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** – **Craftsmanship** – **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 – Craftsmanship – 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':**
- 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 = craftmanship
- (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!"