken in relation to the threats connected with the violence phenomenon.
- Particular institutions work individually on solving this problem, not being aware of the competence of other other organizations (especially the role and competence of the Police in preventing family violence are not known or misinterpreted by other institutions).
- The support offered to families affected by violence is inadequate. In the city of Białystok there are two specialized institutions dealing with family violence.

Characteristics of perpetrators and their methods:

The conducted analysis of available data (gathered during home interventions) indicates that the perpetrators of violent acts are predominantly males:

- 2004 – 3183 ● 2005 – 3341 ● 2006 – 3663.

Most of them resort to violence under the influence of alcohol:

- 2004 – 2573 ● 2005 – 2713 ● 2006 – 2812.

The number of minors committing such deeds remains marginal:

- 2004 – 12 ● 2005 – 6 ● 2006 – 11.

Victim characteristics:

Victims of violence are usually women and children. It should be stressed that also children under 13 years of age who have witnessed violence are classified as its victims. Analysis of data on conducted home interventions related to violence has brought the following results:

Women: ● 2004 – 3091 ● 2005 – 3267 ● 2006 – 3610

Children up to 13 years of age: ● 2004 – 1662 ● 2005 – 2194 ● 2006 – 2311

Children aged 13 to 18: ● 2004 – 791 ● 2005 – 864 ● 2006 – 953

Sources of the problem:

Main sources of the problem are:

- lack of systematic information campaigns and their narrow territorial span.
- lack of an interdisciplinary approach towards the issue of home violence.
- lack of a specialized education offer.
- prevailing stereotypes, according to which family problems should be dealt with behind closed doors.
- inappropriate educational programs for employees dealing with counteracting home violence in future.

These factors are directly reflected in the scarcity of specialists in counteracting family violence in the Podlaskie Voivodship. Also, low availability of support offers is the outcome of such a situation. Activities of particular organizations and institutions, undertaken individually and without knowing the competence of other bodies, are characterized by low efficiency.

Short description of the project:

Perceiving the need for cooperation between various institutions and organizations towards helping the victims of violence and towards enhancing the present support offer directed at such victims, it has been decided to establish in police stations across the city of Białystok STUDENT INFORMATION POINTS (SIPs) for victims of family violence and minor members of families threatened by social pathology.

The SIPs are operated by students of law, pedagogy and resocialization of local Universities. Apart from knowledge gained at the Universities, the students undergo a professional training to develop their skills of dealing with violence victims.

The aim of such Information Points is two-fold. On the one hand, students give practical and legal advice to victims of violence-related crimes and on the other, they establish closer contact with these victims in order to actively support them, as well as other members of their families, by indicating potential sources of help. Students participate in the SIPs as in an internship, on the basis of agreements signed between the Police and local Universities.

3. Project objectives.

Main objectives and assumptions:

- Enhancing the available support and information offer for victims of violence.
- Increasing the number of people engaged in activities for counteracting family violence.
- Enriching the knowledge of students - future specialists in the issues of family violence - and equipping them with necessary tools for action in the event of diagnosing such a situation.
- Familiarizing students with various forms of police work, especially with methods of counteracting family violence.
- Increasing the awareness of families affected by violence.

4. Forms of project execution.

Project execution involves engaging students of law, pedagogy and resocialization in counseling and information activities conducted at Police Stations – as a form of student internships. Execution of each edition of the project lasts 6 months.

The first edition of SIP was conducted in 2001. Opinions voiced then by program participants and addressees clearly indicated the need to continue such actions involving students to joint projects aiming at enhancing the knowledge of the local community in regards to victim support. Up to now, seven editions of the program have been organized.

Stage 1 – Formal preparation of the project:

1. Establishing cooperation with institutions beyond the Police, local authorities, in order to execute the project (designating project coordinators in particular organizations, dividing tasks, signing agreements).
2. Preparing information material.

Stage 2 – Organization:

Meetings with students at Universities that have agreed to participate in the project. Such meetings include:

- presenting project assumptions,
- outlining the initial participation conditions (compulsory training, holding valid insurance policies covering accidents during the project),
- completing registration forms,
- verifying candidates for participation in the project.
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Stage 3 – Training:

Students – participants in the project - and their mentors from the Universities take part in training sessions on:

- forms and options of counteracting violence,
- mediatory activities in cases involving minors,
- tasks and aims of the welfare system, forms of welfare benefits and the mode/conditions of granting these benefits,
- the activities of the Municipal Commission for Solving Alcohol-Related Problems (*Miejska Komisja Rozwiązywania Problemów Alkoholowych*),
- motivating alcohol addicts and co-addicted individuals to undergo therapy conducted by appropriate institutions,
- personal data protection.

Training sessions are conducted by Police officers and employees of local social support institutions.

Stage 4 – Project promotion:

1. Distribution of information posters and educational/informational leaflets in Police Stations, by District Constables (*Dzielnicowi*) and by institutions dealing with issues of family violence, addictions and social welfare.
2. Publication of SIP-related information in the Internet:
 - On the website of the Police Headquarters for the Podlaskie Voivodship – www.podlaska.policja.gov.pl,
 - On the website of the Law Faculty, University of Białymstok – www.prawo.uwb.edu.pl,
 - On the website of the Teacher's College for Revalidation, Resocialization and Sports (*Nauczycielskie Kolegium w Białymstoku Rewalidacji, Resocjalizacji i Wychowania Fizycznego*) – www.nkriwf.pl.
3. Publicizing the activities of Student Information Points in the media.
4. Organization of a meeting to mark the launch of the the SIPs, with representatives of the governmental administration, local authorities, the media, participating Universities and their students.

Stage 5 – Project execution:

1. Students remain on-duty at Police Stations across the city of Białystok according to the schedule agreed earlier (interdisciplinary groups with 3 members: a student of law, of pedagogy and of resocialization). Their duty is served in specially designated and marked rooms, three times a week in two shifts (between 10.00-14.00 and 14.00–18.00). A report is written after every shift according to the template prepared beforehand. Reports are gathered and analyzed at the end of every week, with a focus on the number of clients and forms of provided help. Another analysis takes place after the conclusion of the program. In particular Police Stations where the Project is executed, group mentors are designated to help the students. The mentor is usually a representative of the Police, on whose support the students can rely. Information Points are equipped with supportive material: information posters and leaflets, lists and opening hours of courthouses and attorney offices, informational/educational publications on family violence and addictions, supplied by social-support institutions, templates of legal correspondence in cases concerning the family and guardian duties etc.
2. Additionally, performance of the SIPs is continuously monitored by a coordinator from the Police Headquarters for the Podlaskie Voivodship in Białystok, who participates personally in selected shifts.

Stage 6 – Conclusion of the program:

1. Organization of a celebration, with representatives of parties involved in the project, to mark its conclusion, to summarize the undertaken actions and their results and to award students with prizes and certificates of participation.
2. Program evaluation.

1. Partners in project execution and the extent of their involvement (planning, preparing, implementation).

What partners (governmental, private) have been involved in the execution of particular stages of the project? How has it been financed?

- **Office of the Marshall of the Podlaskie Voivodship** (*Urząd Marszałkowski woj. Podlaskiego*): has financed the printing of informational and educational leaflets,
- **Białystok City Council** (*Rada miasta Białegostoku*): has sponsored the prizes for outstanding students,
- **Crime Prevention Department, Police Headquarters for the Podlaskie Voivodship in Białystok**: has prepared the project assumptions, organized all stages of the project, controlled the process of project execution.
- **Municipal Police Stadion in Białystok** (*Komenda Miejska w Białymstoku*) **and its subordinate local Stations**: have prepared office space for the SIPs, have disseminated educational/informational leaflets concerning SIP activities through their Police patrols and Constables, have supported the students professionally
 - during their shifts and while working with clients,
- **Universities of Białystok**: have equipped students participating in the Project in professional knowledge and skills.
- **Municipal Center for Family Support in Białystok** (*Miejski Ośrodek Pomocy Rodzinie w Białymstoku*):

has participated in educating students on the issues of family violence and on welfare services, also has distributed leaflets concerning the activities of SIPs,

- **Municipal Commission for Solving Alcohol-Related Problems** (*Miejska Komisja Rozwiązywania Problemów Alkoholowych*): has educated students on topics within the scope of activities of the Commission and has motivated addicted and co-addicted individuals to undertake therapies offered by various institutions, also has distributed leaflets on the SIPs,
- **Student Legal Advisory board** (*Studencka poradnia prawna*) at the Faculty of Law of the University of Białystok: has cooperated in helping clients of the SIPs in solving complex issues of legal nature, also has equipped the students with the necessary professional knowledge and skills.
- **Local media (radio, TV, press)**: have propagated preventive actions at particular stages of the project.

How particular proposals have been consulted and decisions made?

All proposals and suggestions concerning particular stages of project execution have been consulted by project partners on a continuous basis and discussed during work meetings and training sessions. Specific decisions have been made after consultations between the Police, university specialists, and students. In order to achieve the best possible results, consultations have been organized before, during and after each edition of the SIP program. The project has been financed from the resources of local authorities.

2. Have plans for evaluating the degree of project execution been prepared?

How have particular project stages (planning, preparation, execution) been evaluated?

Execution of particular project stages has been evaluated in the following manner:

- The planning stage – by consulting project plans with teaching staff and students of Universities in Białystok,
- The preparation stage – by exchanging experience with social workers, teachers and psychologists from institutions providing social support,
- The execution stage – with the use of evaluative survey forms concerning training sessions, unstructured and structured interviews with university teaching staff, students and policemen participating in the program.

3. Evaluation of project effects

Have the project effects been evaluated? What exactly has been evaluated? Who has conducted the evaluation?

The main coordinator of the project - Crime Prevention Department, Police Headquarters for the Podlaskie Voivodship in Białystok, in cooperation with project partners, has conducted the evaluation of project effects.

The following factors have been scrutinized:

- the number of involved students,
- the number of clients turning to the SIPs for help,
- professional and organizational level of the conducted training sessions,
- reception of the project by students and partners,
- the number of violence-related crimes registered,
- the number of Police interventions related to family violence.

4. Achieved results.

What effects (results) have been achieved?

- In all seven editions of Student Information Points participated 451 students of Universities located in Białystok (in subsequent years the number of students interested in taking part in the program increased from 30 people in the first edition to 88 in the seventh edition),
- In all seven editions, Student Information Points have served 1484 clients, who have received advice and legal, psychological and welfare help, including addresses and competence of institutions supporting violence victims,
- In cooperation with project partners, students – future specialist working with families – have received training in the issues of family violence,
- Students have had an opportunity to study the forms of Police work, especially concerning activities to counteract family violence and addictions (some project participants have voiced their willingness to join Police forces),
- Some participating students have been accepted as trainees in Police forces,
- The project has met with a positive response from participants and partners alike,
- Analysis of statistical data for subsequent years of project execution indicates an increasing number of reported and detected crimes connected with violence. For example, in the maltreatment category, numbers of registered cases were as follows: ● 2004 – 3321, ● 2005 – 3434, ● 2006 – 3791. Such statistics show a growing trust towards the Police.

Have project objectives been fulfilled?

To a great extent, the accepted objectives of the projects have been fulfilled. However, taking into consideration that the implemented actions have largely concerned shaping social awareness, it is very difficult to evaluate its direct efficiency in a quantitative way.

A measurable outcome of the project execution is involving and educating almost 500 people (students and their mentors) in the realm of counteracting family violence.

Publicity given to the project by the local media has surely resulted in a change in the perception of family violence among the local community. Moreover, the support offered to violence victims from the city of Białystok and its surroundings has been enriched.

Analysis of statistical data indicates an increasing number of crimes connected with violence and the number of home interventions due to violence. This may indicate that the level of popular knowledge on family violence has been heightened and the urge to report it has become more common

Has the project had some particular achievements (unplanned)?

Particular, unplanned achievements of the project include:

- a significant number of partners that have participated in project execution,
- rising number of students taking part in subsequent editions of the program.