

# Human rights-based work: National Network of Women's Shelters Netherlands



**Valente:** umbrella organization for safe shelter, counseling and participation

76 members, 3 founding networks:

- national network of women's shelter: oldest network, first women's shelter 1974
- network for homeless people's shelters
- network for protected living which offers assisted living for people with various psychological vulnerabilities

4 roles: **Lobby and advocacy** - Knowledge sharing – Craftmanship – Innovation

# Human rights = foundation of our work



## Mission statement:

Valente forms and supports partnerships that focus on people who have a vulnerable position in our society due to psychological or social circumstances; people (adults and children) with long-term psychological problems, people facing disruptive forms of domestic violence, people who have become homeless. They have a right to a safe and full position in our society, to which they can contribute meaningfully as human beings according to their own ability and based on their own choices. **That is a human right.**

Our members support people in vulnerable situations when necessary, encourage them to use their talents and take (back) control over their lives, and offer them a perspective in society.

4 roles: **Lobby and advocacy** - Knowledge sharing – Craftmanship – Innovation

# Human rights = foundation of our work



## Lobby and advocacy - Knowledge sharing – Craftmanship – Innovation

Strengthening human rights:

- reflected primarily in our **lobbying and advocacy role**
- also reflected in the **tools** and **methods** we develop with and for professionals

Our lobbying is informed by international conventions as well as by the needs of the people for whom we do our work



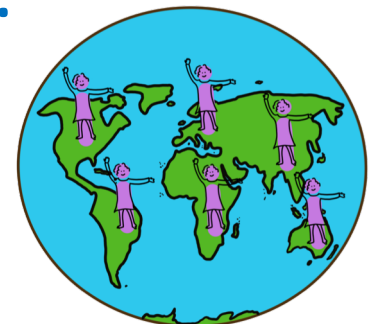
# National network of women's shelters - lobby

## International conventions - binding and guiding for our practice

- UN Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)
- Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (**Istanbul Convention**)
- International Convention on the Rights of the **Child**
- Council of Europe **Convention** on Action against **Trafficking** in **Human** Beings

## International networking: feeds lobby + source of knowledge and innovation:

- Women Against Violence Europe
- Global Network of Women's Shelters
- FEANTSA - working together to end homelessness in Europe



# National network of women's shelters – tools and methods



## Istanbul Convention as 'our ally':

- Gendersensitive approach (<https://www.valente.nl/kennisbank/documenten-gendersensitief-werken/>)
- Custody and visitation rights after IPV: framework for professionals on criteria for contact with fathers

Method for working with children within the shelters "Veerkracht" ("Resilience")

## National partnerships:

- National rapporteur on human trafficking and sexual violence against children
- National Network on CEDAW Convention
- Human Rights Board





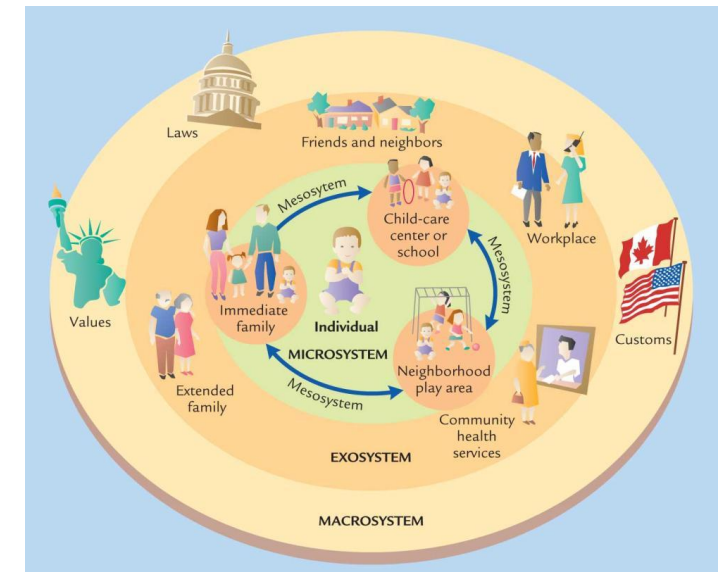
# Role of social workers

## Are all social workers aware of this framework...?

- 'Protocol based work' versus or 'from the heart'
- Dedication, commitment combined with expertise, skills = craftsmanship
- (unconscious) convictions and belief in possibilities and rights for every human being
- Professionals and/or activists and social change agents?

## In our daily work in the shelters:

- Individual support and counselling
- Family-relations and social network
- Community – Social norms
- Political and social context



--> **human rights perspective comes into play at every level**  
**"the personal is political!"**