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FLYING TEAM AGAINST VIOLENCE

**two steps  
forward, one  
step back**

Combatting of honour related violence, forced marriages and abandonment

Political climate, policy and approach in the Netherlands

## Colophon

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## Contents

PART I	Immigration, integration and honour related violence .....	4
1.	Political/social climate and migrants and immigration.....	5
2.	Government policy on immigration and integration .....	7
3.	Political/social climate and honour related violence .....	10
4.	Government policy on honour related violence .....	14
5.	Combating honour related violence in the Netherlands .....	17
6.	Summary .....	22
PART II	Findings of grass roots organizations and NGOs.....	23
7.	Positive and negative effects of the government policy .....	25
8.	Good practices.....	28
8.1	Als ik haar was... (If I were her...) .....	29
8.2	Addressing domestic violence in migrant communities .....	31
8.3	Hand in hand tegen huwelijksdwang (joining forces against forced marriage) .....	33
8.4	Aan de goede kant van eer (On the good side of honour) .....	35
8.5	Changemakers Honour related violence.....	37
8.6	De Zwarte Tulp (The Black Tulip) .....	39
8.7	Know Your Rights! .....	41
8.8	Veilige Haven (Safe Haven) .....	43
8.9	Reporting Centre Honour Related Violence Amsterdam .....	45
8.10	Van Huis Uit (From Home) .....	47
8.11	Opvang Eva (Shelter Eva).....	49
9.	Success factors, wants and recommendations .....	51
10.	Summary .....	57
11.	Conclusions .....	58
APPENDICES	.....	60
1.	Contact information respondents.....	60
2.	Sources .....	62
3.	Contact information Dutch and foreign project partners .....	65

## Introduction

Part I of this report “Two steps forward, one step back” is about Dutch government policy on actions against honour related violence and forced marriage during the past ten years. The policy is considered in light of the prevailing political climate and the government policy on immigration and integration. In the past years, the social debate took a negative turn with the declaration that the ‘multicultural society’ had ‘failed’. Also, populist parties with anti-immigration ideas made a strong showing. Simultaneously, social and political attention turned to honour related violence and forced marriage, which mainly- but not exclusively- occurred in traditional, closed migrant communities.

In the composition of this report the question was: how did the predominant anti-immigration climate affect the national government actions against honour related violence and forced marriage? And what effect did and does this climate and policy have on grass roots organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs)<sup>1</sup> with respect to combating ‘harmful traditional practices’?

By studying and comparing this, the authors expect to gain a better insight in the interaction between political climate, policy and execution. Their hope is that this report will contribute to more awareness on these subjects and to inform readers of the possible risks and dangers.

In Part II, a number of NGOs and migrant grass roots organizations will speak of their work with regard to actions against honour related violence, forced marriage and/or abandonment. Workers of thirteen organizations were invited to reflect on the current government policy, the positive and negative effects on their work, on their communities and participants. The organizations express hopes and needs, as well as recommendations for governments. In addition, part II contains descriptions of eleven ‘good practices’ with their specific factors of success. In the past decade, a great deal has been achieved in the field of ‘combating harmful traditional practices’; a solid approach has been developed. However, it seems to be a case of “Two steps forward, one step back.”

### The Flying Team project

This report was composed as part of the European project “Flying Team against Violence. Combatting Honour Related Violence, Forced Marriage and Abandonment”. MOVISIE and foundations Welsaen and Kezban initiated the project in January 2011. The following partners joined them: ALMAeuropa (Sweden), Papatya (Germany), MIGS (Cyprus) en (until 2012) Kalkinma Atoyosi (Development Workshop) from Turkey. In January 2012, Bağımsız Kadın Derneği (Independent Women Association) became the new Turkish partner. MOVISIE is leading the project, which is financed by the ‘Daphne Funding Programme’ of the European Commission.

With this project, the partners aim to enhance appreciation and support for the work of grass roots organizations and NGOs in their work against so-called “harmful traditional practices”. The large amount of (mostly volunteer) work of these organizations is infinitely valuable and mostly underestimated by policymakers and stakeholders. Next to this, the project aims to unite relevant organizations in an international network to learn from each other, develop work methods and strengthen their position by joining forces. The Flying Team project consists of a various activities and products.

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<sup>1</sup> A **non-governmental organization** is an organization that is independent of the government and that promotes a presumed social interest.

One of these activities is the description of the developments in each of the partners' countries by the partners, and of the good practices of NGOs and grass roots organizations in the partner countries. This report is the description of the situation in the Netherlands. The Dutch findings have been compared with the findings of the other four project countries and published in a European report, also in a summary version. Each country report appears in the national language and in English. The reports can be downloaded from the respective websites of the project partners.

Out of all the 'good practices' described by the participating countries, the project team selected one practice from each country to publish in the 'toolkit'. Also in the toolkit are factors of success and recommendations for grass roots organizations and NGOs to increase their chances of successful projects.

In all participating countries the especially formed "Flying Team", existing of one representative from a grass roots organization or NGO from each partner country, will present the toolkit.

In 2012 the team will visit the national meetings that are organized by the European project partners (except for Turkey). At these meetings the team members present the toolkit and good practice from their countries.

For the national meeting, representatives of grass roots organizations and NGOs invite stakeholders, policymakers and politicians. The Dutch meeting took place on 4 October 2012 in Amsterdam. The Integration and Society board of the Dutch Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations joined in the organization of the meeting.

### **Definitions**

Here are the definitions used for the problems that are addressed as well as an explanation of used terminology.

#### ***Honour related violence***

Honour related violence refers to mental or physical transgressions in the context of patriarchal family structures/communities/societies, that are carried out especially but not exclusively against women and girls, who are seen as the carriers of family honour. Boys and homosexuals, bisexuals and transgenders are also known victims. The violence is rooted in the patriarchal desire to control women's sexuality. Collective ideas and social pressure are important contributors to the problem. As women are held responsible for the education of the children, they are often the scapegoats when the family honour is jeopardized by rumours. As a result, other women in the family sometimes take part in the oppression and even the violence. Honour has its origin in conservative cultural conceptions about gender, power and sexuality. There are strong beliefs about virginity and chastity and the family's reputation and good name in the community largely depends on the actual or alleged behaviour of the girls and women in the family. Discipline and control ranges from limitations in everyday life, like choice of clothes, social life and freedom of movement to influencing important choices in life, such as education, work, marriage or divorce. In its most extreme forms, rigid control can lead to threats of violence and actual violence, including murder. Genital mutilation and some forms of forced marriage, abandonment and repudiation are a form of honour related violence.

The official work definition in the Netherlands which was formulated by order of the government, is: "Honour related violence is any type of psychological or physical violence committed from a collective mentality as a reaction to a (threat of) violation of the honour of a man or a woman, and thus of his or her family, of which the outside world is aware or may become aware." (Ferwerda & Van Leiden, 2005).

### **Forced marriage**

In some cases forced marriage is a form of honour related violence. For example, if the marriage is either preventing or restoring the family honour. Other reasons for forced marriages are economical motives, a wish to strengthen family ties or tradition.

The description of forced marriage: "The act of forcing a girl/woman or boy/man into marriage, by parents, family or community. The core concept is 'coercion'. There is a sliding scale of 'soft coercion in the form of social and psychological pressure', to 'forcing a son or daughter to get married to a partner of their parents' or other relatives' choice by threatening with physical and/or psychological violence'. Or to get married before a certain age." (MOVISIE, 2009). Action group "Femmes for Freedom", initiated in 2011, advocates a broader definition of forced marriage by adding 'marital imprisonment' as a criminal offence. This concerns women who are forced to stay married in a religious marriage. Often, these women have already had a civil divorce in their country of residence, but are unable to have the religious or civil marriage dissolved according to the law in the country of origin of one or both partners, because their husband refuses to cooperate.

### **Abandonment**

There is no common widespread definition of abandonment. Kezban Foundation gives the following description of abandonment in, and sending back to the country of origin: "Husbands abandoning their wives. Parents abandoning their children. Sometimes women and children are sent back from Holland. There are various reasons for sending back or abandoning women and children. Sometimes a husband wants to leave his wife, and for him it is easier to leave her in the country of origin with family, than to get a divorce in the Netherlands. Sometimes, the idea rises that a wife and/or children are too exposed to Western influences, and that the family honour may be violated. If a violation of honour has already taken place in the eyes of the family, abandonment may be the punishment; an attempt to restore the honour. Girls and unmarried women are mostly left to stay with members of their own family. But in some cases abandonment is combined with a forced marriage. Married women are sometimes left with the family of the husband, but in many cases they are sent back to their own families. Either way, the woman is in danger of becoming a victim of honour related violence all over again. They were sent back, therefore they failed as wives, and therefore they violated the family honour. The violence can take the shape of (physical) abuse/ exploitation, but the family may also refuse to take her in and send her back to her original family or husband. Boys run the same risk of being send back or abandoned, for example, to prevent them from 'straying' (getting involved in criminal activities). Also, like girls, boys can be forced into marriage.

### **Harmful traditional practices**

'Harmful traditional practices' is an international term for violence, mutilation and suppression in the name of old traditions and beliefs on sexuality and gender roles. It includes, among other things, honour related violence, child marriages and forced marriage, abandonment, circumcision of girls and polygamy (Ageng'o, 2009)<sup>1</sup>. Next to girls and young women, boys are also known victims. Young people in the teenage and adolescent years are most prone to becoming victims of violence in the name of traditions, as their sexuality is developing and they are starting to form relationships.

## **PART I Immigration, integration and honour related violence**

### **Introduction and accountability**

This part presents the findings of the executed desk research on political and social climate and policy on immigration and integration. Against this background, there will be an account of the actions that were taken during that period to prevent honour related violence. The desk research was executed on the basis of sources from literature, science, media, politics and government. In addition, a number of policy officers were questioned: two government officials, a civil servant and a representative of the Dutch National Knowledge Centre Honour related violence (LEC EGG) of the police.

### **Goals of Part I**

1. Describing the national approach of honour related violence and forced marriage in the context of the political climate and government policy on immigration and integration.
2. Exploring the possible effect of the political (mainly anti-immigration) climate on the national government approach to honour related violence and forced marriage.
3. Exploring the effect of the political climate and government policy on grass roots organizations and NGOs in their strive against these harmful traditional practices.
4. Offering input for a comparison of the situations in the four partner countries: Germany, Sweden, Cyprus and Turkey (as recorded in the European report 'Flying Team against Violence').

## 1. Political/social climate and migrants and immigration

Immigration is as old as the Netherlands itself. For a long time, however, it wasn't a serious issue of public debate or political intervention. The attention for ethnic communities other than the indigenous Dutch population and other cultures arose only when the mainly second generation Moluccans began to openly manifest themselves as a politically inspired movement.

And then, when in the late seventies and early eighties the whole of the Netherlands began to see that many of the immigrants (men-Italians, Spaniards, Greeks, Turks, Moroccans) that had come to the Netherlands in the sixties to work, weren't going back to their countries of origin, but planned on staying in the Netherlands, immigration became a political issue. It was mainly the non-western immigrant workers (mostly Turks and Moroccans) who brought their wives here, or got married here and had children, left the society and politics with a number of questions: What kind of support do the 'new Dutchmen' need? Is the establishment of 'new groups' a positive development, or not? Do we need to formulate conditions for immigration, family reunion and family planning, or don't we? What can we ask of them - assimilation or integration while maintaining their own culture within the Dutch society?

### A changing climate

In the mid-nineties the public and political opinion with regard to immigration and integration slowly but surely shifted from 'neutral, with focus on benefits and difficulties for migrants and for the Netherlands' to 'negative, with focus on problems'. Issues like the relatively high unemployment rate among 1st, 2nd and 3rd generations migrant males, the relatively high drop-out and crime rate among 2nd and 3rd generations of Moroccan males, the relatively high crime rate among Turkish males, the conflicts among neighbours and in old neighbourhoods with citizens from different ethnic backgrounds were continuously highlighted and emphasized.

Positive developments like the relatively high number of adequately functioning Moroccan and Turkish girls and women were hardly noticed or discussed. Furthermore, research outcomes on discrimination and exclusion of non-western migrants, language and cultural differences, which hampered a smooth integration, were hardly considered or simply ignored. Around 2000 it was hardly acceptable to have a moderate view of immigration and integration. If you weren't a migrant kisser, you were a migrant hater. And it was fully acceptable to be in the latter group. While in the early nineties it was simply 'not done' to reject the multicultural society, in the beginning of the twentieth century there was no opinion leader or political party that had the heart to openly recommend the multiculturalization of the Netherlands.

### "The multicultural drama"

The public/political debate on migrants and immigration polarized quickly in the second half of the nineteen nineties. Remarkable detail was that in the beginning the issues on the agenda were discussed without consideration for their social context. And this persisted until the end of the twentieth century when the following publications were issued: *Het multiculturele drama* by Paul Scheffer, the evaluation of the integration policy by the Verwey-Jonker Institute and the parliamentary research on the Dutch integration policy (See Sources). The most important question from then on, according to Paul Scheffer in the national newspaper NRC (29 January 2000) after his book was published, was: "Why do we feel we can afford to sit back and watch generations of immigrants fail and leave a supposed reservoir of talent unused? And on what do we base our belief that everything will be alright? The social peace runs a serious risk."

However, not everyone accepted Scheffer's analyses and social context. The political Party for Freedom (PVV) introduced a just as popular context. This particular player introduced the term 'political Islam' as a context to explain the integration problems, thereby narrowing the notion of 'migrant' down to 'Muslim migrant'.



Putting migration/integration in its broader context has not led to less polarization, but it has brought more substantial opinions. From that moment on there were two movements. On the one hand, the social groups and political parties focusing on the (supposed) added value and need of immigration for the Netherlands, on the other side, social groups and political parties that emphasize the (supposed) impossibility of a union between the political Islam and the Jewish-Christian democracy.

Due to the banking crisis in 2009 and the subsequent debt crisis in the Netherlands and the rest of Europe economical problems (money, employment, housing) became priorities on the agenda. However, this way the heaviness of the migration issue is slightly toned down. The Social and Cultural Planning office conducts quarterly research into what the Dutch population perceives as the biggest national problems. The report *Burgerperspectieven 2011/4* contains a table with the developments from 2008 to 2011. According to the people, the biggest problem in 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011 is 'Cohabitation, norms and values'. 'Immigration and integration' are number six on the list (behind Cohabitation, norms and values; Income and economics; Politics and governance; Health care and elderly care; Crime and safety). This may lead to the conclusion that in general immigration/integration is not regarded a major social problem, albeit that 'cohabitation, norms and values' has a sure overlap with integration (problems). Interesting herein is the difference between image and social acceptable behaviour on the one hand and daily practice on the other. When people are asked to write down their opinion they answer that they don't feel that immigration/integration is a major social problem, while in the public debate, especially in the media and in politics, migrants and integration are persistently mentioned as an important problem in Dutch society. Media and (local) politics have recently observed a shift towards economic issues, as well. This trend continued to show at the parliamentary elections for September 2012.

## 2. Government policy on immigration and integration

The development of government policy on immigration and integration runs virtually parallel with the developments and debate in society, apart from being somewhat behind.

The first phase in the policy development (roughly between 1980 and 1995) can be marked as: support for integration with retention of the original culture. The fundamental idea was that the original culture was to be retained to facilitate a possible return to the homeland. For a long time, '*Gastarbeiders* (migrant workers)' were not seen as immigrants, but as temporary 'guests' who had come to work in the country for a limited period. Government policy (WRR, 197) began to change only when it became clear that reality didn't keep to the Dutch written blueprint. In the beginning, the retention of the original culture was encouraged, but for different reasons. Instead of facilitating a smooth return it was supposed to facilitate integration in the Netherlands. In addition, support services were initiated around issues like housing, language training, learning to cycle and swim, organizing (migrant grass roots organizations). 'Fitting' in Dutch society was the motto, and not (yet): adapting to Dutch norms and values.

The second phase of the policy development (roughly between 1995 and 2010, with 9/11<sup>2</sup> as turning point) can be marked as: stricter conditions for immigration/family reunion and political asylum, stricter conditions for non-western migrants in particular. More and more, the alien policy targets (limiting immigration) began to dominate over the targets of the integration and emancipation policy (integration and participation).

### Restricting immigration

The third phase of policy development, starting in November 2010 when a minority coalition of VVD-CDA, supported by right-wing PVV (*Gedooagkkoord*) took office, which made the restriction of immigration of non-western populations and the limitation of the Islam a number one priority, can be marked as:

- (Attempts to) restrict immigration/family reunion.
- More and stricter demands for immigrants and political refugees.
- A stigmatization wherein 'migrant' is increasingly becoming a synonym for 'Muslim', and there is less and less recognition of the enormous diversity among the migrant and refugee population.
- Polarization between US (the 'enlightened' Jewish-Christian Netherlands) and THEM (the 'stupid' Muslims) and 'never the twain shall meet'.

And although from 2009 due to the economic crisis financial-economic issues have dominated the public debate, behind the scenes work is still in progress to design a more restrictive and stricter immigration and refugee policy. Typically, the Rutte cabinet appointed a special minister (Leers) of Asylum, Integration and Immigration, instead of a State Secretary.

In terms of further policy developments, in 2011 the cabinet's policy letter on integration, bonding and citizenship was published. The responsible minister of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, Donner, herein presents the preferred different approach of integration ("Multicultural society has failed" and "Give the Netherlands back to the Dutch"), which is favoured by the cabinet.

In its integration policy the cabinet states that the Dutch society and the values it is built on should come first. Migrants, in particular, should endorse these values and keep to the law and jurisdiction.

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<sup>2</sup> 9/11 (-2002): The attack of the Muslim Al Qaida on the WTC and Pentagon in the US.

### **No more integration policy**

In the above mentioned policy letter, minister Donner poses that integration is no government responsibility, but that of the people that come to live in the Netherlands. There will be no more integration policy for specific groups. Also, unacceptable behaviour and crime will be treated without considering backgrounds. Here, Donner assumes that through regular policy in the field of employment, education and housing, any citizen should be able to build a more or less independent existence for him- or herself. The people that come here are expected to learn the language and study the Dutch culture by themselves.

The following measures were mentioned:

- A permanent residence permit is only granted after passing the *inburgeringsexamen* (assimilation exam). Formerly granted residence permits are withdrawn if a person doesn't pass the exam within a period of three years. Exceptions are possible for refugees and victims of domestic violence.
- The obligation for organizations to have a reporting code for domestic violence and child abuse, also applies to 'cultural forms of violence' like honour related violence.
- The law on assimilation is amended and specified, like the law on foreign assimilation (higher demands - level A1 or 2, plus a reading test and an exam on Dutch society).
- Subsidies and measures for integration of specific groups are terminated and added to the general integration policy.
- After 2012 municipalities will no longer have a role in the assimilation process.
- An amendment is being drawn up to aggravate sentences for forced marriage and with more emphasis on the prevention of forced marriage.
- A law is being written to prohibit the wearing of burqas (formally: 'face covering clothing') in public areas.
- There will be a joint agenda for modern citizenship, which will be composed together with municipalities, social organizations and citizens.

The cabinet filed an amendment to expand the possibilities to expel aliens who commit a crime. NGOs and experts have indicated that the Dutch cabinet is now seriously pushing the limits and even breaking the European Convention on Human Rights.

The Rutte cabinet collapsed in the spring of 2012. Since then, the outgoing cabinet rejected a number of the above-mentioned amendments (including the 'burqa prohibition'). Some amendments were earmarked as 'controversial' by the House of Representatives and may be checked until a next cabinet.

### **Migrant organizations and other NGOs in the public/political debate**

In the public as well as the political debate, migrants (as opinion leader, expert and politicians), migrant organizations, women and human rights NGOs play an important part. All bills and other measures are/ have been scrutinized and commented on. A major dilemma of NGOs is how to draw attention to the problems migrant families without creating the stigma that migrants are an extremely complicated community. If we look at forced marriage/abandonment/honour related violence, for example. These particular issues require an intensive approach but there is a high risk of stigmatization and over-problemizing.

For a clear view we have listed the most important protest and action points of the various NGOs:

- The human rights i.c. the European Convention on Human Rights should be leading in the alien/immigration/integration policy. Recently, however, Dutch policy development focuses on as

little human rights perspective as possible, and 'stretching' the limits of the convention. As we speak the Netherlands are at the top of the list of EU countries in terms of strict alien policy.

- Making integration- and emancipation policy secondary to a (strict) alien policy has a negative effect on human rights and development opportunities for women.
- Conditions for marital partners from non-western countries are stricter than for other marital partners.
- Emphasis on repressive measures means less focus on prevention of problems through information, education, support, etc.
- The general public as well as several political parties have a tendency to magnify domestic violence among migrants in terms of occurrence and severity, and underestimate the occurrence among autochthone Dutch families.
- There are still many gaps to fill when it comes to the position of migrant women, including the fact that in domestic violence cases women should automatically be granted an independent residence permit. In addition, a husband should not have the power to independently have his wife removed from the Residence Registration, in order to 'get rid of her' by abandoning her in the country of origin.
- The position of victims of human trafficking is still poor; the so-called B9-regulation<sup>3</sup> doesn't offer adequate protection or support. Human trafficking policy is more and more about the persecution of perpetrators.
- 'Abandonment and repudiation' is a persistent problem. For ten years we have known about women and children being left behind in their home countries but no effective measures have been taken to stop this.
- Forced marriage is mostly approached as a matter that requires repression while more can be achieved through information, education, a mentality and behavioural change within honour cultures, emancipation of young people, early recognition of (risk of) forced marriage, etc.

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<sup>3</sup> The 'B9 regulation' refers to Chapter B9 from the Dutch Aliens Circular. This Chapter contains the procedure for victims and witness-informers of human trafficking. Chapter B9 serves to enable victims of human trafficking to press charges and take away the threat of immediate eviction (from: [www.b9-regeling.info](http://www.b9-regeling.info)).

### 3. Political/social climate and honour related violence

From the mid-nineteen nineties, care workers, social workers, researchers and civil servants have been working on problems behind closed doors among migrant families: parenting problems, mental problems of parents and/or children, social-economic issues, violence. This is a good thing, of course, and prompted by concern, but there were mostly talks and ideas *about* migrants instead of *with* them. Obviously, domestic and sexual violence weren't 'just discovered' at the end of the nineties. The (white and black) women's movement of the 80s and 90s already introduced the themes sexual and domestic violence, without discriminating between original and new Dutch families. But it wasn't until after the report 'Privé geweld – publieke zaak' (Private violence – public issue), of the Ministry of Justice in 2002, that violence behind closed doors became a political theme and was included in government policy.

The Dutch population was first confronted with 'honour related violence' in 1999, when a shooting took place at a school in Veghel. A Turkish-Dutch boy shot and wounded his sister's boyfriend. Another wake up call was the murder of Kezban Vural in broad daylight by her ex-husband. Now, the entire migrant community was under fire for their cultural and religious beliefs, and the use of violence against their women and daughters.

A lot has happened since then. The IOT (Turkish Participation Board) and the NCB (Dutch Centre for Foreigners) organized several conferences to discuss this type of violence within the Turkish community. A number of women founded Kezban Foundation to introduce domestic violence as a subject of discussion in migrant communities.

#### Honour related violence on the agenda

Honour related violence appeared on the political agenda loud and clear in 2003/2004 after several new honour killings were extensively covered by the media, while at the same time a number of organizations were seeking the social debate on honour killings. These were, among others, the school of one of the victims, the ROC Twente and TransAct, national knowledge centre domestic and sexual violence<sup>1</sup>. In response to these events, members of Parliament addressed the Minister of Justice. They wanted to know what was going on in the cultural communities concerned, and what the government was doing to prevent this type of violence, support the victims and persecute the perpetrators.

This all happened in the same period when the 'multicultural society' was said to have failed (see 1.2.). The lobbyists of the issue 'honour related violence' were wary of media and politicians who had a tendency to portray honour killings as 'medieval practices' that didn't belong in Dutch society and culture. Followed by the simple conclusion that 'therefore' these people didn't belong in the Netherlands. There was a clear danger of migrants feeling cornered due to the association with honour related violence and marginalized as 'old-fashioned' with 'barbaric' traditions. It took some careful balancing and diplomacy of the organizations that were working to agendize honour related violence as a serious issue in Dutch society, without stigmatizing all migrants along the way.

Member of parliament for the VVD, Ayaan Hirsi Ali (Somali by birth), for example, tried to establish a link between Islam and honour related violence. Many Muslims felt attacked and were inclined to close the ranks.

At the same time, the assertion prompted a discussion within the Muslim community about honour related violence. Many people disagreed with Hirsi Ali – Muslims as well as others; in their opinion honour related violence was a cultural more than a religious phenomenon.

### **Pressure from the House of Representatives**

In the period 2003-2005, several members of the House of Representatives, including Nebahat Albayrak en Khadija Arib (labour party) and Mirjam Sterk (Christian Democrats), supported Ayaan Hirsi Ali in forcing the government to make honour killing a priority and take measures to end this violence. In 2004, partly pressured by the House of Representatives, Rita Verdonk, Minister for Integration and Immigration (part of the Ministry of Justice), strongly advocated hard measures against honour killing. She was known for her 'hard actions' against unwanted and criminal 'aliens'. In her opinion, migrants and refugees who took advantage of the facilities, broke laws or engaged in criminal activities, including perpetrators of honour killing, should be expelled immediately. In 2005, the discussion between women's groups and the Minister of Integration and Immigration and questions of the House of Representatives and Migrant) lead to the design of an extensive interdepartmental Programme (see 5.1).

### **Role of politics and media**

The University of Toronto conducted a research on the role and impact of media and political debates in the action against honour related violence in a number of Western European countries, including the Netherlands and Canada (Korteweg en Yurdakul). They concluded that the Netherlands successfully avoided the stigmatization of migrants and explain as follows: "Firstly, political actors mostly approached the problem as a form of domestic violence, a problem that occurs among all layers of society. Secondly, the active participation of migrant organizations gave their pioneers the status of problem solvers. This broke down the stereotype notion that honour killings and honour related violence presented an inevitable outcome of allochthonous cultural practices. Finally, the debates on honour killings and honour related violence took place after immigration had already been restricted by law, for example, by raising the minimum age for marriage immigrants from countries like Turkey or Morocco to 21 years, and imposing a language exam on these new immigrants in order to obtain a visa. These measures had passed as bills while the policy on honour killings and honour related violence was being developed".

Most media seem to have taken their responsibility seriously by rendering a careful account of the incidents. Nonetheless, the image deserves some nuance. In the media, migrants are primarily presented in stereotypical manner, in particular with regard to problems. The media generally think of honour related violence as an effect of the gender roles within migrant communities, which often leads to stereotype images of suppressed (Muslim) migrant women and dominant (Muslim) migrant men. This gender equality was believed to be the cause of the unwillingness of migrants to integrate in western society. As if all migrants share this same believe and as if gender equality is a western invention.

In politics, some parties hope to use the issue of honour related violence to emphasize the poor position of migrant women within their communities, which supposedly thwarts assimilation in Dutch society.

Korteweg and Yurdakul state that the Programme Bureau Honour related violence, which was founded in 2005, has always treated the issue as a Dutch problem, involving Dutch citizens and requiring Dutch solutions. The Bureau hoped to prevent that honour related violence would become a vehicle for other beliefs about migrants and the accompanying restrictive immigration measures. Nonetheless, a much heard argument for a stricter immigration policy is 'protection of women and girls'.

### Views of migrant (organizations)

Korteweg and Yurdakul observed that the active attitude and involvement of the National Consultation Platform on Minorities (LOM) succeeded in quelling stigmatizing remarks about migrants of parties like the PVV. Fellow organizations like the IOT (Turkish Participation Organization), the SMN (alliance Moroccan Dutch citizens) and VON (Refugee Organizations Netherlands), actively participated in the structural exchange with the Minister of Integration and Immigration, and urged the minister to take preventive measures.

The LOM acted as 'problem solvers'. They planned on putting on a collective programme to promote a mentality change within migrant communities (this became the high profile project "*Aan de goede kant van eer*", see 8.4).

According to Korteweg and Yurdakul, the umbrella organizations and the individual opinion leaders with migrant backgrounds often avoided the use of the word 'culture' in combination with honour related violence, as this elicited a noticeable 'us' against 'them' sphere. The researchers feel that honour related violence is now indeed regarded a specific type of domestic violence and not a proof of 'stupidity' of immigrants and therefore an excuse to restrict or prohibit immigration.

Not all migrants or migrant organizations agree with Korteweg and Yurdakul's assumption that there is no stigmatization of migrants in the Netherlands. This is apparent in the interviews with workers from NGOs and grass roots organizations that are rendered in Part II of this report. It is also apparent in a 2009 survey from Brenninkmeijer et al on the experience and approach of honour related violence in the Netherlands. She questioned respondents from Turkish, Kurdish, Moroccan and Hindu backgrounds. The respondents were positive about the political and public attention for honour related violence, because "(...) it contributes to an open debate on the problem and offers a stimulus to work on a solution. At the same time, the respondents regretted the fact that oftentimes a direct link is made between the violence and the culture of the homeland or a religion. Many see this as unjust and too blunt." Furthermore: "In addition, the unfortunate association of ethnicity or religion with honour related violence may lead to a reactive disposition among migrant communities, which may bring forth the closure of communities and cause pressure within the groups." This can well lead to a restriction of women's freedom of movement even within their own community.

See also Chapter 2.3 for opinions of NGOs and migrant organizations on policy measures.

Brenninkmeijer discovered that different migrant groups have different ideas about honour and violence. This is of all times, but migration, women's emancipation, integration and social debates could have affected and magnified the differences. From the interviews with Turkish, Kurdish, Moroccan and Hindu Dutch respondents, Brenninkmeijer distinguishes four basic attitudes towards the link between honour and violence.

The attitudes range from "Violence to protect honour may be a necessary evil" and "honour is good, but violence should not be allowed", to "the notion of honour needs to be revised" (making honour a personal matter instead of something of an entire family or community, and being less rigid altogether), and to "the complete theme of traditional honour should change". The latter group has no affinity whatsoever with the specific honour codes they were taught. To his (small) group, integrity and performing well at work is much more important

### Ideas from the 'field'

Brenninkmeijer also questioned relevant parties from the 'field' on their views on honour related violence: governments, migrant organizations, professional organizations like police, women shelters, scientists and experts. Here, she observed and formulated a number of common starting points and assumptions, or a "doxa". The most important starting point she identified is that many parties assume that honour related violence is a specific problem among specific migrant communities and therefore

different than other types of (domestic) violence. The odd migrant culture 'which involves isolation and repression of women' is deemed different than the culture of the 'Dutch'.

The second starting point she mentions is that many actors consider honour related violence in the light of a modernization or emancipation process of migrants. If they face and complete this process, this type of violence will diminish or disappear. Starting point number three is the notion that honour related violence is part of a collective mentality, unlike domestic violence. At the basis are cultural patterns. Brenninkmeijer concludes that the respective parties are trying to avoid cultural stereotyping, while at the same time they believe that the collective mentality of migrant communities is the basis of honour related violence. Her advice with regard to the cases is that we choose a situational approach with attention for culture, as well as for other aspects, like economical and legal position, personal circumstances and character.



## 4. Government policy on honour related violence

Not the opinion leaders, the political parties or the governments (national, municipal) were the first to label the problems that occur in migrant communities, families and partner relations. It was the white and black women's movement that identified and exposed sexual and domestic violence and made these issues part of the political agenda. The local (migrant) women groups eventually succeeded in attracting public attention for the problem, which is now known as honour related violence.

### Programme Honour related violence

After all this social turmoil the government started the 'Interdepartmental Programme Honour related violence' in 2005. The Programme Bureau and the project leader acted under responsibility of the ministry of Justice. Key tasks were investigating and composing the exact definition of 'honour related violence', collecting prevalence figures and developing an effective approach.

The Programme Bureau was assigned to develop measures to facilitate early and effective intervention and thus improve the protection of victims. Such would be impossible without considering identification and recognition of honour revenge, protection, the operational chain and tracing and persecution, thus declared Verdonk, minister of Integration and Immigration<sup>1</sup>.

After consulting the temporary commission of integration, a coherent three-way policy and approach was developed: social prevention in alliance with the Ministry of Housing, Neighbourhoods and Integration (WWI), criminal measures (Ministry of Justice), victim care (Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport (VWS)). A working definition was designed for 'honour related violence', more comprehensive than 'honour killings' (see introduction).

Two pilots for police officers were run, at the Multi Ethnic Police force in Haaglanden and at the Zuid-Holland Zuid police force<sup>1</sup>, to effectively investigate cases wherein honour was a possible motive, and to put up a registration system. The National Knowledge Centre Honour Related Violence (LEC EGG) started its quest. Cases involving honour related violence were investigated<sup>1</sup> and their complexity was recorded.

In national government policy, action against honour related violence was integrated in the domestic violence programme, under the generic term "violence in co-dependent relationships". The organizations that offer victim support and care, and the prosecuting parties are the same as in domestic violence cases.

### Policy after Programme Honour related violence

On 31 December 2010 the Interdepartmental Programme Honour related violence officially ended. Since then, several changes have occurred in the action against honour related violence; from national to local action; repression instead of prevention and a shift from specific to generic policy.

#### ***From national to local***

When the Programme Honour Related Violence ended, an important national, stimulating and coordinating function for a structured approach was lost. Not only did the collaborations between the ministries cease to exist, so did the activation of national programmes, even though implementation and embedding weren't strongly secured at the time. The state government leaves it to the local governments to continue the programme as it was initiated.

The underlying thought here, is that the municipality is closer to the problems and therefore better equipped to coordinate and activate the services and organizations that are part of the chain against honour violence. Municipalities may make use activities and projects that were developed in the Programme.

The downside of cutting state funding and thus minimalizing the stimulating role of the government, is that municipalities and (local) migrant organizations are no longer motivated to get up and take action. The national government has less means to influence municipalities. The projects that had just taken off or were just starting to yield results are stagnating and collapsing. Any attention for or work on the issues from the municipality now depends on individual aldermen, civil servants and key members of (local) migrant organizations. The government was in the process of cutting 18 billion euro and had nothing reserved whatsoever to support and encourage the municipalities.

As we speak, specific attention is merely reserved for the issue of forced marriage. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations (Housing, Neighbourhoods and Integration (WVI)), developed a long-term programme is pursuing the 2010 campaign (Stop Force), now called *YourRight2Choose*, together with MOVISIE. In addition, the Ministry (now called BZK, Integration and Cohabitation) aims to revive and re-establish the former network of actors in the actions against honour related violence.

### **Stricter policy**

A second policy change is the focus on repression. The government wishes to tackle honour violence and forced marriage with a stricter policy containing criminal and private law. For example, by making forced marriages, along with polygamy and religious marriages, penal, and prohibiting marriages between cousins. Less time and money is set aside for (research on) prevention. The downside of this (crime) law centred approach, is that cases that never find their way to the police or legal facilities remain invisible. This is true for most cases, as the people in forced marriage cases seldom report to the police. The Forced Marriage bill will be offered to the government in the summer 2012. The Ministry of Security and Justice organized a Round Table discussion on the subject in June 2012 between the key actors and scientists. Among the participating parties was the action group “Femmes for Freedom”, who are advocating a broader definition of forced marriage by making ‘marital imprisonment’ a penal offence (see also Introduction and Definitions).

Another important policy measure is the financial support of the national knowledge centre Honour related violence, which works under the heading of the Haaglanden police force and has been anchored by the government as a standard item in the new National Police force budget, as of 2013. Furthermore, the knowledge centre is not solely focusing on repression, but also on prevention of (escalation of) violence.

### **Generic policy**

A third, very important policy line is to develop a generic policy instead of specific policies for particular target groups. “Generic where possible and specific if necessary”. Migrants and refugees are dependent of general services. Providers of care and prevention services no longer receive funding for the care of specific groups.

Actions against honour related violence, for example, are fully integrated in the activities around domestic violence, as it is believed to be a type of domestic violence. Next to honour related violence, this container notion includes partner violence, child abuse and elderly abuse, but also forced marriage, abandonment and circumcision of girls. Dealing with all these family problems requires expertise in many areas of the police, care institutions and shelters, as well as different methods for this wide range of problems.

The current term used by the Ministries of Health, Welfare and Sport and Security and Justice is 'violence in dependency relationships'.

Finally, the Dutch government policy and – although less strongly- the public debate on immigration, integration and honour related violence are inevitably influenced by foreign debates and policies from, especially from European countries. An important milestone is the recently formulated Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence of the Council of Europe. The Dutch government was the 24th member state to sign the convention on 14 November 2012. NGOs believe that the analyses, vision and recommendations from the convention will positively influence Dutch policy.

### Summary previous chapters

In short, we can say that the political and social climate with respect to immigration and migrants in the Netherlands polarized and tightened. The government measures to restrict immigration and to make migrants largely responsible for their own naturalization process (*inburgeren*), are a result of the stricter policy. The issue of honour related violence strengthened the stereotype image of the poor position of women in migrant communities. A large number of migrants felt stigmatized as being a 'problem group'. The interdepartmental Programme Bureau Honour Related Violence was reasonably successful in avoiding the stigmas, for example by joining forces with other migrant organizations on prevention of and actions against the violence. At the same time, numerous legal measures that were to protect victims hampered immigration. The repressive measures became leading and the specific policy for groups like migrants and refugees was discarded. The concrete description of actions against honour related violence in the Netherlands is described in the next Chapter. The initiatives did not always come from the national government, but often from individuals, (migrant) organizations and institutes.

## 5. Combating honour related violence in the Netherlands

This Chapter renders a concise, and therefore incomplete, synopsis of the actions against honour related violence in the Netherlands: criminal law, shelter and care, and prevention. Honour related violence, forced marriage and abandonment are all integrated in the action against domestic violence, or 'violence in dependency relationships'.

### Criminal law

The police and the Public Prosecutor are important and vital chain partners when it comes to tackling domestic violence (see also 6.2.). Duties, authorities and agreements between chain partners have been laid down in protocols. In the past years, both organizations have been focusing on action against honour related violence and forced marriage. This has been recorded in the "Guidelines domestic violence and honour related violence" (April 2010) for police and Public Prosecutor. The guidelines include regulations concerning tracking and prosecution of domestic and honour related violence. These will be described below.

#### **Tracking**

Each police region has a contact person, a 'special officer honour related violence' who is responsible for operational consultation and support in (possible) 'honour' cases. The police have to recognize early signs of 'honour' motives for (imminent) offences. To achieve this, the method LEC-EGG (National Knowledge Centre Honour related violence) was developed. The LEC-EGG introduced 'red flags' that were 'translated' into a query, an electronic search system to scan police information systems. With cases that are possibly motivated by honour, the police fill out a *checklist*. Based on the results, an *analysis* and a *plan of action* will be composed. The police and Public Prosecutor should remain alert for possible additional perpetrators and accomplices.

Also, every jurisdiction of the Public Prosecutor must have a special officer, a prosecutor, to coordinate domestic and honour related violence cases. Finally, each court must have a similar contact person, an Advocate General.

#### **Prosecution**

Each jurisdiction must appoint a contact person, a prosecutor, to coordinate domestic and honour related violence cases. In addition, a contact person, an Advocate General, should be appointed for in every court region (*ressort*) to deal with these cases. All officers must participate in training activities on these specific issues. The SSR, Training and Study Centre for the Judiciary, offers a two-day course 'Domestic violence' for employees of the Public Prosecution Service and the courts. A half-day of this course is reserved for the discussion on cultural factors and domestic violence. Next to this, the SSR offers a one-day course on honour related violence. Whether these courses are enough to provide all relevant officers with sufficient knowledge and insight in this complex matter, remains to be seen.

With criminal cases involving honour, 'cultural defense' is an often-heard notion: this means that 'honour related violence' is no offense if seen from a cultural background, and even mandatory. Solicitors would use this argument to mitigate criminal liability or justification on grounds of mental pressure.

In the Netherlands, honour related violence is regarded an unacceptable violation of the right to life and on physical integrity. Here, similar behaviour is a criminal offence by law. Cultural background is not accepted as a (legal) reason to reduce the penalty.

On the other hand, Cultural motives are also not automatically seen as a aggravating circumstances that would lead to stricter penalties.

## Care and shelter

Up to several years ago, care organizations did not think of victims of honour related violence, forced marriage and abandonment as a specific group. They were seen and treated like any other domestic violence victim. In 2004, many organizations came to realize that problems involving honour have a specific dimension and often require a different approach. On a national level, the police and the women's shelters picked up on registration, education and information and method development, which was supported by government policy. In the regions, the Advice and Support Centres Domestic violence and social work participated in the information and training activities. A number of Youth Care agencies and Reporting Centres Child Abuse are also in the process of educating their workers.

### **First care for victims**

A large group of victims is reluctant to (immediately) contact professional care services. They (primarily) turn to their informal circles for support and information. Many migrant grass roots organizations offer open hours or information projects on domestic violence and/or honour related violence (like "*Aan de goede kant van de eer*" en "*Hand in hand tegen huwelijksdwang*"). This paves the way for migrants and refugees to share their problems with a member of the board or volunteer. However, they are often reluctant to speak up out of fear of social control and gossip. Especially formed volunteer organizations offer information and support to victims (also anonymous), for example a special telephone number for migrant women and Kezban Foundation. The Schorer Foundation developed the project "*Veilige Haven (Safe Haven)*" for young people from traditional cultures that experience problems due to their homosexual, bisexual and/or transsexual preferences. "Rotterdam Verkeert" also targets this group. There are several websites for young people where they can chat anonymously and discuss questions and problems (like *HalloKezban* and *Chat-met-Fier*). The aforementioned organizations fulfil an need and are important actors/mediators towards professional help.

### **Professional care and shelter**

A growing number of victims seem to be calling upon professional care organizations. Many women and girls that were forced to flee from violence in their families find protection in women's shelters. As knowledge and expertise on this specific matter has grown, safety measures have improved and are implemented more efficiently. Risk-analysis tools are widely used, there are close contacts with the police and clients are involved in designing their own safety plan. A number of women's shelters have specialized in the care for victims of honour related violence. Since 2007, two pilots were run with shelters for underage girls and young women that were threatened with honour violence: Zahir at Fier Fryslân and Eva at Kompaan and De Bocht. The Federatie Opvang took the initiative to describe the newly acquired knowledge and experiences of the women's shelters in a manual ("*Met verstand van zaken! Dealing with honour related violence, manuals for workers in women's shelters*"). The manuals are also useful for other care workers.

To meet the demand for safe shelter for male victims of domestic and honour related violence, a pilot shelter has been set up in each of the four large cities (the G-4). A total of 40 places are available. The shelter also welcomes men who are threatened by their family because they refuse to kill sisters or wives who are 'guilty' of honour violation.

We don't know of any specific shelter for male-female couples, which are sought and threatened by both families for having a relationship. Some couples do live in regular shelters for some time, but this is too dangerous because there is no pledge of secrecy here.

### ***Mediation***

Mediation meetings between victim and the family can lead to solutions, which are satisfying to both parties as much as possible. Often, the community needs to know and believe that the family is actively working on restoring the honour. For in many cases it is the community rather than the family that decides whether a family's honour is restored, and if the family is welcomed back.

A mediation process requires careful preparation, safety guarantees and (often) a whole lot of patience. Mediation is only successful if both parties are reasonably happy with the solution and keep to the things that were agreed upon. To be successful it is important that both parties express their trust in the mediator from the very start. Mediation can be conducted by an experienced professional or by someone from the community or family of the relevant parties. Professionals may be police officers and/or care workers. In Amsterdam, the Reporting Centre Honour Related Violence was established to offer consultation, referrals and mediation with family conflicts.

An authority figure from the community or family may act as a mediator upon request or personal initiative. MOOI foundation from The Hague, trained a special team of 'community mediators'. The members have several ethnic and cultural backgrounds and are trained to inform their communities as well as act as mediator.

Another form of conflict solving in family circles that is currently used for honour conflicts is a method that developed by the Eigen Kracht Centrale. Here, an independent coordinator starts with individually speaking to all people involved, before having group meetings with the family. However, the coordinator does not join in the group meeting. The involved parties try to find a solution to the honour conflict which is satisfying to all parties, and wherein all parties involved are responsible for their share of the solution.

### ***Dealing with (potential) perpetrators***

Many perpetrators of serious physical honour related violence act under pressure, or are even forced by their families. The weaker the position of a man or boy within the family, the harder it will be to withstand the pressure. If he is not prepared to defend the 'family honour', the community won't think of him as a 'real man'.

Sometimes men and boys who are experiencing pressure and refuse to cave in to this pressure seek help and protection with organizations. Social work agency Zebra in The Hague has specialized in specific care for men in similar situations.

If a man has committed honour violence, either pressured by family members or not, he may find himself facing a moral conflict. A few may seek professional help. Upon conviction a judge may sentence a perpetrator to treatment, for example at De Waag or in rehabilitation.

### ***Chain partners***

To organize care and shelter for victims of honour related violence, organizations often work together as 'chain partners'. The Support Centre Domestic Violence, women's shelter and the police are often the key players, immediately followed by Youth Care and the Public Prosecution Service. Victim care is adjusted to how the police and public Prosecutor deal with (potential) perpetrators. These services are leading and may use their authority in cases of imminent honour violence to warn the family for penal consequences and, if necessary, force them to refrain from the (intended) violence against a daughter. Close contact between the relevant services and the victim is essential..

More often than not the work against honour related violence in municipalities or regions runs parallel to the work against domestic violence; the same organizations are involved. The director's role is with the municipality. In some cities, a specific 'chain group honour related violence' has been set up, next

to a chain group domestic violence (like in Rotterdam and Amsterdam). The collaboration agreements have been laid down in a covenant or protocol.

Besides collaborations between professional organizations, the chain partners also aim to involve local grass roots organizations. Common goals are to exchange knowledge, organize information meetings and making it easier for the communities to find their way to professional care facilities. In 2009, Brenninkmeijer et al<sup>4</sup> conducted a study of the organization of the work against honour related violence. The first objective was to investigate the collaboration between the relevant partner organizations, and secondly, the role of the migrant organizations in the chain. Brenninkmeijer often observes "... a certain tension between wants and possibilities. On the one hand there are high expectations about the other party's contributions to the work against honour related violence as well as an appreciation of the added value of working together; on the other hand, the collaboration is considered difficult and there is a lack of trust". Brenninkmeijer feels that this is due to the "... need for a central or hierarchic 'leader' – this is mostly true for the organization of police and care. On the other hand, a serious mentality change requires a bottom-up approach with ample room for 'independent' initiatives of the relevant migrant communities<sup>1</sup>". See also Part II on the role and tasks of grass roots organizations.

### Prevention

Combatting honour related violence requires preventive measures at different levels. Beliefs and traditions will not change overnight. However, there will always be shifts, brought about by education, social economic position, migration and emancipation, etc. Brenninkmeijer found that beliefs around honour are often widely shared and considered 'self-evident', while, at the same time, they are situational and subject to change. (young) Women and men are demanding more freedom and wish to personalize the rules around honour as much as possible, instead of adhering to the group norm. Many young people and women are looking for ways to escape the various means of control of their honour (see also 4.5).

Next to these changes in beliefs as an effect of social and personal circumstances, specific interventions are implemented to achieve a mentality change in a number of cultural communities.

### Community interventions

Various migrant and refugee organizations develop activities to challenge old ideas and "harmful traditional practices". Local information meetings and debates are organized on a regular basis to exchange ideas with the community members on gender roles, emancipation, parenting teenagers, domestic violence and sometimes honour related violence (even as a specific subject). And to encourage openness and pave the way for and support different, liberal points of view, and to stop the violence. The information officers and speakers are often members of the targeted community, they know the language, the sensitivities and the best ways to get in. Kezban Foundation developed the docudrama "*Als ik haar was...*(if I were her...)", on domestic violence in one Moroccan and one Turkish family and worked with trained information officers (see 8.1). The project proved to be a spin-off for other organizations that used the film and information officers. Another spin-off is the film "*Als ik hem was...*(if I were him...)", on the position of Turkish Dutch and Moroccan Dutch (abusive) men.

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<sup>4</sup> Brenninkmeijer et al: Honour related violence in the Netherlands. Research on experiences with and action against honour related violence. Sdu; 2009.

### ***Recognition and breaking taboos***

For early recognition of possible honour related violence or the risk thereof, professionals working with (potential) victims must be educated and trained. The reporting law on child abuse and domestic violence, including honour related violence en forced marriage, will come into force on January 1, 2013, for all care and educational organization and other relevant parties. Organizations are obliged to have a protocol for the identification and reporting of violence among their participants and clients. All employees must participate in trainings on (early) identification and signs, and discussing delicate matters.

### ***Role of schools***

Education is often the only reason for girls from closed traditional communities to be allowed away from the family. Therefore, schools are important finding places. Girls over thirteen years old run a risk of becoming a victim of honour related violence, forced marriage and abandonment. Many parents want their daughter to come home directly from school and won't allow them to join in extracurricular activities. A research by Sardes from 2008 "Report inventory honour related violence among secondary schools and vocational education (ROC's)", shows that there are only a few schools with a specific protocol to deal with honour related violence. What is done at schools is mostly ad hoc and no method is the same.

To generate more attention, the Ministry of Housing, Neighbourhoods and Integration in 2007 – 2009 initiated the "School project Honour related violence" for vocational education. Part of the project was the study "Learning from honour at schools. A study of early signals of honour related violence".

Hopefully, the reporting law child abuse and domestic violence will stimulate schools to look out for honour related violence and forced marriage. Various trainings have been developed for teachers and non-teaching staff on recognizing and talking about honour related violence.

The campaigns against forced marriage of the Ministry of Justice and MOVISIE, entitled Your Right2Choose and *StopDwang* (StopForce), are also targeting young people in schools. Teachers and non-teaching staff are, among other things, presented with a manual for recognizing and discussing forced marriage.

The campaign Your Right2Choose has run again during the summer vacations in 2011 and 2012, now with financial support of the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, Directorate of Integration and Society.

Schools can contribute by informing and strengthening young people by discussing themes that are associated with honour and that all young people can relate to: sexuality, partner choice and having very strict or utterly liberal parents. The education project RespectEER (2006-2010) of MOVISIE aimed at young people and professionals in education. It contained trainings, workshops and guidelines for lessons and for discussing honour related violence. For professionals in education, MOVISIE also published a manual for recognizing and discussing honour related violence and a manual to introduce the themes honour, sexuality and violence in the classroom.

Information officers of foundation *Verdwaalde Gezichten* (Lost Faces) discuss honour violence with students in a series of lessons called "*De Zwarte Tulp* (The Black Tulip)" (see 8.6).

As homo- and bisexual students bear the same risk of becoming a victim of honour related violence, MOVISIE developed a digital toolkit for educational institutes to introduce and discuss the themes. The toolkit offers information, tips and a list of existing methods, lessons, publications, websites, etc.



## 6. Summary

In Chapter 1 of Part I we have described how in the past years (from the late 1990's) the political climate in the Netherlands with respect to immigration and immigration has shifted from a paternal, 'tolerant' attitude towards migrants, towards a strict and demanding attitude.

Chapter 2 describes how the government was strongly influenced by the political debate and implemented more and more measures to restrict immigration and abolish the integration policy. Naturalization, for the most part, was made to be the migrant's responsibility.

Chapter 3 illustrates how, in that same period, a number of NGOs and (migrant) women's organizations worked to expose the issue of honour related violence in society. They did so in spite of the risk of (further) stigmatization of migrants in the Netherlands. Their courage and tenacity was rewarded as they nonetheless managed to introduce the issue, in politics, the media and within the/their communities. Some media and political bodies did feel that honour related violence confirmed their stereotype images of, for example, the violent migrant man and the repressed migrant woman. In their opinion this is impeding their integration in society. In 2003, honour related violence appeared high on the political and social agenda.

The government policy on honour related violence that was the result of the efforts of the NGOs and (migrant) women's organizations is described in Chapter 5. An important role was filled by the interdepartmental Programme Bureau Honour Related Violence, which operated under the flag of the Ministry of Justice. This agency aimed to avert further stigmatization of migrants by giving the migrant (women's) organizations a large part in the prevention of HRV. The organizations were eager to take on the role of 'problem solvers' and initiated projects aimed at stimulating a mentality change among their communities. The (information) activities of the organizations are described in Chapter 6. Here, we shortly describe the Dutch situation, from tracking to prosecution; from shelter and care to prevention and education. The state or local governments financially supported most projects and activities. Chapter 8 in Part II contains descriptions of eleven 'good practices of grass roots organizations and NGOs.

## **PART II Findings of grass roots organizations and NGOs**

### **Introduction and accountability**

For part II of this report, thirteen volunteers and professionals of NGOs and migrant grass roots organizations were interviewed on their views on the government policy and the action against honour related violence, forced marriage and/or abandonment (see appendix: list of respondents). Next to this, the respondents were invited to share their 'good practices', and eleven were described in this report. There are practices from the entire scope of education and information, conflict mediation within or between families, referrals to care and (crisis) shelter and support.

The interviewed volunteers and professionals are 'down-to-earth and realistic'. Part of the organizations has close links with one or more migrant communities or are members. The workers are aware of the traditions and norms, as well as the associated problems, like honour related violence and forced marriage, from first hand. They are challenging the views on gender roles and sexuality that are at the basis of these problems. They are initiating a mentality change within the communities. This is an important role, because changes in beliefs and behaviour are only successful and viable if they come from within.

#### **The three goals of Part II of this report:**

1. Offering (volunteer) organizations a stage to ventilate their views on the (government) policy, their needs and recommendations.
2. Exposing the 'good practices' of these organizations in their actions against honour related violence, forced marriage and/or abandonment.
3. Offering an insight in the conditions and factors that lead to success, to further the development of an adequate policy and efficient implementation.

#### **Selection of respondents**

There are numerous organizations in the Netherlands that are active in the combating against honour related violence, forced marriage and/or abandonment. Due to limited (financial) means it was impossible to interview all of them. The Dutch project team of "Flying Team against Violence", MOVISIE and foundations Kezban and Welsaen, made a selection. This selection was partly based on suggestions of participants of the national kick-off conference (29 March 2011), and the Sounding Board that was formed after this meeting.

Organizations were selected for their high quality services and projects aimed at preventing and/or ending honour related violence, forced marriage and/or abandonment. Criteria were:

- National aura.
- Possible prompting effect on other initiatives.
- Unique or innovative character, an unorthodox approach, an approach that hasn't been used in the Netherlands.
- Proven 'durability': a long-term offer, easy to adapt to changing circumstances and/or not dependent of a particular funding or one single employee.
- Transferability to other organizations.

For a complete picture, another criteria was diversity in tasks in the chain. Of projects with similar target groups, offers or methods, one was selected. For example, of the two shelters for girls and young women, only Kompaan-De Bocht was interviewed, while Fier Fryslân is similarly active in the field.

The project “Discussing domestic violence with migrants” of Foundation Palet seemed to be comparable with the activities of Foundation Welsaen and *Buitenlandse Vrouwen Overleg* (Migrant Women Group, BVO). Only one of these projects was added to the list.

The care offer by Foundation Shakti was excluded because it wasn't specifically aimed at victims of honour related violence or forced marriage, but at all clients with migrant backgrounds.

The project of the Turkish Dutch organization HTIB wasn't included, the national programme “*Aan de goede kant van de eer* (on the good side of honour)” was. The “Changemakers project” by VON, a spin-off of that same programme did end up as one of the described projects thanks to its innovative method and national character.

Not being mentioned in the list of ‘good practices’ in this report is however no indication of the value or quality of the projects.

Obviously, the outcomes of the interviews with foundations Palet, Shakti and HTIB have been considered in our conclusions.

### Interviews

The interviews were conducted in April-June 2011 by the Kezban, Welsaen and MOVISIE project team, also supported by a trainee student from the criminology master Safety policy and Law enforcement of the Faculty of Law, University of Leiden. During the semi-structured interviews the respondents were asked about their definitions of honour related violence, forced marriage and abandonment. What are factors of success? What do they think of the government policy and what are their aims and needs? Not all respondents answered all questions; some only described their good practice. Afterwards, the respondents were offered the opportunity to correct and add to their answers.

For several of the descriptions of the good practices, additional information was gathered from websites and publications.

## 7. Positive and negative effects of the government policy

In Part I, government policy and actions against (mainly) honour related violence were closely examined. In Chapter 3, the reactions of professionals and migrants hereon were rendered. For the most part, the respondents were positive about the growing awareness and approach. Some respondents, however, observed that the stigmatization of migrants had indeed intensified.

This Chapter provides a summary of the opinions of representatives of grass roots organizations and NGOs on the national government policy: what are positive effects and what are negative effects? How does the policy affect their work and organization? The answers have been summarized in six themes: increased awareness; migrant stigmatization; the policy shift from specific to generic; two sides of (penal) legislation; and finally the institutionalization and transiency of projects.

NB. Not all respondents were able to answer all the questions. Many of the organizations that were questioned are mainly concerned with execution and implementation. They do share what they need to be successful in their work, but they are too disconnected of the state government policy. This is especially true for regionally operating agencies. The extent to which the respondents were or weren't familiar with the national policy varied strongly, depending among other things on the respondent's function. In general, workers with mainly executing duties were least familiar with or involved in state policy. Some were able to comment on the local policy. As only a limited number of people were interviewed, the outcomes are in no way representative for all NGOs and grass roots organizations.

### More awareness

In general, the respondents that were familiar with national government measures were satisfied with government attention from various ministries for the problems. They were positive about the prominent position the issues had on the political agenda, for some years, and about the relevant government policy and activities in this period. They observed both positive and negative developments.

A decade ago, honour related violence was an unknown phenomenon in the Netherlands, or under a different name, at least. Forced marriage was no subject and abandonment cases were merely unfortunate incidents, which didn't require a specific policy. The respondents observe that, partly thanks to the stimulating government policy, awareness and recognition of the problems has increased considerably, within the different communities as well as among the police and within care organizations. "The taboos to discuss the issues were breached, also because activities are reaching further than just ending the violence. The deeper causes are investigated and solutions are developed", states a respondent. Some mention the support and appreciation of the government for the work of grass roots organizations as a crucial positive element.

Several respondents appreciate the government attention for sexual diversity. The idea to promote and stimulate acceptance within migrant communities through information campaigns at schools is received positively.

A side note of the government policy, according to the respondents, is that the subject of honour related violence seems to be quickly disappearing into the background now that other themes appear to be more important.

When the state terminated the heading and coordination from the Programme Bureau Honour Related Violence in 2011, the respondents described the situation as follows: the organizations involved weren't

(sufficiently) informed about all the developments with regard to policy and actions. They also observed that, as a result, the exchange of knowledge decreased.

### **Stigmatization**

Virtually all respondents mentioned the same negative effect of the government attention: the stereotyping and stigmatization of 'newcomers'. Migrants and refugees are associated with problems. The majority is not thinking in solutions, focusing on differences instead of similarities, which adds to the polarization between different groups in society. The general feeling is that it is getting harder to talk about taboos and problems in the communities as migrant organizations are wary of acknowledging the negative image of migrants.

### **Generic policy**

Working and communicating with the communities is vital and this is why migrant (grass roots) organizations are invaluable. Several respondents feel that the government is not (actively) approaching or involving and reaching the traditional communities where the problems are most severe. Due to the government policy, the role of the communities in the prevention of the problems and the emancipation of their members is narrowing.

One of the respondents recounts an experience where the government was too involved in the implementation. As a result, their campaign against forced marriage did not have the intended effect with their target group. Their communications failed to successfully reach the communities who were beginning to lose trust in them altogether. This organization's conclusion is that the direct role of the government caused a great deal of anxiety in the communities, which ultimately cost them a lot of time and effort to 'fix'.

Many respondents find that organizations nowadays make less use of the possibilities and know-how of specific communities and grass roots organizations. All that the (migrant) organizations achieved in the past years by actively involving target groups in their actions is nullified by the new government policy. The 'specific' policy, with time and money for problems among specific groups, has been abolished and replaced by a generic policy. As a result, the respondents observe a decrease of expert knowledge among professionals. After all, acquiring specific knowledge is no longer stimulated.

### **Two sides of legislation**

From the political field, new laws to tackle 'harmful traditional practices', are initiated. These laws are largely repressive, like, among other things, penalizing forced marriage. A positive effect, according to the respondents, is that penalization can be a counterweight for the traditional customs. Community pressure towards community members with different views could decrease. (Potential) victims feel supported. Individual young people can use the penalization of forced marriage as an argument towards their parents to ward off a forced marriage: "It is against the law ...". Although the government is unmistakably making a statement, the respondents are not undivided about the penalization of forced marriage. A lot of resistance has risen among the relevant communities, including potential victims. Penalization presents another barrier to seek help, as victims fear that their parents or other family members will end up in prison, like criminals.

Next to this, the respondents explain that there are also two sides to the new law on marriages with partners from abroad.

The positive side is that many of the pre-arranged forced marriages are harder to realize. On the other hand, the new law is making it very hard for individuals who voluntarily choose to marry someone from abroad; it is restricting their choice of partner. Another downside is the stigmatization of migrants as the

law implies that all migrants look for marriage partners from the home country, that they are all full cousins, and that the only reason they come here is to take advantage of Dutch social system.

### **Institutionalization**

When the government started to take an interest in honour related violence, the relevant organizations made an effort to improve their collaborations and coordinated chain approach. More and more, migrant (grass roots) organization are involved in (chain) actions against honour related violence. A respondent remarks that the chain approach has taken off successfully and that it is now possible to monitor families more closely to prevent a conflict from escalating. Even after the care process in a certain case has ended, it is still possible to keep an eye on the family, for example by involving the district police. The respondent emphasizes that good collaborations are only possible if every partner organization in the chain is clear about its role and duties.

Another respondent points out to us that many organizations are growing to be more and more institutionalized, with a great deal of attention for protocols and accountability, but with very little or poor relations with the communities. As a result, the organizations that are called upon to deal with cases involving honour related violence, etc., like the Domestic violence Support Centres, have no way into the communities. There is even a fair amount of hostility within communities towards organizations like the Child and Youth Protection office, because their methods are unsuitable or misunderstood. Therefore their reputation is mainly negative. The idea is that all they want is to take away their parental custody.

Extensively discussed incidents in the media and personal stories from others have made the people wary and distrustful of organizations, says one respondent.

### **Temporary projects**

The respondents appreciate the government's initiatives for a multitude of projects but feel that the projects tend to stagnate right after they start. Most activities aimed at migrants are temporary. The projects aren't embedded and anchored in the municipality or in any other organization. Due to cutbacks and the termination of the target group policy many projects have disappeared or will do so in the near future, along with specific actions for and with migrants. The projects are insufficiently balanced out and integrated which, in the long run, leaves them hardly viable for a structural approach or long-term collaborations and true anchorage.

Next to this, respondents perceive that the economy measures are disrupting existing social networks. When organizations are closed down, people are forced to look for other, stable organizations to transfer and implement their projects and expertise.

## 8. Good practices

In the Netherlands, grass roots organizations of migrants and refugees and NGOs launched and are still launching numerous initiatives against honour related violence, forced marriage and abandonment. This chapter contains a selection of the projects and activities (good practices) from the past years, some of which are still running. The focus of many of the projects of grass roots organizations is on breaking the taboo to discuss the problems, and to stimulate more awareness as well as a mentality change among the communities. Initiatives were developed by individual members of the community, or by grass roots organizations, welfare organizations, or as a collaborative effort. National umbrella organizations also initiated activities, but on a local level the implementation was left to the grass roots organizations. Many projects revolving around breaking the taboo are aimed at the entire spectrum of men, women, elderly and young people. Some are sporting an extra information track for professionals. Several of the good practices by NGOs are mediation projects for families who are involved in honour conflicts, others focus on the shelter of (potential) victims of honour related violence and forced marriage.

### Selection criteria

Based on a number of pre-formulated criteria, the Dutch project group of the Flying Team against Violence selected eleven projects to be listed as 'good practice' in this report. They are aware that several other projects were just as suitable to appear on the list, and that this listing is in no way comprehensive. This particular critical screening was mostly driven by a lack of financial means. The described good practices are more or less meeting the formulated requirements and sufficient indicators to prove it:

- The project or activity is clearly defined, with clear goals and target group(s), and/or time period.
- Ideally, the project or activity is described in a plan or method description.
- Continuity is a goal; the project is pursued or carried by collaborative migrant organizations.
- Different implementation possibilities have been investigated, like involving another organization or addressing also other (ethnic) target groups. In other words, knowledge is transferred to professionals.
- (Aiming at) participation in structural boards to transfer/exchange knowledge and expertise for professionalization purposes.
- The problem is recognized and acknowledged by the target group/participants (including grass roots, collaboration partners, board members and/or volunteers).
- The project was evaluated.
- The targets were achieved and the target group was reached as demonstrated by various indicators.

Finally, the project team aimed to select examples of actions against all three issues: honour related violence, forced marriage and abandonment.

The information from the project descriptions is drawn from the interviews with respondents from the respective organizations, completed with data from written sources and websites. The descriptions of the factors that generate successful projects are solely based on information from the respondents.

## 8.1 Als ik haar was... (If I were her...)

At information and debate meetings, trained information officers discuss the subjects of domestic and honour related violence with Turkish and Moroccan migrants by means of the adult docudrama “*Als ik haar was....*”.

### Goal

Goal is to help victims to get out of their often isolated position, to show them that they are not the only ones with domestic/honour related violence experiences, and that change is possible. The film is used to get the audience talking about the subject and breaking the taboo through recognition and acknowledgement of violence. The method contributes to a mentality and behaviour change in the interaction between women and men and will help to effectively break the cycle of violence.

### Target group

Women and men with Turkish and Moroccan backgrounds and other migrant communities. Also, professionals that are working with the target group, like GP's, social workers, police, key members of the migrant communities and other mediators. Through this film they will get an insight in the (mental) situation of their migrant clients, which will help them communicate easier.

### The project

*Als ik haar was....* is an educational tool in the form of a docudrama on domestic violence in migrant families, including a manual for information officers. Two different films were made: a Turkish version (in Turkish and with Dutch voice-overs) and a Moroccan version (also available in Berber). Next to the docudrama there are short interviews on domestic violence with two professionals, a GP and a police officer. The manual contains a step-by-step description of how to discuss the film. There are suggestions, tips and tricks on the different themes from the film, and on possible theme discussions after the film. Posters are available to announce the film to the public.

### Background

The decision to make a film for information purposes was based on the fact that written information does not seem to reach migrant women sufficiently. The audio-visual approach intensifies the recognition and awareness of the audience. The film simply illustrates the way domestic violence can start and continue over time. Participants are asked to think about what they would do in similar situations, as a victim, a mother in law, or as a man. This way, the participants are eased into sharing possible experiences of their own, or of someone close to them.

### What makes this project a good practice?

The method of sharing information was developed in 2004 and is still widely used at information meetings throughout the country, for municipalities, schools, welfare agencies, as well as migrant grass roots organizations. In addition, the method is integrated in various other project programmes, like in project 8.2 in this report, ‘Discussing domestic violence in migrant communities’.

The docudrama relates to the participants and will excite a discussion on domestic and honour related violence with the communities of grass roots organizations, with important stakeholders and intermediaries. A national team of trained information officers is available for organizations to appeal to in order to show the film and start the discussion on domestic and honour related violence in their communities.



The fact that the information officers come from migrant backgrounds themselves is an advantage in the contact with the target groups: a success factor.

**Development and implementation**

Foundation Kezban: [www.stichtingkezban.nl](http://www.stichtingkezban.nl)

Material: The DVD (with all language versions), the manual and the posters *Als ik haar was ...* can be ordered at Kezban.

## 8.2 Addressing domestic violence in migrant communities

Inciting a dialogue about domestic violence and honour related violence through meetings and gatherings, information, empowerment trainings, support groups and dialogue circles.

### Goal

Breaking the taboos that exist around domestic violence, a mentality change and the formulation of a stand on gender roles, on the use of violence and the role of the community with respect to violence. 'Honour related violence' is not specifically announced at the start of the project but is discussed further on in the programme.

### Target group

The project aims at different parties in terms of cultural background, gender and age. Next to specific activities for women, men or youths, there are communal activities for all.

### The project

At information meetings the participants break the taboo and discuss the problems of domestic and honour related violence. By making the individual problems of women a common issue, by sharing stories and working on a solution together, the victims will break free from their isolation. Supporting each other, caring for the victims in the community together with the community, is an important element of the project. Parallel to his process the men are confronted with their role and responsibility. Various methods are applied in the project, for example information meetings, empowerment courses, and support groups to provoke dialogue. Next to this, the team uses various work forms and artistic means. Different methods are suitable for different activities, depending on the specific goal, wants and needs of the participants. The project activities are linked to existing networks and activities of the (grass roots) organizations. At meetings, trained information officers will start the discussion by showing the film "*Als ik haar was...*" (See 8.1). *Contact women* are recruited from the target group and trained to be information officers themselves as well as recognize signals and refer victims. Next to this, a number of people will be trained to inform communities on legal position and abandonment.

### Background

The project aims to stimulate a dialogue in the communities by bringing the parties together to talk about the current situation, the wish for change and the possibilities. What is good and what is damaging with respect to the views and traditions of our community? What do we need to change and how can we do that? Crucial in this process is the open rejection of violence, which allows the community to take action against the causes of unsafe situations and violence.

### What makes this project a good practice?

The method specifically works 'by, with and for' the target group. Discussing and tackling domestic violence *together* with the target group, from the very start and throughout the whole process, is what makes it successful. To create trust and safety among the target groups, the project members had to "move along with the target group".

They developed and adapted their actions to fit the tempo and situation of the target group. In this case that meant taking it nice and easy. The manner of approaching target groups and daring to confront them with their taboos were decisive elements for success.

A lot of time and energy was spent on getting to know the participants and creating a platform in the (ranks of) the target group, for example by involving and keeping close contacts with key members and

confidants who are familiar with the field and the target group. They were the connection between the target group(s) and the professional field and formulated conditions for an effective approach. Another important success factor appeared to be the short lines between the project members as well as working with people who know the target group and how to get inside and really reach them.

### **Development and implementation**

St. Welsaen ([www.welsaen.nl](http://www.welsaen.nl)) and BVO: [www.stichtingbvo.nl](http://www.stichtingbvo.nl)

The method description '*In gesprek*', Bureau Artant (2011) is available at Foundation Welsaen.

Welsaen offers advice and training on the method for other municipalities.

Foundation Palet – diversity advisors – developed a similar project in three regions. More information:

- *Hoe gekleurd is geweld?* Strategies for violence in migrant families; 2005.
- *Een kwestie van vertrouwen*. Prevention domestic violence in migrant families in six steps; 2008.  
Published by: PON, Institute for advice, research and development, Noord-Brabant.

### 8.3 Hand in hand tegen huwelijksdwang (joining forces against forced marriage)

Addressing forced marriage at information meetings for Muslim youths and parents.

#### Goal

The project goal of *Hand in hand tegen huwelijksdwang* is to contribute to the prevention of forced marriages. To reach this, three sub targets were formulated:

- Promoting a conscious, independent choice of partner among Muslim youth.
- Promoting an open communication on the subject between Muslim youth and their parents.
- Provide training for professionals on forced marriage and partner choice.

#### Target group

Muslim members of migrant communities wherein forced marriage is a (common) practice, parents as well as youth. Also professionals.

#### The project

Many Muslims appear to have unseemly ideas of what their religion says about forced marriages. To get their message across loud and clear, the team has involved imams and Islam experts from the communities. Information meetings are organized at the participating (grass roots) organizations and mosques (for example Turkish, Moroccan, Pakistan, Surinam, Dutch parties). In this familiar and trusted environment the target group is generally more inclined to discuss delicate matters.

To start with, four meetings are organized for Muslim youth. Next to this, there will be two information and exchange meetings for boys and girls together and six for young adults and parents. After this, meetings are organized in five more cities, together with the local partner organization.

In this project, focus is on the Islamic identity and using Islamic sources.

Professionals were invited to attend a conference and the publication "*Hand in hand tegen huwelijksdwang*" was developed and published.

#### Background

In the beginning, the target group is in denial of the problem; forced marriage is not open to discussion or the people are unaware of the problem. The project method is bottom-up: addressing forced marriage within the community, at a level that the target group can relate to. A lot has been invested in winning trust. After the initial denial of the problem and refusal to address it, awareness sets in and the subject becomes open to discussion.

#### What makes this project a good practice?

The project members chose to use a 'Management model' from awareness, attitude change to behavioural change. They effectively succeeded in breaking the taboo on a very sensitive matter that needs to be addressed. Support, commitment, trust and involving the people are essential factors.

To many people, looking at partner choice from another angle and recognizing that prearranged marriages are not part of the Islam was an eye-opener. Throughout the project, parents were in no way accused but treated as partners.

After all, they just want what is best for their child. The project made a move towards a mentality change, a clear norm was set saying that forced marriage is unacceptable according to Islam rules as well as a violation of human rights.

Further success factors were searching for the best way to relate to the target group, addressing the entire community and attracting key figures. Also important was the awareness of the role of the organizer, an Islamic platform. This position is strengthened if the organization sends out a correct and nuanced view on forced marriage without offending the target groups.

**Development and implementation**

SPIOR, Foundation Platform Muslim Organizations Rijnmond, Rotterdam: [www.spor.nl](http://www.spor.nl)

The project was a spin-off of the former SPIOR project '*Het recht van de vrouw ligt in haar eigen hand*'.

See: "*Hand in Hand tegen Huwelijksdwang*" (SPIOR, 2007).

## 8.4 Aan de goede kant van eer (On the good side of honour)

Breaking the taboo on honour related violence by providing information material and trainings for grass roots organizations and stimulating collaborations between grass roots organizations, local governments and organizations.

### Goal

*Aan de goede kant van de eer* aims at combating honour related violence by educating people, providing more insight among potential risk groups, promoting awareness, enhancing empowerment and independence, initiating a mentality change and offering alternative behaviour. Next to this, the project aims to built networks, bring about collaborations and stimulating migrant (grass roots) organizations to work together with other organizations and support agencies dealing with honour related violence.

### Target group

The offer is primarily developed for local grass roots organizations, networks and key figures. Next to this, the project aims to reach local boards, police, care, welfare and other professionals working with victims of honour related violence.

### The project

*Aan de goede kant van de eer* is a national long-term programme (Meerjaren Kaderprogramma), containing various smaller projects and activities. The programme had been launched in ten different municipalities in collaboration with local grass roots organizations (for example, HTIB in Amsterdam), local management social institutes (in the period 2007-2010).

The three umbrella organizations for migrants, IOT, SMN and VON, developed and organized various projects and activities for their communities, either as a joint production or independently. (The part executed by VON, '*Changemakers Honour related violence*', is described under 5.1.5. of this report). The migrant umbrella organizations started by drawing up a protocol. Herein described are the duties and responsibilities of migrant and refugee organizations in their preventive actions against honour related violence. There are also guidelines for organizations that are planning to address honour related violence in the (near) future. Furthermore, professional organizations can get an insight in the possibilities of grass roots organizations. The protocol is the basis of all joint activities of the umbrella organizations with local grass roots organizations. Methods and training programmes are available for grass roots organizations. There is information, a website [www.eervol.com](http://www.eervol.com) and there two training programmes are developed: Empowerment in parenting! Training for young and future mothers.

### What makes this project a good practice?

The powerful joining of forces of diverse migrant and refugee organizations was a success factor, as well as the variety of activities, making it possible to reach many different target groups. Another factor of success was the chosen method to work from the inside to the outside.

It is important that local grass roots organizations play a key role as they know the target group better than anyone and will be able to use the activities and trainings to achieve a mentality change. This way, they can make a serious contribution in the action against honour related violence.

### Development and implementation

Partly initiated by the interdepartmental Programme Honour Related Violence, the project was executed by the Turkish board (IOT): [www.iot.nl](http://www.iot.nl), The Collaboration of Dutch Moroccans (SMN):

[www.smn.nl](http://www.smn.nl) , Refugee Organizations Netherlands (VON): [www.vluchtelingenorganisaties.nl](http://www.vluchtelingenorganisaties.nl) , and the national government.

The Toolkit *Aan de goede kant van de eer* is available at the participating umbrella organizations.

## 8.5 Changemakers Honour related violence

Changing attitude and behaviour with regard to honour related violence by training and using *changemakers*, supporting grass roots organizations and working with local agencies.

### Goal

Realizing some sort of *civic driven change* can be described in four steps: 1. Acknowledge the problem; 2. Take a stand; 3. Change your attitude and 4. Change your behaviour.

### Target group

Members of refugee communities wherein honour related violence is a common practice and their grass roots organizations.

### The project

Via the method *Changemakers Honour related violence*, pioneers are trained to inspire others to also join the changemakers movement. The method consists of three parts:

- Training changemakers from risk communities to start a mentality change.
- Supporting changemakers and grass roots organizations with the organization of local activities aimed at social prevention.
- Setting up collaborations with local support agencies and police, to be able to support (potential) victims and prosecute perpetrators.

In the first part, key members of the communities receive a general and, after that, a special training. The focus in the programme is on taking position with regard to the problem of honour related violence: what are my responsibilities as changemaker to end the problem, and what can I do? Concrete acts of change are discussed with the participants.

In almost all (grass roots) organizations those board members who are leading figures are trained. They can become the contact person between board, politics and chain partners. Next to this, 'pioneers' are trained to work the subject onto the community agenda, as mentality changers. These are refugees with a trainer and/or information background. The changemakers form coalitions and support each other in their actions against honour related violence.

For the second part, the 'Change Guide' was developed: a manual with 'tips and tricks' for trained changemakers to bring about a mentality change in their circles. In the manual are examples of work methods and the theory on how people change their attitude and behaviour towards subjects like honour related violence. A lot more can be found in The Change Guide, including contact information of relevant organizations and potential expert collaboration partners.

(Key members) of refugee organizations are on a content level as well as financially fit to organize activities against honour related violence and to be a full partner in the chain. For local collaborations a protocol for action and a collaboration agreement were drawn up and signed. This collaboration will enhance the feeling of self worth in refugees and stimulates full participation in society.

### What makes this project a good practice?

The first success factor is the structure of the project, meaning that refugees stand up as owners of the problem and take responsibility for the development of the method as well as for the implementation (in part). Therefore, they don't speak of a target group, but of participants, developers and co-owners. This makes members of refugee communities more action oriented, improves the collaborations with chain partners and strengthens the network. The training programme specializes and the organization's key actors gain more insight in problem of honour related violence, which enables them to develop specific



activities for their community. The refugees feel involved in the actions against honour related violence, share this with the people around them and spread the message in their community; they ultimately feel more responsible to put an end to the problem and do what it takes to contribute.

**Development and implementation**

Refugee-Organizations (VON): [www.vluchtelingenorganisaties.nl](http://www.vluchtelingenorganisaties.nl), as part of the project *Aan de goede kant van de eer* (8.4).

## 8.6 De Zwarte Tulp (The Black Tulip)

A series of lessons with assignments, a documentary and discussions to introduce the subject of honour related violence to young students.

### Goal

Goal of *De Zwarte Tulp* is to encourage young people to think about what it means to make choices and the right to make your own choices. The project is introducing them to questions like: how do traditions and influence your life? In what way is honour a part of your life and what can you do if the honour code of your family prevents you from living the life you want to live? By openly talking about 'harmful traditions' the project promotes a healthy level of awareness of participants' personal norms and values.

### Target group

Years 4, 5 and 6 of secondary school (VMBO, HAVO, VWO, 16-18 years) and colleges (MBO and HBO).

### The project

The "*Zwarte Tulp*" method consists of a series of lessons with various components. There is also a theoretical component with facts and figures on honour related violence. Students learn about honour killings/honour related violence, and are invited to discuss it. They are made aware of their own norms and values with respect to partner choice, sexuality and gender roles. They reflect on their beliefs and views on honour related violence. The trainer works on a mentality change with regard to (underlying problems) unequal right and choices for girls and boys. The students become aware of the influence of "harmful traditions" and the serious consequences of violence, either born out of traditions or otherwise. The trainers guide and stimulate the awareness process. They work with the group using role-play, discussions, acting and painting assignments. The documentary '*Verdwaalde Gezichten (Lost Faces)*', filmed in Turkey and the Netherlands, exhibits the consequences of honour related violence.

The "*Zwarte Tulp*" method exists of two series of lessons: a long and a short version. The long version has five theme sessions of 90 minutes each. They are described in a workbook for students. A manual is available for the trainers. The short series consists of two lessons of 90 minutes each. The theme: What is honour to you? What is honour related violence to you? These two lessons are also described in a student workbook and a teachers' manual. During both series of lessons the documentary "*Verdwaalde Gezichten*", made by the two young Dutch-Turkish founders of foundation *De Verdwaalde Gezichten (The Lost Faces)*.

### What makes this project a good practice?

Connecting with young people was a number one priority in the development of the lessons, in content, form and implementation. This starts (in the long version) by asking questions like: who are you? What are your dreams for the future? Also, the lessons always start with a fun subject and a creative activity and then slowly work towards the more sensitive matters.

The offer is not developed for a specific cultural group but on all young people, as in the Dutch multicultural society youths of different cultural backgrounds all grow up together. And these youths engage in many culturally mixed relationships, which sometimes leads to anxiety and problems because not all parents approve of this.

The ultimate goal is to integrate the method in the standard career and citizenship lessons in secondary education. To guarantee this, the foundation has close contacts with the care coordinators and teachers from the school they are serving right from the start of the lessons.

**Development and implementation**

Foundation *De Verdwaalde Gezichten*: [www.verdwaaldegezichten.nl](http://www.verdwaaldegezichten.nl)

## 8.7 Know Your Rights!

Public information campaign Rights and Abandonment for Moroccan and Turkish women, men and young people.

### Goal

Improving the legal position of migrant women, children and young people, and promoting independence, emancipation and participation. Improving the care and prevention and the anchoring of activities and knowledge in the regular organizations.

Building a solid network of chain partners at a local, national, bilateral and international level.

### Target group

Primary target group: Moroccan and Turkish migrant women and young people (and men). The project team is working on activities for other migrant and refugee groups.

Also: professionals and volunteers from various fields in health care, welfare, social care, education, government and legal aid.

Finally: national and international policy makers and politicians.

### The project

The problems with regard to legal position, abandonment and forced marriage are often a combination of a dependent status, power imbalance and problems with Dutch family law, the alien act and the family law in the country of origin, family- marriage- and parenting problems and different forms of violence.

The project is designed as an integral method existing of:

- Training for information officers with an Arab/Berber background. More than 100 women and men from five Dutch regions were trained to inform and educate Moroccan and Turkish communities. Programmes for other nationalities like Afghan, Somali, Iraqi, Iran, Egyptian, and others are under development.
- Information meetings for migrant groups on a local level; in neighbourhoods, schools and organizations. Local or regional partners organize the gatherings. They are moderated by the information officers.
- Developing and spreading information material for Turkish and Moroccan groups, information officers, volunteers and professionals, on Family and Alien Law and abandonment; Brochures in two languages with (emergency) notebook.
- A support point and phone line for abandoned women, offering support from the first call to the return to the Netherlands, as well as organizing care and shelter, in close collaboration with the Dutch Support group Returning Emigrants, SSR
- Information meetings for professionals, like social workers and solicitors, in the shape of a national conference, linked to regional working conferences. Information, tips and consultation on identification, referral and support, also to strengthen collaboration and optimize (joint) care and support.
- Covenants with organizations of relevant chain partners to ensure continuity of the method in the Netherlands. Building and strengthening networks of chain partners on a local, national, bilateral and international level, mainly aimed at prevention, referral and care.
- A lobby among policy makers and politicians for a better human rights policy and a stronger legal position for migrants and refugees.
- Expert meetings in Morocco and the Netherlands with Dutch and Moroccan experts, politicians, policy makers and relevant institutes and women's organizations.

**What makes this project a good practice?**

Success factors of this project are: working on multiple levels, cooperation and collaboration. Also, successfully delivering the information to all parties involved at all levels. Due to the large number of information meetings, many migrants are reached.

To do this it is crucial to aptly respond to existing needs, perpetually developing tools and material and methods to serve the current groups and other migrant and refugee groups. Finally, the collaboration/networking on national/ /bilateral level has yielded positive results.

The project “Know your rights” works like a motor for the emancipation of migrant women.

**Development and execution**

A collaboration of national working group Mudawwanah with, among others, Emancipation desks, SSR in Morocco and the Netherlands, Foundation Kezban, Palet, BOZ Brabant and MVVN.

[www.steunremigranten.nl](http://www.steunremigranten.nl) and [www.stichtingkezban.nl](http://www.stichtingkezban.nl)

The information brochure ‘Know your rights’ is available in Dutch, Turkish and Moroccan.

## 8.8 Veilige Haven (Safe Haven)

The organization provides advice and care to homosexual and bisexual youths and migrant men and women on cases involving honour related violence and forced marriage, through open hours, shelter and immediate care.

### Goal

Informal support, advice, care en supervision in cases involving (among other things) honour related violence and forced marriage.

### Target group

Homosexual youth and adults with a migrant background who are having problems with their family or cultural/religious community because of their sexual preferences.

### The project

*Veilige Haven* provides care for youths, men and women from multicultural Amsterdam and vicinity, who need a place to go with their homosexual, bisexual or transgender feelings. *Veilige Haven* offers fun and relaxation, an informal place to meet others just like you, for example in the “world cafe.” There are several facilities, ranging from open hours to shelter and crisis care. The workers moderate individual sessions and group discussions, with self-acceptance as the ultimate goal. They refer to further care and shelter if the youth can no longer go home. They also coordinate the care.

Of the sixty to one hundred clients each year, about 80% has a Muslim background. Upon intake clients are not always specifically registered under honour related violence and forced marriage. It isn't always asked, this depends on what the visitors are willing to release. In at least one on three cases young people are victimized by (honour related) violence, but there seems to be one large ‘dark number’. If honour related violence is committed or imminent, *Veilige Haven* refers to the police, for example to project *Roze in Blauw* (Pink in Blue).<sup>1</sup> Most migrants refrain from reporting with the police. *Veilige Haven* teaches participants that they can also make an informal report. *Veilige Haven* as a supervised living facility has six beds for young people who have experienced honour related violence or have received threats. The locations are reasonably anonymous. Two social workers are present to chair the living room meetings.

*Veilige Haven* is part of the Amsterdam Chain Approach Honour Related Violence. This is an unmistakable added value, as many autochthonous care workers hardly know anything about the target group or their specific problems.

### What makes this project a good practice?

The workers have similar backgrounds and experiences as the target group. They offer advice but will never push someone towards a ‘coming out’. *Veilige Haven* is easy going and informal. The focus of the project is on reaching self-acceptance and awareness.

The professionalism of the workers is another important success factor. They understand the clients because they know who to interact with people from another culture. They are empathic and involved. “Empathize, don't join.”

**Development and implementation**

*Veilige Haven* was initiated by Schorer, the (former) Dutch Institute for Homosexuality, health and welfare, and is now part of the COC Amsterdam.

[www.cocamsterdam.nl/veilige-haven](http://www.cocamsterdam.nl/veilige-haven)

## 8.9 Reporting Centre Honour Related Violence Amsterdam

Prevention and chain approach to honour related violence through consultation, support and mediation in honour cases.

### Goal

Offering advice and/or mediation and referring to shelter and care services. Next to this, advising and supporting professionals in (possible) honour related violence cases.

### Target group

- Victims of honour related violence from Amsterdam.
- Care workers and other professionals from Amsterdam.

### The project

The workers of the Reporting Centre Honour Related Violence were especially trained to recognize signs and risks of honour related violence. The Centre has developed a risk-assessment to investigate whether honour related violence plays a role. The workers have mastered various methods to intervene in family conflicts, and settle them to such extent that it is possible to come to a non-violent restoration of honour or mediation process between families. Another important task of the Centre is the referral of clients to shelter and care organizations. After a case has been closed, the Centre will keep track of the client for a certain period of time, even if the client moves to another municipality.

The Reporting Centre registers all cases of honour related violence in Amsterdam. All reports that are filed at the police are also send through to the Reporting Centre. When faced with complicated cases the Reporting Centre joins forces with the National Knowledge Centre Honour related violence (the *LEC EGG*).

In the Reporting Centre, the care parties and the criminal law (police) work together closely. There are also close collaborations with shelters, care workers and experts on culture. The reporting Centre put up a care network and has case meetings with the police, Youth Care and other relevant agencies, twice a month. For each case the action plan is discussed and completed with all intended actions and actors. To discuss progress on a policy level the organization, the chain partners and the municipality come together every three months.

The workers of the Reporting Centre promote prevention and (early) recognition by providing regular information nights and workshops for grass roots organizations and local community homes. Finally, they offer trainings and seminars for professionals and students.

### What makes this project a good practice?

Professional, knowledgeable workers with 'feeling' for the issue of honour related violence, who understand the importance of breaking the taboo. They are the key conditions for a successful Reporting Centre. The workers assume an impartial attitude, pass no judgement, and will not impose their own beliefs or values onto others. The workers have an open attitude towards people and cultures.

Another important success factor is the close collaboration and exchange with the police and other chain partners. The easy accessibility of the Reporting Centre for both clients and care workers, and the possibility to provide immediate advice are additional success factors.

Each year, the Reporting Centre has been getting more reports, which proves its success. Familiarity with honour related violence as a phenomenon and the Reporting Centre as such is growing.



A final important success factor is that the financing party, the municipality of Amsterdam, has not specified a term for the Reporting Centre; this offers a careful guarantee for continuity, at least for now.

### **Development and implementation**

The Reporting Centre is part of the Blijf Groep. The Blijf Groep provides prevention, shelter and ambulant care after domestic violence in Noord-Holland and Flevoland.

[www.blijfgroep.nl/hoe-wij-helpen/meldpunt-honour related-geweld](http://www.blijfgroep.nl/hoe-wij-helpen/meldpunt-honour-related-geweld)

## 8.10 Van Huis Uit (From Home)

Prevention of (escalation) of honour related violence through mediation and education by community mediators.

### Goal

Prevention of honour related violence by preventing or de-escalating conflicts within and between families, and educating people in an informal setting.

### Target group

Members of cultural communities with a tradition of honour related violence.

### The project

The project *Van huis uit* reaches its goal by identifying early signs of conflicts and violence induced by family honour; by calming the people down and have them listen to each other. For this, the project team needs to involve key community members who are the ears and eyes of the community and who are prepared to volunteer as 'community mediators'. They know what goes on in a community and are trusted members with a certain level of authority. For the project, twenty-five men and women from the different cultural communities were successfully recruited. Many of them are professional care workers. Before they venture out as mediators they receive a thorough training to, among other things, acquire adequate mediation techniques.

The community mediators are able to intervene in conflicts between families at an early stage. This way, they (mostly) succeed to prevent or de-escalate the conflict and/or violence in name of family honour. They offer mediation, inform the people and connect people. They are above the parties and represent the mutual interest. They act on personal title, are extremely involved, and work on a voluntary basis. For the mediation they use tools from the different cultural dimensions.

The mediators also educate community members on the subject. Information giving often take place at someone's home, where people come together for drinks or dinner and sensitive subjects are brought up in an informal manner. For larger scale information meetings the project teams up with grass roots organizations. The project aims to not get tangled up with these organizations in order to stay independent.

The twenty-five mediators all have their own task in the mediation process, the information meetings and the networking among other (grass roots) organizations, governments and other parties. The key figure of the project activities is the coordinator who monitors all mediation processes, even afterwards. The organization collaborates with the chain partners honour related violence in the municipality (like the Support Centre Domestic Violence, Police, women shelters). The partners in the chain have agreed to work with a reporting protocol. The mediators always inform their 'clients' hereof.

### What makes this project a good practice?

The main factor of success of this project is the independent position of the mediators. They weren't selected just for being members of the community, but as individuals. They are neutral at all times, as well as independent and unbiased. They know the community, they know how to get in, but they are not tangled up in it. The mediators are closely involved in cases of honour related violence, but they are not part of the problem. The project has found the right balance between involvement and distance. Another success factor is the easy accessibility of the mediator. When the volunteers are providing

information at meetings, the public can approach them afterwards and they can easily assume their role as mediators.

Thirdly, it takes a clearly visible coordinator to achieve the best results. The coordinator monitors all mediations, even after they have finished. There are evaluations of the processes and other activities. Finally, joining forces with the regional chain partners is an important success factor.

### **Development and implementation**

Foundation MOOI, organization for social support, together with Odyssee, support organization for development processes.

[www.stichtingmooi.nl](http://www.stichtingmooi.nl)

## 8.11 Opvang Eva (Shelter Eva)

Shelter and support after (threat of) honour related violence and forced marriage in a shelter that was specifically developed for this purpose at a secret and extra secure location.

### Goal

Providing shelter, protection and support.

### Target group

Girls and young women of 14-23 years old who are trying to live their lives with one foot in their original culture and one foot in the western culture.

### The project

*Opvang Eva* (Extra Veilige Afdeling / Division Extra Safe) is a pilot shelter project with twenty places (2 x 10). The diverse group of girls and women can roughly be divided into two groups: the first group exists of daughters that have run away from home because of the strict rules imposed by their parents or because they have a boyfriend. Pregnant girls are welcome. The second group exists of women who were discarded by their husbands or who have chosen to leave him, thus causing problems in the family. A large part of the girls and women in the shelter is a victim of honour related violence, forced marriage and/or abandonment, or has been threatened with these forms of violence. 90% of the clients has been physically abused, 100% has been mentally abused. In some cases incest or other sexual abuse have added to the problem.

The workers of Eva are very sensitive about the behaviour and safety of the girls and women. They offer them some kind of structure and help them to look ahead, at the future: what are your plans and what about your parents? Your husband? Especially in the initial phase of a client's stay, the regulations with regard to safety are strict (no hand phones, no internet and no going outside). Within a week the workers and the client will investigate whether mediation with the parents or family is possible. The police agency National Knowledge Centre Honour Related Violence (LEC EG) mostly starts by doing a case risk-assessment. Further actions are, among other things, based on this assessment. The girls and women will be offered a so-called "rainbow therapy". They learn to think about their own opinion and feelings and how to talk about these sentiments. This is something they have never done. Furthermore, the girls and women learn how they can live with their parents without conflict, either within themselves or with the parents. Finally, Eva provides 'aggression regulation therapy'. Clients are welcome to stay as long as they need to.

### What makes this project a good practice?

Eva is successful because it puts the safety of the girls and women first. Eva will always try to send her clients back to their former environment so that they don't have to leave everything behind and start again from scratch when they leave the shelter. There is enough money in the pilot to develop and operate the shelter as well as to organize extra training and education. In addition, the collaborations and covenant with the regional chain partners domestic violence (especially the police, Support Centre Domestic violence, Youth Care) are essential to guarantee fast and efficient actions. And finally, the ability to learn from mistakes, by your own or another organization, and to prevent them from happening again, is crucial to be successful.

**Development and implementation**

Foundation Kompaan and De Bocht (Goirle), organization for support in complex problems in the field of parenting, growing up and safety. Opvang Eva opened her doors at the same time as Zahir, the shelter of Fier Fryslân for girls and young women who are threatened with honour related violence.  
[www.kompaanendebocht.nl](http://www.kompaanendebocht.nl)

## 9. Success factors, wants and recommendations

This chapter provides a summary of the opinions and experiences of the respondents with regard to their work with grass roots organizations and NGOs against honour related violence, forced marriage and/or abandonment. The first section is an account of the success factors that were mentioned in the interviews, which is followed by a description of the impeding factors. In this case, the respondents considered their own situation and experiences as well as those of fellow-organizations. Finally, this chapter ends with a survey of the wants and needs of the questioned organizations.

### Success factors

Hereunder the factors of success for projects and activities that were mentioned by the respondents. Their answers are categorized as follows: bottom-up method, inclusiveness, terminology, collaboration, professionalism and continuity.

#### **Bottom-up**

According to the respondents, successful projects are initiated or supported by the respective community. It is crucial that the community it is serving is committed and supportive of the project. Therefore, a clear communication with the community is most important. The organization should be clear about what they aim to achieve and how they plan on involving the people. It is important to be sensitive to signals and opinions from the community and use these as a basis for the project plan to attract funding and governments. The identified signals should be picked up by the organization and discussed with the community. The respondents indicate that this will give the organization a right to speak, which leads to more support and therefore more chance of success.

Another success factor is that project workers do not work *for* the participants, but *with* them. There is no 'target group'; there are 'participants', and 'co-owners'. Workers stimulate participants to tackle the problem together. The work method is suitable for the group, their problems, questions and experiences. Trust in each other and in the workers is another important condition for success. In addition, an organization should continuously ask itself how things are done and whether this is the best way to achieve its goals. The participants are leading in terms of tempo and quality of the project. Furthermore, a specific approach and offer for women and men, for young people or adults can be a factor of success. At the same time, experience shows that enough effort is made to establish a dialogue between the genders and between the age groups.

#### **Inclusiveness**

A successful project or offer is accessible and approachable for the intended participants. It caters to their needs and departs from their worldview. Dissenters and points of critique are more than welcome. The project team even encourages participants to express differences of opinion. This will further critical thinking and an open discussion. A successful project includes a diversity of activities and/or information materials (if necessary in the native language of the participants).

#### **Terminology**

In a successful project the language and definitions used by the team members are adapted to the participants' worldviews. Consequently, one of the first steps to take is to establish clarity on the communities understanding of honour related violence, forced marriage and abandonment. We often see that the distinction between domestic violence and honour related violence is far from clear. In such cases, in their communications, the organization may speak of 'domestic violence' instead of 'honour related violence'.

Connecting with the community also entails that the organization departs from positive messages for theme meetings, like “ Mothers, daughters and partner choice” instead of “Forced marriage”. However, when addressing financiers and politics it is important to use concrete terminology for the respective problems.

### **Collaboration**

All respondents agree that collaboration is an important success factor. Collaboration with chain partners like the police and care organizations is particularly vital. Throughout all activities, the ‘backside of the chain’ has to function properly. In other words, when participants address information officers after a meeting on honour related violence or forced marriage, they have to be able to refer them to (professional) organizations for further support. They have to have confidence in these agencies that are to support the victims or prosecute the perpetrators.

According to the respondents, the collaboration between grass roots organizations and professional agencies can take place on different levels: on a policy and/or a case level. The chain approach may differ in every municipality, and the role of the grass roots organizations will be accordingly.

The collaboration in the municipal chain of *information-care-prosecution* is successful if it meets the following conditions:

- Clarity about the collaboration targets and about the necessary expertise to achieve these goals.
- Mutual trust as well as recognition of and respect for the other player’s knowledge and position.
- The collaboration partners exchange ideas, prejudices and fears.
- There is consensus on the definitions of domestic and honour related violence and forced marriage, minimizing the risk of misunderstandings.

Past experiences show that drawing up a profile and/or code of conduct containing the duties, roles and responsibilities of all collaboration partners will reduce the risk of misunderstandings considerably. Furthermore, the respondents emphasize that professional collaboration partners should not forget that all grass roots organizations are different, in terms of expertise, level of insight and understanding of the problem.

### **Expertise**

The respondents label expertise of paid and unpaid employees of grass roots organizations and NGOs as an important success factor. Employees have to be capable of discussing these sensitive themes with their communities/participants. Professionalism is a success factor (in paid workers as well as volunteers). The project members must be selected carefully and should be sufficiently trained and capable.

The project members are crucial for the success or non-success of a project or activity. If mediators and confidential officers are truly impartial and independent, this is a success factor. Therefore, acquisition of volunteers is a delicate question. The organization must be aware of the possible risk of working with volunteers from the community they are actually working for. However, the project members should also be on familiar terms with the migrant organization and grass roots. NGO workers must have sufficient knowledge of other cultures and need to apply an intercultural perspective in their approach of the problem. Successful project members show affinity with and empathy for the participants but are capable of maintaining a certain transcending connection. They are close to the participants without losing themselves in the relationship: “empathize, but don’t identify yourself with them”, a respondent explains.

Successful workers are aware of their position and status as project/board members and of possible cultural impediments of their own.

They are prepared to challenge norms and values within their own community. They are not afraid to be vulnerable and know what their strength is. They are role models for the target group, which is especially important for young people. Project members with personal experiences are only 'experience experts' and useful if they have successfully dealt with their own experiences and are able to look beyond their own situation.

Finally, several respondents emphasize that organizations should always practice some sort of quality check.

### **Continuity**

Due to the provisional nature of projects, the organization should have a plan for continuation and anchoring from the very start of the project. One way to do this is by making your offer transferable, suitable for other (professional) organizations to use and implement. This requires a clear project/method description. The sounding board made a note that methods are easier to transfer than *trust* among and from the participants. And trust is a major requirement for projects to succeed, especially in the work with migrant groups.

The continuity of an offer is more viable if the offer is flexible, if it can be adapted to the needs and wants of different participants. Other positive elements are the collaboration, consultation and support of both participants and chain partners. A reliable project basis and a good name are built on trust. Discipline and keeping promises towards participants and partner organizations are success factors. Chances of continuity and success increase if project members/volunteers are (among other things) financially compensated for their efforts. At the same time, the chances of success are higher if the project doesn't fully depend on project funding, and may be pursued without subsidies. Chances of continuity will increase if there is commitment from the community from the very start, with the community members acting as 'ambassadors' to spread the project goals in the community. However, every community will always need at least a few 'active pioneers'.

### **What doesn't work?**

The respondents have also shared their views on counter productive circumstances with regard to projects and activities of grass roots organizations and NGOs. The elements they mention are mostly related to attitude and ineffective methods.

### **Narrow mindedness**

If project members aim to impose their own beliefs and values onto the participants, they will never reach the target group or any of the project goals. The same goes for convicting or condemning any beliefs or behaviour of the participants. If project members present examples from the superior 'Dutch' way to act and behave, everything will fall apart. A lecturing attitude is always counterproductive. If project members are not straightforward and open, if they look at male participants as (potential) perpetrators of violence, or assume that parents are repressing their children, they will not be able to reach the grass roots.

If the organization is sending out a strong dismissive message about the problem, for example through the media, this may evoke anxiety and resistance among the participants/ target group. Also, a project is bound to fail if the organization or project members are insufficiently informed on or have no affinity with the subject or target group. Calling upon external experts without close connections with the target group is mostly ineffective.



### ***Faulty strategies***

A number of methodical aspects are essential for the rise or fall of any project. Working only top-down and neglecting the fact that participants are not just individuals but also part of a family and a community, will seriously diminish the chances of reaching any project goal.

The risk of working with 'experience experts' is that they may sport a very narrow view of other persons' needs.

Another risk is having information and exchange meetings on taboo subjects, while the information officers are unable to refer participants who share their personal stories to the right places for shelter and support.

The effects of changes in mentality and behaviour are most likely to sustain if they are changes from within. Therefore, the respondents agree that although penalizing honour related violence and forced marriage is necessary, it is by no means a solution. It is a bit like the Health Service checking girls after their visit to countries where circumcision is still allowed by law. This will not lead to an abolishment of the practice, as the community is not instigated to change.

A few critical notes from the interviews: a great deal of funding goes to information and education, which means that a large group of traditional thinking people who live in isolation and who may be victims/perpetrators of honour related violence, are never reached because they do not attend these meetings. Also, at trainings or meetings the Dutch language barrier is often a problem. People with a poor understanding of the language are often excluded.

Another acquired lesson is that it can be 'dangerous' to involve the media in a project (launch) too soon. The respective community or the participants are often wary of getting being presented in a negative way. In this respect, project teams should always try to check or work together with the media to prevent a negative image and angry reactions from the communities.

### ***Provisional nature***

All respondents agree that the provisional character of projects diminishes the chances of success, of achieving goals. Important themes are exposed, the problems are extensive and complicated while the means are poor and follow-up is very hard to realize.

Generating a mentality change from within takes time. Money is lost if projects are not combined and assessed in terms of efficiency, and if no research is done on more creative ways to approach the problem from different angles (for example in parenting programmes and other activities for vulnerable families).

### ***Wants and needs***

The wants and needs of the organizations can be categorized into three areas: money/manpower, collaboration and continuity.

### ***Money/manpower***

Organizations are mostly in need of (additional) funding to attract and hire more paid workers and volunteers, to have better access into communities and establish early identification of problems. Other services need a better or bigger office.

One organization has requested help in the fields of fundraising and PR and recruitment.

### ***Collaboration***

Many respondents express the wish for more exchange with the chain partners to join forces in the implementation of actions against honour related violence and forced marriage.

There should be more shelters for homosexual youths who are threatened with honour violence. More trained professionals in the Netherlands to deal with abandonment cases and more coherence in the care for victims, both in the Netherlands and in the countries of origin. Another wish is to realize (more) exchange of knowledge and experiences with fellow organizations abroad.

### ***Continuity***

Organizations want to be able to guarantee the continuity of their project activities and expertise. Some are rooting for additional funding to start a follow-up project; others would rather receive structural financing instead of temporary project funding.

One respondent expressed the need for support and cooperation of the manager and colleagues, in particular with regard to anchoring and continuation. Many respondents wish to anchor the expertise that the organization built up around dealing with honour related violence, forced marriage and/or abandonment. Also, this expertise should be recognized and appreciated for its worth by the organization, the chain partners and governments alike.

### **A few recommendations**

Finally, the recommendations as formulated by the respondents, categorized as recommendations for fellow grass roots organizations and NGOs, for Dutch governments and for the European Union.

#### ***Recommendations for fellow grass roots organizations and NGOs***

- Put less focus on the organization's interest. Avoid tunnel vision.
- Aim for close collaborations, form a network with other grass roots organizations and NGOs. Learn from each other and exchange knowledge. Share concerns and join forces to face governments.
- Be accessible and flexible. Involve parents in youth projects and do not treat them as (potential) perpetrators.
- Invest more in prevention and sustainability, and pay attention to transferral and continuity.

#### ***Recommendations for governments***

The respondents don't specify between recommendations for state or for local governments. If the shoe fits...

- Make sure your offer is designed specifically for cases involving honour related violence, forced marriage and/or abandonment and provide high quality and accurate care.
- When funding actions against honour related violence, forced marriage and/or abandonment, make it a condition that chain partner organizations and institutes work together with grass roots organizations and NGOs. Only grant subsidies if organizations run an intercultural policy.
- Recognize the added value of the (volunteer) work of grass roots organizations. Invest in and support them to help stimulate and encourage their communities in their liberation process and to achieve a mentality change. Make sure that the issues of honour related violence, forced marriage and abandonment stay on the agenda. Five years is not enough to achieve a genuine change of mentality.
- When temporary funding (grass roots) organizations and NGOs, stimulate the embedding and anchoring of the offer in regular care institutes and provide the means to enable them to do so. Ensure continuity.
- Continue to support and finance research on honour related violence, forced marriage and abandonment.

- Make sure information campaigns are suitable for the broad cultural diversity in the Netherlands, also in terms of language, but make sure that autochthone citizens are also involved in campaigns and actions against honour related violence, forced marriage and/or abandonment. Next to this, the campaigns should also consider sexual diversity. Invest in young people for they are the future.
- Reconsider the penalties or sentences for forced marriage and abandonment, but be ware of the resistance this may evoke, which might daunt people from seeking help.
- Stop sending out the implicit message: “Migrants equal problems”!

### ***To the European Union***

Due to the international character and the literal and figurative boundaries that are crossed with honour related violence, forced marriage and abandonment, the respondents believe it is essential that active measures are taken on a European level.

- Draw up European conventions on possibilities for return after abandonment and on Muslim marriages/civil marriages. Develop a protocol for reporting, shelter and (legal) support after abandonment, which can be used in all European countries.
- Try to reach unity in guidelines, actions and penalties in cases involving honour related violence, forced marriage and abandonment.
- Initiate more exchange and collaboration with the Turkish government, for example by launching an international campaign against abandonment for Turkey and several other European countries.

## 10. Summary

In Part II, thirteen respondents from NGOs and grass roots organizations offer their opinion on government policy around 'harmful traditional practices'. They observe a positive shift, as there is now much more awareness and openness about the issue within the cultural communities. They also feel appreciated by the government for their contribution to the awareness process. Less positive, according to the respondents, is that all the work is project based. Many initiatives have to terminate and are broken down soon after they have been set up. Meanwhile, a mentality change takes time and requires continuous exposure and attention through various means and methods. Next to this, they do signal a stigmatization of migrants as a 'problem group', instigated by politics and media. They observe a growing resistance among their communities with regard to discussing and being confronted with the issues. This complicates the emancipatory activities of NGOs and grass roots organizations, also for fear of enhancing the negative image.

From 2010 onwards, national and local governments have reserved less time and money for actions against honour related violence. The organizations feel the effect of the cutbacks, the shifts in policy priorities and the discontinuance of the specific target groups policy. The grass roots organizations report that they aren't approached by professional care organizations, like the chain partners, as much as before. Next to this, they observe a decrease in professional expertise.

The respondents report that the government focuses less on prevention and more on repression, for example by criminalizing forced marriage. The clear norm setting may be helpful for (potential) victims, but it also increases a fear of prosecution among family members, who are therefore less inclined to seek help. The respondents feel that criminalizing harmful practices is not the solution.

In the past years, the grass roots organizations and NGOs have built a ton of experience in the field of tackling honour related violence, forced marriage and abandonment. Most 'Good practices' from The Netherlands revolve around information and awareness. Part II holds a description of eleven of these good practices. A shared factor of success for all of these practices is that they work 'bottom-up', with support and commitment of the communities and together with the participants. Other success factors are using the language and notions of the community, the knowledge and capacities of the participants, collaborating with local chain partners and embedding activities, preferably for longer terms. A project can never succeed if workers assume an accusing or disapproving attitude towards the participants, or publically (radio, television, Internet) express a critical opinion on, for example, forced marriage. Without specific activities for hardly accessible closed communities a project is bound to fail.

The respondents recommend that with all activities attention is paid to durability, transferability and continuity. This is true for fellow-organizations as well as governments and (other) financing parties. Governments are recommended to keep actions against harmful traditional practices on the agenda. And the European Union should establish more unity in regulations, approach and criminalization of honour related violence, forced marriage and abandonment.

## 11. Conclusions

The introduction of this report contained the following questions:

How did the predominant anti-immigration climate affect the national government actions against honour related violence and forced marriage? And what effect did and does this climate and policy have on grass roots organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs)<sup>5</sup> in the strive against 'harmful traditional practices'?

The following conclusions can be drawn from Part I and Part II:

- The predominantly anti-immigration climate of the social and political debate in the Netherlands since the late nineteen nineties, wherein the multicultural society was said to have “failed”, influenced the government policy, as well as migrant and refugee communities and their organizations.
- Government policy went from supporting integration with preservation of the original culture, to stricter conditions for immigration, family reunion and political asylum. Integration policy was dropped.
- At the same time, the national government realised that a one-sided approach of the problems of migrant communities was of no use. A good example of a comprehensive approach and collaboration with migrant organizations by the government is the work of the interdepartmental Programme Bureau Honour related violence. The bureau didn't see the issue as a migrant problem, but as a *Dutch* problem and as a specific type of domestic violence. By seeking collaborations with migrant organizations, the bureau actively involved the communities to further prevention and reduction.
- However, at the same time, the national government implemented several legal measures, which were hugely stigmatizing for migrants. The measures that were often meant to protect (possible) victims of violence were a complicating factor for large groups of immigrants and refugees. For example, immigration was restricted to tackle forced marriage.
- The government policy entailed positive as well as negative effects in migrant communities. There was a clearly growing awareness and openness about honour related violence and other harmful traditional practices. On the other hand, the government focus on violence inadvertently enhanced stereotyping and stigmatization of migrants, due to the link between problems and culture or religion.
- Because of the stigmatization, some migrants (or migrant communities) shut out any intervention or support with their problems. Sometimes they respond by expressing their traditional ideas and norms ever so strongly to emphasize their identity. The interviewed grass roots organizations and NGOs have noticed that it has become harder to discuss taboos and problems in the communities. The organizations are also weary of intensifying the negative image.

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<sup>5</sup> A **non-governmental organization** is an organization that is independent of the government and that promotes a presumed social interest.

- As the national government has not supported a policy for specific target groups since 2010, financial means and focus on the problems in the community have reduced significantly. Now that the government has dropped her active part in the action against honour related violence, migrant organizations feel that the government is not involving the traditional communities in finding the solution of the problem. Consequently, the communities were much less involved in the prevention of violence and this decreased the emancipation of the community members. Another effect is the poor communication between the government and the target groups.
- Thanks to the work of the Programme Bureau Honour related violence, professionals from various sectors were informed on harmful traditional practices. Now, some time after the Bureau ceased to exist, it appears that the provided knowledge hasn't spread sufficiently. In addition, professionals still know too little about legal positions, right of residence etc. Intercultural work is still not embedded in care organizations, even though it is a vital ingredient for an efficient practice
- The chain approach for honour related violence that was developed by the Programme Bureau is invaluable when it comes to casework. In some cases migrant (grass roots) organizations are actively involved. However, as of yet only a limited number of regions are actually working with the chain.
- The migrant organizations and NGOs developed various different products and activities aimed at ending harmful traditional practices. The most work has been done in the field of education and encouraging discussion and debate on taboos. Unfortunately, the relevant government policy was terminated too soon. As a result, many projects have been phased off, even though the programme hasn't had the chance to sufficiently integrate and embed in the regular care organizations.
- A great deal has been achieved and improved in 10 years in the field of tackling harmful traditional practices like honour related violence. However, the cut-off of state supervision and state funding seems to have come too early. "Two steps forward, one step back."
- Many migrants (and migrant organizations) refuse to let it slip away. They are actively and positively looking for ways to continue their work and seek exposure for their message. They are fighting for the integration of their offer in the relevant organizations in the field and of their message in migrant communities.

## APPENDICES

### 1. Contact information respondents

#### **Stichting Kezban**

Postbus 198, 5000 AD TILBURG  
info@stichtingkezban.nl  
www.stichtingkezban.nl  
06-12507996

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## Other respondents

- **Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport**
- **Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom relations – Housing, Neighbourhoods and Integration**
- **Municipality of Delft**
- **National Knowledge Centre Honour related violence (LEC EGG - police)**

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