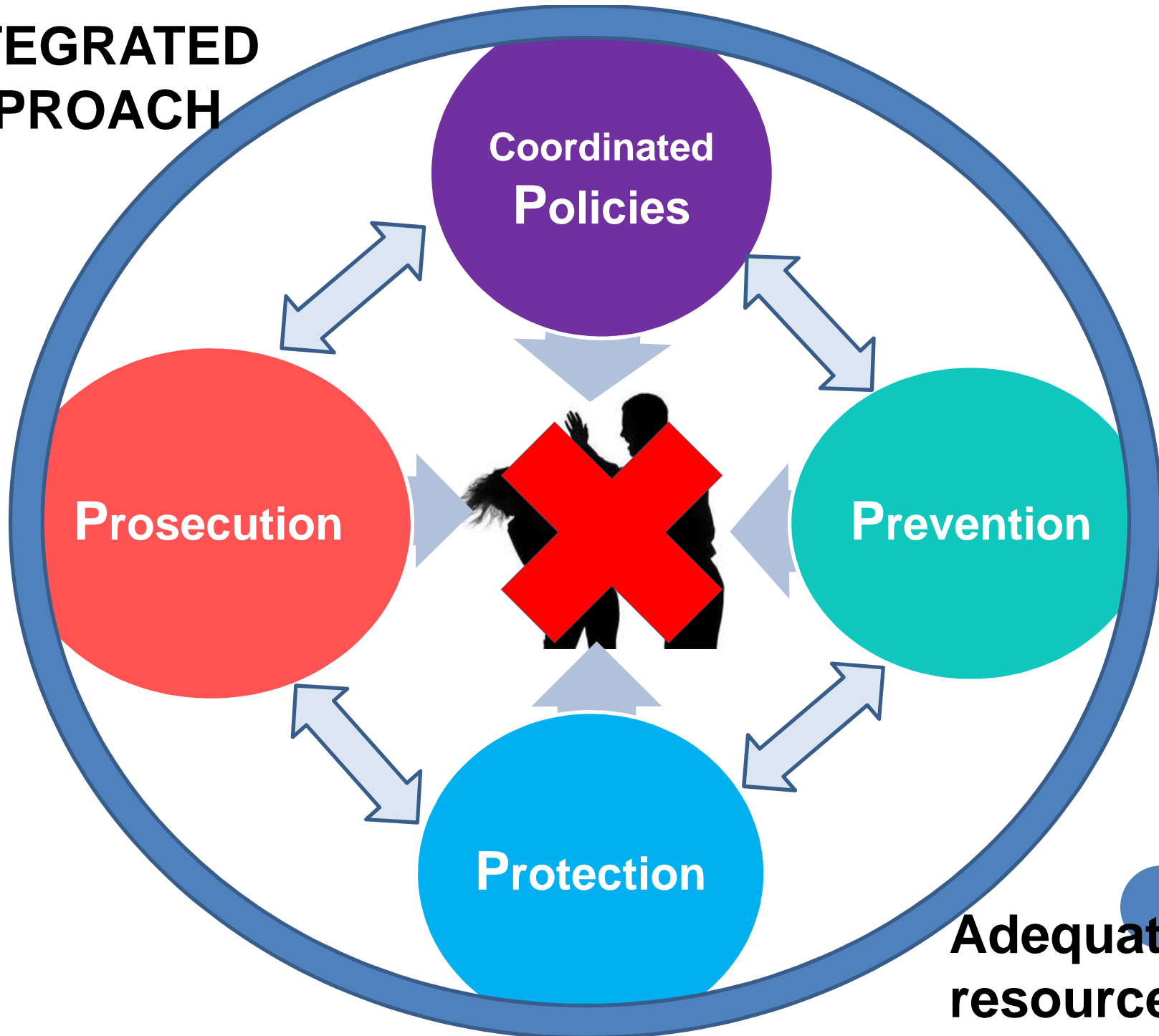


**THE ADDED VALUE OF THE ISTANBUL  
CONVENTION: PREVENTION, PROTECTION  
AND SUPPORT TO VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE**

**Hilary Fisher**

**Expert consultant, former member of CAHVIO  
and former Chair of the Council of Europe Task  
Force to Combat Violence against Women**

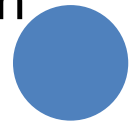
# INTEGRATED APPROACH



**Adequately  
resourced**

## PREVENTION

- Attitudes, prejudices, gender stereotypes and gender-biased customs or traditions influence patterns of behaviour that contribute to perpetuating violence.
- To eradicate violence these need to be challenge. The Convention calls for:
  - Promoting changes in attitudes and behaviour
  - Taking legislative and other measures
  - Taking account of needs of vulnerable people placing their human rights at the centre
  - Encouraging all, especially men and boys, to prevent it
  - Ensuring culture, custom or religion not a justification
  - Promoting programmes and activities that empower women



## CHANGING ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOURS

- Regular **awareness raising** programs and campaigns on violence working with non governmental organisations (NGOs) and civil society.
- Widespread information provision on preventative measures
- Promoting equality and mutual respect in interpersonal relationships through **education** in:
  - All schools with teaching materials for all levels of education
  - Informal educational settings e.g. community and sports facilities
- **Training** all relevant professionals in prevention and detection of violence, equality, survivors needs, prevention of re victimisation and multi-agency cooperation.
- Encourage media and private sector to set standards to prevent violence against women and promote respect.

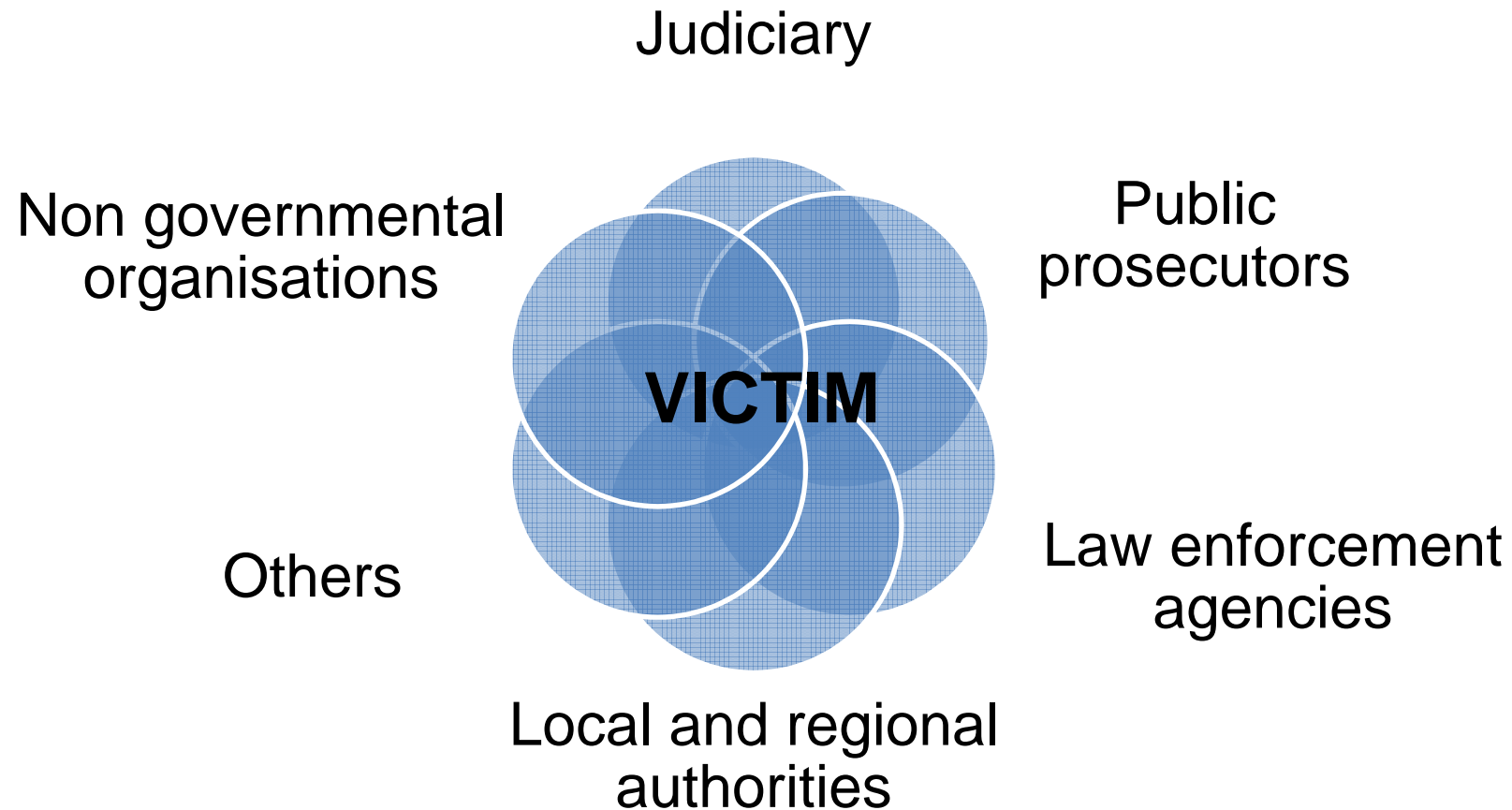


## WORKING WITH PERPETRATORS

- Establish or support **treatment programmes for perpetrators** of domestic violence and for sex offenders, based on best practice.
- Programmes need to:
  - Encourage perpetrators to take responsibility for their actions and examine their attitudes towards women
  - Be run by skilled facilitators
  - Work closely with women's support services, law enforcement agencies, child support agencies
- Safety and support for, and human rights of, survivors must remain primary concern.



# PROTECTION AND SUPPORT – IMMEDIATE AND LONG TERM



Co-operation between state agencies and with NGOs



## INFORMING AND SUPPORTING SURVIVORS

- Ensure survivors:
  - Are **informed** of available support services and how to get help in relevant languages
  - Have access to **general services** including: legal and psychological counselling, financial assistance and housing that address their needs
  - Have access to health and social services that are adequately resourced with trained professionals
  - Are referred to appropriate specialist services
  - Have information on and access to regional and international **complaints mechanisms**



## PROVIDING THE RIGHT SUPPORT

- Tailored services essential to meet survivors needs.
  - Specific groups of women have particular needs e.g. young women, migrant women, women with disabilities
  - Support needs differ depending on type of violence experienced, requiring **specialised services**, e.g.:
    - rape crises and sexual assault centres, women's centres, women's shelters for survivors of forced marriage
- Services need to be:
  - Immediate, short term and long term
  - Spread across the country
  - Accessible to all survivors and their children
  - Have skilled staffed and adequate funds
  - Able to empower survivors





## Types of services

- Telephone helplines
- Shelters
- Immediate medical support
- Collection of forensic medical evidence (rape)
- Psychological counselling
- Legal counselling
- Advocacy and outreach
- For children as survivors or witnesses

## Delivered by

- Women's organisations and support services provided by Local Authorities
- Specialised and experienced staff experts on gender violence
- And with inter-agency co-operation and co-ordination



## Specialist shelters

- Provide immediate access to safe, secure accommodation
- Provide necessary support, addressing health, safety, financial and other needs
- In sufficient numbers – recommended one family place per 10,000 inhabitants

## Helplines

- Provide immediate access to help and support - essential for survivors of violence
- Need to be:
  - Free of charge
  - Available across the country
  - 24/7 - round the clock
- Providing confidential information and counselling in a number of languages



## SUPPORT FOR SURVIVORS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE

- Survivors of sexual violence, including rape, require:
  - Sensitive response by well trained, specialised staff
  - Provision of immediate medical care, forensic examination and trauma support
  - Longer term psychological counselling
- Provision for sufficient easily accessible rape crisis or sexual referral centres for survivors.
  - CoE Task Force to Combat Violence against women and domestic violence recommended one centre per every 200,000 inhabitants



## PROTECTING CHILD WITNESSES

- Children in families where there is violence are aware of it and may also experience abuse. It causes significant harm.
- Protection and support services to survivors must take account of rights and needs of **children witnessing violence**.
- Address children's victimisation by providing psychosocial counselling tailored to children's needs.
- Action taken must be in the best interests of the child.



## BREAKING THE SILENCE AROUND VIOLENCE

- Protecting victims from further violence by encouraging **reporting** by:
  - Witnesses – friends, neighbours, family, colleagues if they believe violence has occurred or further acts of violence may happen
  - Professionals – lifting confidentiality rules for professionals when they believe serious violence has been committed and is likely to reoccur



## PROTECTION ORDERS

- Establishing **emergency barring orders** empowering authorities in situations of immediate danger to:
  - Remove perpetrators from the residence
  - Give priority to the safety of the victim
- Make available **restraining** or **protection orders** to victims for their immediate protection that are:
  - Easily accessible, low cost, for a specific period and can be issued *ex parte*
  - Available irrespective to other legal proceedings and can be introduced in future legal proceedings
- Critical that:
  - While the ban is in place victims can:
    - Receive specialist advice and support
    - Request longer-term protection
  - Any breaches of such orders are a crime

