

## OBJECTIVE 02

To promote Human Rights and Democracy, involving citizens in policy dialogue, design and monitoring

# Overcome Violence Together

Damla Kodan and Sevgi Yiğit



Photo Credit: Damla Kodan

## THIS ACTION INVOLVED

**Youth-Centric Event on Flirting Violence:** Organized an engaging event for young individuals, creating a platform to discuss flirting violence and share experiences.

**Comprehensive Survey Among Turkish Cypriot Youth:** Conducted a detailed survey to gauge the prevalence and awareness of flirting violence, obtaining nuanced insights from the community's younger demographic.

**Strategic Social Media Campaign for Awareness:** Launched a targeted campaign to enhance public and duty-bearer awareness on flirting violence, leveraging various online platforms for effective dissemination.

## ABOUT DAMLA KODAN AND SEVGİ YİĞİT

Damla Kodan and Sevgi Yiğit are Turkish Cypriot activists who advocate for gender equality and equal rights, not only for women and men but also for those who have been victims of discrimination based on their sexual orientation, preferences, and identity.



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## STORY OF THE ACTION

As part of this effort, the activists organized a panel on December 21, 2019. Legal, psychology, and social service experts shared insights on gender-based violence, encompassing various forms and methods, with a specific focus on flirting violence. The second component involved conducting an online survey, supported by experts and volunteers, to assess the prevalence and awareness levels of flirting violence. The support from Grow Civic enabled the activists to obtain expertise in designing and developing the questionnaire and analyzing the data. Approximately 200 young Turkish Cypriots aged 18 to 25 participated in the survey. Results revealed that 40.5% of participants had experienced flirting violence, and some individuals began facing this violence before the age of 18, persisting into later years. The acts of violence varied, encompassing psychological, sexual, physical, and digital forms.



"Following the panel, I spoke with participants. One of the male participants told me how he had been exposed to psychological violence during his relationship (checking social media accounts, not allowing them to see people, etc.). But because he was a male, he hadn't told anyone about it, fearing that people's reaction would be for him to "man up". This helped us understand that gender roles do not only pressure women and girls but also men and boys, putting burdens on their shoulders. Another participant mentioned that he realized during the panel that he was actually exerting flirt violence. "This was how we were taught to love; by being jealous, controlling, owning," he told us. According to them, they were born into a very protective family with strict rules. They believed that partners applying violence were doing it to show love and protection. Just like in this example, the action allowed them to realize that what they had believed in for many years might not have been right after all."

Damla Kodan.

As a final activity, the action involved a social media campaign in which the data retrieved from the survey and the panel event were shared with the general public and the decision-makers.

## RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH

The advocacy component of the initiative encompassed three approaches. Firstly, there was a focus on increasing the knowledge and awareness of duty-bearers who were invited to the panel event. The second approach involved raising awareness among duty bearers and generating public pressure through the social media campaign. Lastly, the third approach aimed to equip them with an evidence-based report during one-on-one visits or meetings. The primary change sought by the initiative was for the "ministry of education" to take steps toward integrating information about flirting violence into the curriculum. Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the activists were unable to finalize the third activity.



## CROSSCUTTING MAINSTREAM TOPICS

Damla Kodan and Sevgi Yiğit led an initiative tackling gender-based violence by championing equality across sexual orientations, challenging traditional roles, and prioritizing youth. Through comprehensive surveys, the initiative sheds light on diverse dimensions of violence, spanning digital and psychological realms. Conducting targeted focus groups with vulnerable people was integral to their approach. This involved creating a safe space for open dialogue, enabling them to gain firsthand perspectives on the unique challenges faced by these groups regarding flirting violence. The insights gathered directly informed the initiative's strategies, ensuring they resonated with the diverse experiences of vulnerable individuals. This approach not only strengthened the inclusivity of their efforts but also contributed to crafting more tailored and effective solutions.

### Ways Grow Civic Support Contributed to the Action:

Grow Civic Support significantly bolstered the initiative by offering specialized assistance in survey design, data analysis, and project management. Grow Civic expertise facilitated the creation of a meticulously crafted survey instrument, optimizing its relevance and effectiveness. The hands-on support from Grow Civic empowered the activists to glean nuanced insights into the prevalence of flirting violence among young Turkish Cypriots, providing a robust foundation for informed advocacy and strategic efforts to address and mitigate gender-based violence within the community.



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