

"La Strada" Moldova Brief:

Full Name:	International Centre "LA STRADA"
Contacts:	Post Box 259, Chisinau MD-2012, Republic of Moldova Tel.: (00) 373-22 23-49-06 Fax: (00) 373 22 23-49-07 Email: office@lastrada.md URL: www.lastrada.md
Founded:	Registered on 23 august 2001 with the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Moldova
Legal status:	Public Association; non-for-profit organization Registration Certificate nr. 1009620003492 issued by the Ministry of Justice of the RM Public Utility Certificate MD 000453 issued at March 02, 2018 by the Ministry of Justice of the RM
Category of NGO:	National
Staff:	24 full time employees
Membership:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- National Committee to Combat Trafficking in Persons;- Inter-ministerial Coordination Council for Prevention of Domestic Violence;- National Coalition of NGOs "Life without violence"- National Alliance of NGOs for family and child social protection "Child & Family"- "La Strada" International Association;- GAATW – Global Alliance Against Trafficking in Women;- ECPAT – End Child Prostitution and Trafficking Network Associate member.
Programmes and Areas:	Issues Affecting Women Programme: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Trafficking in persons especially women;- Violence against women and domestic violence. Issues Affecting Children Programme: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Child online sexual exploitation and sexual abuse.

Our principles:

Our Vision

The International Center "La Strada" is a value-driven organization striving to build a society where human rights are respected, sensible to the issues affecting women and children and which contributes to emerging available favorable conditions for the protection of affected ones.

Our Mission

What is the perception of the International Center "La Strada"?

We exist and operate to ensure respect of the rights and legal interests of women and children in the RM to stay free from violence, at all levels – individual, legislative and executive. We do so, by applying a comprehensive change model to our work, through information and education, providing direct support and assistance, strengthening communities and development of policies.

What are the values of the organization?

- Respect for the human rights – we consider violence against women and children a grave violation of human rights;
- Respect for the beneficiaries' decision about all aspects of their lives and treatment with dignity;
- Transparency and responsibility.
- Teamwork, exigency and flexibility;

Who are the organization's beneficiaries?

Our beneficiaries are women vulnerable to violence or affected by domestic violence and sexual assault and children at risk to and affected by sexual exploitation and sexual abuse focusing on sexual crimes facilitated by ICT.

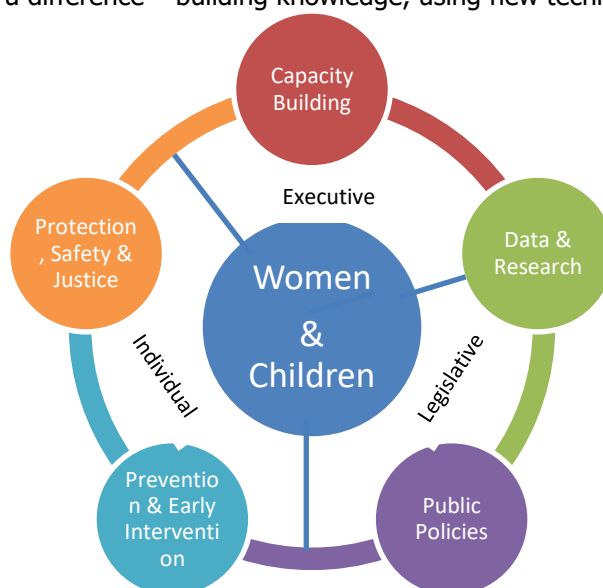
How does the International Center "La Strada" frame its work?

Our actions are embedded into *5 pillars* reflecting a systemic approach, starting from the grass root level to the issue of violence against women and children and, national and multi-sectorial cooperation:

- Prevention and early intervention,
- Protection, safety and justice,
- Capacity building,
- Public policies, and
- Data and research

While putting this approach in practice, we will always strive to ensure:

- working with others – co-operating, collaborating and communicating effectively;
- achieving results – transforming strategy into action;
- leadership – inspiring, motivating, communicating, influencing and creating;
- ensuring that voices of our beneficiaries are heard – engaging women and children in our actions, developing policies through children's and women's eyes;
- making a difference – building knowledge, using new techniques, responding to change.



Our history and the future we go for:

The International Center "La Strada" was founded in 2001 in the framework of the "La Strada" Program Prevention of Trafficking in Central and Eastern Europe". The Program was a result of the initiative of three NGOs from the Netherlands, Poland and the Czech Republic who developed the first "La Strada Programme - Prevention of the Trafficking of Women in Central and Eastern Europe" in September 1995. In the following years new partners from Ukraine and Bulgaria joined the Programme, followed by Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova and Macedonia. After having functioned for nine years as a joint Programme and network, International La Strada Association was officially established in October 2004. The International Centre "La Strada" is both a descendent of the La Strada Program and a founder of the International La Strada Association.

"La Strada" Moldova started exclusively with an **anti-trafficking project** comprising 6 staff and an annual budget of USD \$30 000. Throughout the years, La Strada Moldova developed its expertise and expanded its interventions in this area becoming both nationally and internationally recognized expert. We have opened and still operate the national Ant Trafficking Hot-Line, brought trafficking prevention and safe migration seminars in schools and jointly with IOM opened the shelter for trafficked persons and unfolded large national awareness campaigns. Our specialists lead the development process of the first National Action Plans to Fight Human Trafficking. Our lawyers, psychologists and social assistants participated in the writing and implementation of first professional training programs targeting social staff and police. As members of the national expert group, we participated in the writing of the Anti-trafficking Law. "La Strada" analysts provided expert support to the Government in conceptualizing and framing the National Referral Mechanism for the protection of trafficked persons and at-risk groups and more recently - the National Anti-trafficking Strategy¹.

Today, La Strada Moldova is a team of over 50 dedicated staff (personnel and active volunteers), running two complex Programmes tackling severe forms of violence against women and children and as never before strongly committed to continue to promote and defend the rights of women and children to stay free from violence. Our scopes steam from the needs of our beneficiaries and shortfalls of the state protection system while the activities are build on results achieved and lessons learnt and count on multistakeholder partnerships.

This year, "La Strada" marks 10 years of work in the area of **domestic violence prevention**. We found that this is a logic expansion of our scope of work as we learned that many women became vulnerable to trafficking in their attempt to escape from domestic violence and thus seeking financial independence by responding to a (false) job add abroad. We went to women prison and asked women about their needs at the time when they were suffering from domestic violence. "Someone to listen to me without judging..." and "If there was at least one to support me or tell me that I feel right about not admitting violence from my partner..." were mostly heard testimonies. Therefore, we launched The National Trust-Line for Women² and put together a women-safeguarding team of lawyers and social care staff. We went to schools to reach out to youngsters with a specially tailored course about building harmonious relationships and preventing early signs of violence³. Our lawyers and psychologists are co-trainers in the national training programs targeting front-line police and social workers on effective protection of women affected by domestic violence. More recently, we joint the national expert group called out by the Government to develop the Strategy for Prevention and Fight of Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and related Action Plan. This is directly connected to our work as members of the national delegation (from the RM side) participating in the process of Istanbul Convention writing and

¹ http://www.antitrafic.gov.md/public/files/Strategy_and_Plan_antitrafic_ENG_publicat.pdf

² http://lastrada.md/files/resources/4/Raport_TI_ANUAL_2017_f.pdf

³ http://lastrada.md/files/resources/4/14_09_LaStrada_SUMAR_final.pdf

contributing to the national Law introducing new tools and legal leverages for better protection of women against domestic violence.

The work we carried in the area of domestic violence prevention, inspired us to explore another very sensible issue and namely **sexual assault against women and girls**. During the last 4 years, La Strada Moldova unfolded multiple studies and analysis for better understanding of the judicial practices and norms that fuel the status quo in the area of sexual violence against women⁴. We also researched about the needs and expectations of the victims from the legal and social protection system⁵. The findings and recommendations have been extensively discussed with various specialized communities including legal and health systems stakeholders. We are putting these conclusions at the basis of strategic legal system transformations launched recently and namely: assisting the National Institute of Justice developing and institutionalization of a professional training module targeting prosecutors and judges; facilitating a wide legal review for editing a specialized Law; helping police to develop specialized course for front line specialists and testing the SART approach to cases of sexual assault.

In 2013, La Strada came up with thematic projects in the area of **child safety online**. This decision was grounded by multiple cases of child sexual exploitation (child sex trafficking and sex tourism) facilitated by ICT we have assisted upon request of specialized police. So first, we advocated for and contributed to introducing special legal leverages protecting children participating in criminal proceedings, promoted a special basic course on child friendly interview with the National Institute of Justice and promoted the development of relevant mechanisms and infrastructure. Yet, soon we released that much more is needed in on the prevention and education side. Thus, during the last 5 years, we have developed, launched and expended the first and only educational portal www.siguronline.md with dedicated pages for adolescents, parents and teachers. We have piloted safety online seminars for adolescents in schools and recently launched first methodological support materials for teachers. For three years in a row, "La Strada" unfolds national awareness campaigns to mark the Safer Internet Day. Our child safeguarding team functions 24/7 and teams up with specialized police for identification and legal protection of children who have suffered from sexual abuse online. We have advocated for and provided expertise to the Government in developing the first National Action Plan to promote child safety online, and conducted independent monitoring of Lanzarote Convention implementation by RM⁶ under attention of the Lanzarote Committee following national thematic Conference and its outcomes⁷.

"La Strada" is also proud to have become a trustfull partner and an expert whose observations and recommendations are requested and carefully considered with various national and international institutions and thematic platforms (GRETA, UPR, CEDAW, Lanzarote Commission, other).

⁴ http://lastrada.md/files/resources/3/EN_Sumar_LaStrada_corr.pdf

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http://lastrada.md/files/resources/3/Ensuring_access_of_victims_of_sexual_violence_to_adequate_legal_and_social_protection.pdf

⁶ http://lastrada.md/files/resources/3/raport_en_1.pdf

⁷ http://lastrada.md/files/resources/3/Concluzii_i_recomand_ri_Masa_Rotund_20_21_februarie.pdf

We have become a Strategy-based organization. The **2016-2020 Strategic Plan** of ours guides us in all our work – from planning and assessment to fundraising and organizational development. It reflects a systemic approach to the issues we address because we strongly believe that working on all levels - individual, policies and institutional – is necessary if sustainable positive change is sought. This approach of ours was in all times supported by data and research as we believe that all efforts could and should be measured while our beneficiaries and clients be given a voice.

The Strategic Plan 2016-2020⁸ develops on the three distinct areas of activity and reflects specific social phenomena existing in the Republic of Moldova, targeting 2 categories of beneficiaries under the following Programmes:

- ❖ Issues Affecting Women Programme:
 - Trafficking in persons especially women;
 - Violence against women and domestic violence.
- ❖ Issues Affecting Children Programme:
 - Child online sexual exploitation and sexual abuse.

Our actions, per Programme areas, are embedded into *5 pillars* reflecting a systemic approach, starting from the grass root level, to the issue of violence against women and children and, national and international cooperation:

- Prevention and early intervention,
- Protection, safety and justice,
- Capacity building,
- Public policies, and
- Data and research

Our Tools and Services:

Program: Issues Affecting Women

In order to instrument the goals set under the Strategic Plan 2016-2020, La Strada will leverage and engage the following in house knowledge, services and tools built with dedication over the last 17 years:

Area: *Trafficking in persons especially women*

- National Anti-trafficking Toll-Free Hot-Line 0 800 77777;
- Informational portal targeting at-risk groups www.migratiesigura.md;
- Experience in organizing and conducting awareness raising and informational campaigns for at-risk groups;
- Legal and public policy expertise;
- Research capacity using methodologies based on the external high standards;
- Educational programs for wide range of professional groups on counteracting THB;
- Experience in lobby & advocacy, elaboration of theoretical concepts/publications/normative acts;
- International training, research and legal expertise.
- International lobbying and advocacy campaigns in partnership with La Strada Association and GAATW.

Area: *Violence against women and domestic violence*

- National Toll-Free Trust-Line for women affected by DV 0 8008 8008;
- Professional training course and full set of materials for teachers on educating violence-free relationship among youth;
- Capacity building modules and toolkits aimed at frontline professionals in contact with women affected by DV;

⁸ http://lastrada.md/files/resources/3/LS_SP_2016_2020_final_summary.pdf

- Thematic library, stock of and experience in conceptualizing and unfolding unique dedicated awareness campaigns and materials to promote 0-tolerance to DV;
- Legal counseling and representation and Psychological Evaluation Reports development in support of women affected by DV in contact with the justice system;
- Legal and public policy expertise to the Government of the Republic of Moldova in streamlining women rights protection policies;
- Experience in lobby & advocacy, elaboration of theoretical concepts/publications;
- Data management system and analytical capacities;

Program: **Issues Affecting Children**

Area: ***Child online sexual exploitation and sexual abuse***

- Informational portal www.siguronline.md, for adolescents, parents and teachers;
- Capacity building programs for education and justice system professionals on child safety online, understanding risky behaviors, pro-active identification of and protection of children victims of sexual offenses during criminal investigations/court proceedings.
- Experience in conceptualizing and organizing national awareness campaigns and SID campaigns;
- Online HelpLine and online reporting mechanism for incidents of online violence and abuse;
- Child-friendly interviewing Room and trained interviewers for vulnerable victims-witnesses within justice system;
- Legal representation and Psychological Evaluation reports in support of victim-witness during criminal proceedings;
- Legal expertise to the Government of the RM in streamlining national child rights protection policies and specialized laws;
- Internal Data management system and good analytical capacities;