

# 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

SOCIETY WITHOUT VIOLENCE

*SINCE 2001*

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# ABOUT US

Society Without Violence is a women's rights defender organization widely recognized not only in Armenia, but also in the South Caucasus due to its advocacy work on national and regional levels. Since 2001 the organization primarily focuses its projects on educating and empowering young women, promoting gender equality, advocating for women's representation and participation in all levels of decision-making and peace-building processes, contributing to the elimination of gender-based stereotypes, discrimination and violence.

## **Our Mission**

is to promote women's active involvement in the socio-economic, political and public life of Armenia through education.

## **Our Vision**

is to have a society free of violence led by democratic values rooted in gender equality, a society where women/human rights are protected.

## **SWV has four main pillars:**

**Gender education** - One of the main objectives of SWV is to empower women and raise awareness on women's rights. SWV emphasizes the essential role of education in fulfilling this objective.

**Women in politics** - One of the important indicators of the establishment and consolidation of democracy is, among others, women's political participation in all levels of decision-making. Every person regardless of gender, has equal rights and should be provided with equal opportunities to participate in the political and civic life. SWV is working towards above indicated goal

**Anti discrimination** -SWV advocates for the establishment of an effective enforcement mechanisms and strategies for prevention of the violence, prosecution of the perpetrators and rehabilitation of the victims of domestic abuse.

**Women's economic emancipation** - Extensive research proves that there is a massive gender gap in political participation and employment opportunities between men and women. Therefore, the truest way to push women forward to economic emancipation is to economically empower them.

# ACHIEVEMENTS

**An Academic Gender Course and a Syllabus Brochure developed**

**8** advocacy documents prepared and sent to the respective governmental and legislative institutions

More than **20** local and international meetings and conferences

**Capacity building for staff members:**  
**3** documents prepared; advocacy strategy & action plan, fundraising plan, communication action plan

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Հասարակություն  
առանց բռնության ՀԿ, 2020



**Round table live discussion with the participation of legislative and CSO representatives**

More than **35,000** views of round table live discussions

**Online closed webinar with gender experts and 30 participants**

More than **600** viewers of online webinar

# GENDER COURSE

ENABLING ACCESSIBLE AND SUSTAINED GENDER EDUCATION IN ARMENIA(N)

Starting from 2019 SWV has been developing a comprehensive academic course on gender studies with the financial support of the Kvinna till Kvinna (KTK) Foundation, as well as in partnership with the Women's Solidarity Fund (WSF), UK, and Résolu. In the era of digital technologies the course will eventually be launched online. The academic course is designed for teachers/educators as well as for adults in continuing education and for all those interested parties who would like to enhance their academic knowledge on the concept of gender.

The course was designed by 6 feminist academic scholars and feminist activists (2 local and 4 international experts). International experts joined the project from Oxford and Cambridge, UK, and University of Canterbury School of Law, New Zealand. The academic gender course comprises of 6 module:

- Module 1: Gender and Sex
- Module 2: Gender Stereotypes
- Module 3: Gender in Armenian Culture
- Module 4: Gender Based Violence
- Module 5: Gender, Conflict & Peace
- Module 6: Gender and Media



In the final stage of the course design the syllabus has been developed. The syllabus covers short introductory paragraphs of each module: its aim, objectives, main concepts and bibliography. It is to be proudly noted that this academic gender course would be popular in its comprehensiveness that would be widely available for first of all teachers and all the interested parties.

During the state of emergency in Armenia due to Covid-19 SWV joined #StayHome, #Self-isolation, #Self-education campaigns and launched the series of "Enabling Accessible and Sustained Gender Education in Armenia(n)" posts. Taking the opportunity that by circumstances people were largely at home, had more free time and increased usage of online platforms, we adapted and published content of academic course via SWV social media pages to raise awareness on gender matters.



# ADVOCACY

Throughout 2020 SWV has observed and developed its comments and suggestions to the governmental and legislative institutions regarding the following documents.

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## **A package of**

recommendations developed on the state standards of general education, provided to the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport (MESCS) of RA.

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## **A package of**

recommendations developed on the state standards of "Social Science" subject provided to the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport (MESCS) of Republic of Armenia.

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## **A package of**

recommendations developed on the state standards of "Me and the Surrounding World" subject provided to the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport (MESCS) of Republic of Armenia.

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## **A package of**

recommendations developed on the state standards of "Armenian History" and "The World History" subjects provided to the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport (MESCS) of Republic of Armenia.

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## **A package of**

recommendations developed on the CEPA road map and action plan provided to the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport (MESCS) of Republic of Armenia.

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## **A package of**

recommendations developed on the draft law of audiovisual media services provided to the Standing Committee on Science, Education, Culture, Diaspora, Youth and Sport of NA of Republic of Armenia.

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## **A package of**

recommendations developed on the report SDG VNR provided to the government of RA .

## *Photo Contest*

# INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY: MARCH 8

In the scope of Women's International Day SWV announced photo contest. The submitted photos covered the following preselected topics; "Raise Awareness on Women Rights", "Equal Rights for Men and Women", and "The Consequences of Inequality".



The topics were designed to draw attention of the wider public to the tight connection between March 8 and rights of women breaking the stereotype of associating March 8 with beauty and merely celebration of women. The photo contest aimed at closely engaging participants thinking about suggested topics and using the potentiality of photography to find way of communicating their ideas.

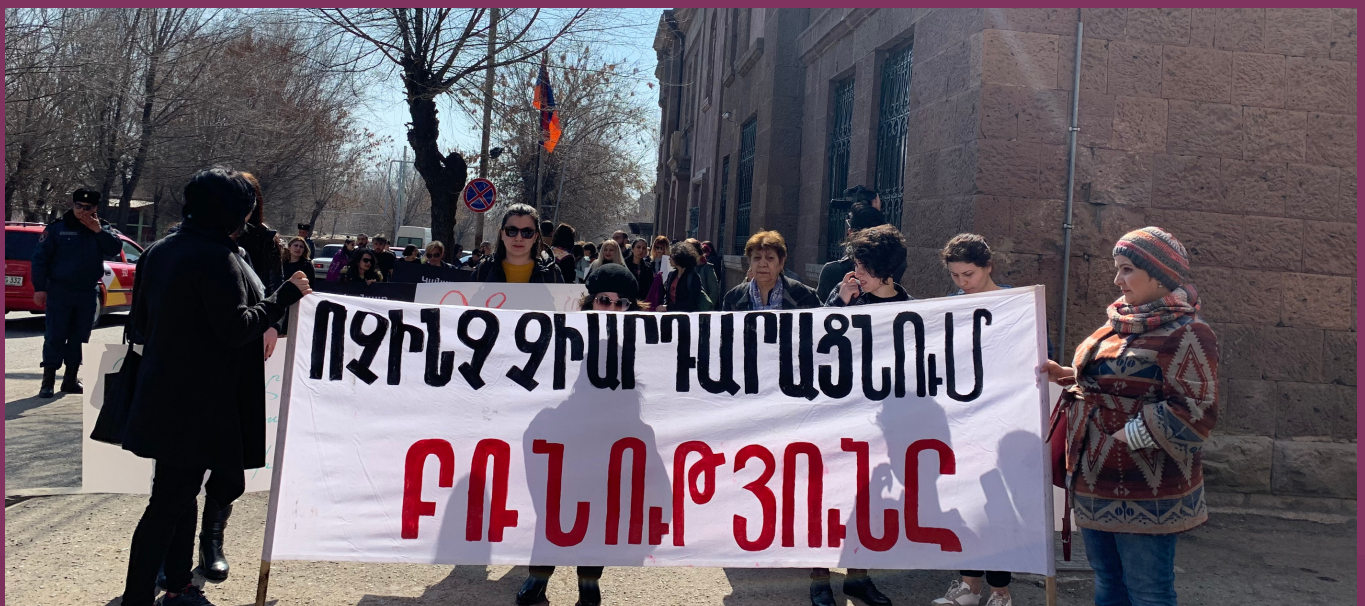
We selected 8 photos/photo stories which were published in the frames of "Art for Human Rights" social media campaign. The two winners were selected who also received financial reward. Besides the digital, offline exhibition was also planned but was postponed because of the COVID-19 outbreak.

In addition, "Women Day's Expo Yerevan" should have been taken place on March 8 in collaboration with United World College Dilijan students' Women's Day Armenia initiative which was also canceled because of state of emergency.

## Public Activism

# MARCH IN GYUMRI ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

On March 6, a man murdered 43 year-old woman and severely beat her 13 year-old girl. The case of domestic violence was recorded near the Women's Rights Day and Women's History Month. SWV with the members of Coalition to Stop Violence Against Women took part in the protest in Gyumri.



We aimed at raising awareness on the unacceptableness of domestic violence, emphasize the role of the community in preventing the abuse, and show the significance of functional mechanisms in legislative bodies.

Though facing the hate speech and the circulation of prevailing stereotypes, the march was able to draw huge attention to the issue of femicide. The protest was covered by 18 media agencies transmitting the key messages of the march.



JULY 27

# GENDER EQUALITY DAY

In 2010, Society Without Violence NGO declared July 27 as Gender Equality Day to contribute to the establishment of gender equality in Armenia. Since then, every year we organize extensive public activities aimed at awareness raising on gender and women's rights, educating and sensitizing the Armenian society with a vision of creating a reality where gender-based stereotypes, violence and discrimination are no longer accepted.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic all events dedicated to July 27 took place exclusively on online platforms.

10th ANNIVERSARY

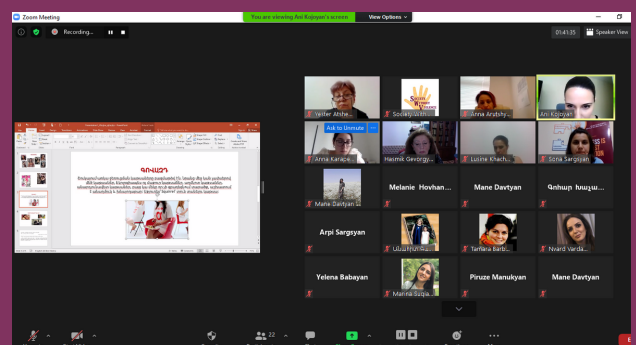


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ի՞նչ  
ազգային օրեր են  
նշվում  
աշխարհում

The leading experts in the field - Anna Arutshyan (Researcher at Oxford University, Co-Founder of SWV NGO), Hasmik Gevorgyan (Professor of Sociology at YSU, Gender Studies Expert) and Ani Kojoyan (Lecturer at YSU, Expert on Education and Gender Studies) interactively held "Gender Discourse: Stereotypes, Culture, Media" closed webinar. We have received much positive feedback, with the majority of participants showing keen interest in continuing to acquire knowledge with the provided materials by the experts.

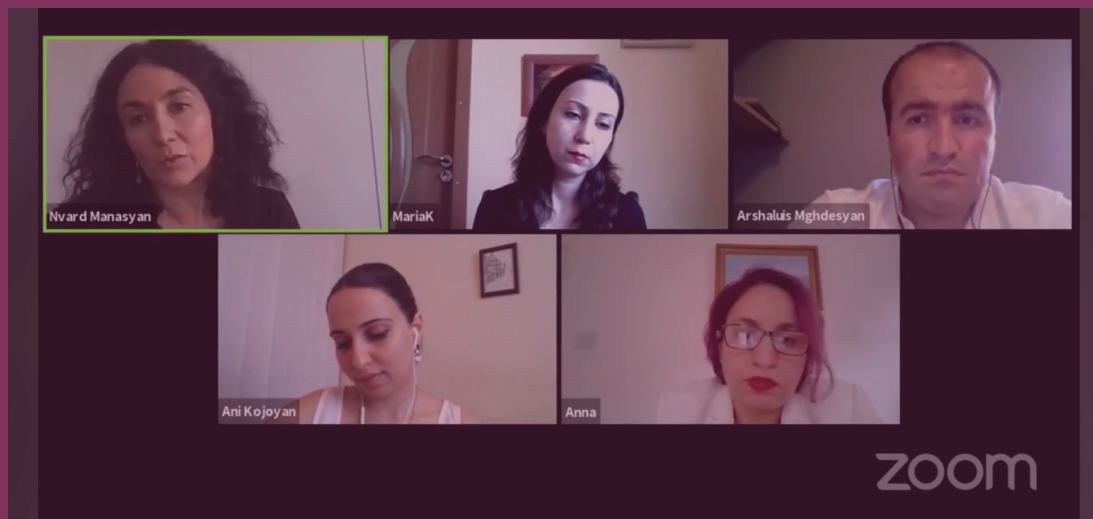
In the 10th anniversary of Gender Equality Day in Armenia, we have published interesting information and thoughts regarding the history, peculiarity, public perceptions, and goals of July 27. We presented important days that are recognized as national days in different countries.

On July 21 we provided space and opportunity for young women's self-education on gender studies topic with leading experts on gender.



*10th ANNIVERSARY**JULY 27*

# GENDER EQUALITY DAY



The series of events dedicated to Gender Equality Day was closed on July 27 with an online discussion on "Gender Equality through Education". The speakers of the discussion were: Maria Karapetyan (Member of the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia), Nvard Manasyan (UNICEF Armenia, Gender Equality Program Officer), Anna Arutshyan (Co-Founder of SWV NGO, Researcher at Oxford University), Ani Kojoyan (Lecturer at YSU, Expert on Education and Gender Studies).

In the midst of pandemic, taking into account the importance of education in reaching gender

equality SWV cooperated with one of the leading news agencies in Armenia to ensure the distribution of the discussed topic. The live discussion and various awareness raising posts dedicated to gender equality met hate speech and serious threats on online platforms. The comments blamed SWV for spreading the idea of gender equality which is purely European aiming at destroying the Armenian identity and traditions. Though we have faced the flow of hate speech, the positive feedback dominated. We are delighted to mention that the broadcast was distributed widely reaching over 35,000 views.

# CHALLENGES

## COVID-19

Since the beginning of 2020, the whole world was paralyzed because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Armenia entered complete lockdown because of rapid spread of the virus. The global pandemic deepened the vulnerabilities of women in Armenia. The different types of violence against women increased, gender poverty gap widened, the demand of unpaid care work grew, and the mental health devastation was recorded. The COVID-19 cases rose significantly in September conditioned by the war Armenia was forced to enter.

During the uncertainty of pandemic SWV demonstrated high flexibility in adapting everyday activities and actions to the created situation. SWV turned some of the events and projects online. During the total lockdown SWV managed to find ways to use multiple online platforms for the awareness raising purposes. Social media campaigns, informative materials, webinar, and discussions were held online ensuring the safety of the people meanwhile educating and empowering them.

## WAR

Starting from the early morning of 27 September, 2020, in the midst of COVID-19 pandemic, Azerbaijan began launching indiscriminate airstrikes (including UAV strikes) and artillery assaults (including internationally banned cluster weapons) against the Republic of Artsakh (Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh) along the entire line of the border.

The humanitarian crisis caused by the war led to severe consequences on women and children. Because of the war many women and children, have evacuated to Armenia, as it has been insecure to stay in the places of their residence, any longer. As a human rights defender organization SWV brought the attention of its international partners to speak up for the justice and rights of peaceful population living in Artsakh. Despite the silence of most of the human rights international organization community, some of our international partners did not stay indifferent by spreading our voice of taking action and by providing some support to the women and children. In parallel to this, SWV also responded to the needs of women and children by providing humanitarian aid to them.

# HUMANITARIAN AID

Society Without Violence NGO has been actively engaged in providing support to women, children and their families in response to humanitarian crises which occurred in Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh as a result of a recent full-fledged war starting from the early morning of 27 September, 2020.

With the partnership Coalition to Stop Violence Against Women (CSVAW) and UNFPA SWV has provided hygienic items and food for the displaced women and children.

Society Without Violence NGO organized "safe spaces" for women from Artsakh where they were able to gather, socialize, support each other, exchange experiences, therefore, to lay down the foundation for the resettlement network and consider their participation in the resettlement in the nearest future. For that purpose, the "safe spaces" event took place in the preselected 3 hotels located in Tsakhadzor city, Kotayk region where women with their children were hosted. At the moment of organized events 403 persons were hosted at the hotels (women with their children and in some cases with elderly parents and wounded husbands). As described by women, they felt cared and this event was a huge psychological support for them. In the frames of this event food intended for about 20 days was provided to these women.



More than 100 women have been provided by dignity kits. The support is planned to be provided in January-February, 2021.



With the support of Global Fund for Women, SWV will continue to support not only women displaced from Artsakh, but also those women and their children from Armenia who are hitting the poverty line as their main breadwinners were fighting in the frontline and are still there and/or have been injured or died.

Society Without Violence was founded in 2001. Since its establishment the organization has implemented projects that focused on empowering women, increasing public awareness and participation on various issues impacting women, promoting social activism, increasing female leadership skills and contributing to the formation of women human rights defenders' institutional system.

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