



DOVA

The Human Rights Assessment
Instrument on Domestic Violence

Women and children are often in great danger in the place where they should be safest: within their families. For many, 'home' is where they face a regime of terror and violence at the hands of somebody close to them – somebody they should be able to trust. Those victimized suffer physically and psychologically. They are unable to make their own decisions, voice their own opinions or protect themselves for fear of further repercussions. Their Human Rights are denied and their lives are stolen from them by the ever-present threat of violence. Societies and governments often do not recognize Domestic Violence as a Human Rights violation. The violence is viewed as a private matter, and minimal efforts are made to stop it.

Human rights and Domestic Violence

Every Human being is a rights holder under Human rights law. Being the victim of Domestic Violence can violate a whole range of individual rights held by the victim such as:

- Right to life
- Right to physical and mental integrity
- Right to security of person
- Right not to be tortured, or cruelly or inhumanly treated
- Right to a fair trial
- Right to equal access to justice
- Right to property
- Right to privacy
- Right to housing
- Right to education
- Right to food
- Right to health and health care

Human Rights-based approach to ending Domestic Violence

Working to end Domestic Violence can feel like an uphill battle. The violence is entrenched and it is not easy to affect change or improvement. The work can be strengthened by using the international Human Rights standards that States have agreed to uphold. Your government cannot make promises on the international stage and then try to forget them at home. Relying on the Human Right standards will enable you to hold

your government accountable if they do not practice what they promise. Addressing Domestic Violence as a Human Rights violation empowers women and other victims/survivors of Domestic Violence. As active rights-holders, they can claim the rights, their governments and States have committed themselves to. The State is obliged to prevent, eradicate and punish and is accountable if it fails to comply or uphold Human Rights.

DOVA

DOVA, the Human Rights Assessment Instrument on Domestic Violence provides a step by step method which helps you to assess if your country is complying with it's Human Rights and other international obligations.

How does it work?

The DOVA assessment process is divided in seven steps. Each step contains questions, examples and checklists to guide the data collection and analysis. The analysis results in a concrete set of recommendations for more effective law or policies that respect human rights. This information will be used to develop an action plan to lobby for policy reform and to raise awareness about the findings. A full assessment process can take three to six months.

DOVA IN SEVEN STEPS



Why use DOVA?

Using DOVA to analyse a problem helps to:

- Gain a better understanding of the situation;
- Make a direct link between a problem and relevant human rights issues;
- Assess the impact of the problem on the rights of all people affected;
- Build alliances with other stakeholders;
- Draw evidence-based conclusions about what the government can do to improve and meet its human rights obligations;
- Make an advocacy action plan;
- Increase the capacity of your organisation to a human rights framework.

Where to find DOVA?

DOVA (published December 2010) can be downloaded free of charge at:

www.humanrightsimpact.org

DOVA is available in English.

Online Resource centre

The Human Rights Impact Resource Centre provides access to instruments, reports and publications on human rights impact assessment from across the world. Users of DOVA share experiences and best practices on the site. See www.humanrightsimpact.org/DOVA

Support to users

DOVA can be used independently. However, people and NGOs may find doing a human rights assessment challenging. A range of workshops and other forms of support are available. Please contact us to discuss the possibilities.

Contact

For a printed copy of DOVA and/or information about support to users, please do not hesitate to contact *Rights4Change*

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The project partners:

- *Rights for Change*, the Netherlands
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