



**Vodafone programme for Women's Security
International conference presenting mobile emergency signalling technology
June 9, 2011**

Conference summary

Within the framework of its community responsibility program, Vodafone is also conscious of the security of women. An initiative involving mobile emergency signalling will be tested from July in co-operation with the NANE Women's Rights Association, the 11th District Police, iDATA Ltd. and Top Cop Security in order to prevent acts of domestic violence.

What has Vodafone got to do with this? **Gábor Intódy, representing Vodafone Hungary**, asked those at a conference entitled "Vodafone for Women's Security" at Hotel Marriott Budapest on June 9, 2011. Attendees had arrived expecting ideas for increasing the security of victims of intimate partner violence. Mr. Intódy described Vodafone Hungary's social responsibility policy with the help of the example in the case of the mining catastrophe in Chile in October 2010, where companies taking part in the rescue effort contributed mostly with their services - instead of with money - to aid the rescue of the 33 miners stranded deep below the Atacama desert and reunite them with their loved ones as soon as possible.

Vodafone intends to realise its social responsibility program using a similar approach, and to do so in preventing intimate partner violence too. Here Vodafone is not only offering technical and financial assistance, but is taking the initiative as well. According to statistics, one woman dies every week in Hungary due to battery; therefore, among other Vodafone social responsibility programmes, cases of violence against women come into the focus of attention as well.

Mobile-based emergency signalling technology is an effective tool for calling help to the most vulnerable persons. The technology has already been tested in Spain and Great Britain. A matchbox-sized device sends out an emergency signal through the push of a button, telling an operations centre the location of the user. Vodafone introduces this service in Hungary in cooperation with competent civil, state and private partners whose goal is also the reduction of serious harm for victim of domestic violence.

An understanding from civil organisations is as indispensable as the participation of the authorities and good technology. Training the dispatchers and officers, database management, the development of localization and mobile communication technologies, building effective communications between the partners during the provision of the service all require professional service providers. Vodafone searched the NGO and the private sector for partners, and found excellent partners in NANE ("Women for women against violence") Association, the 11th district police, Top Cop Security Plc. and iData IT Engineering Co for carrying out the various tasks in the testing phase.

In an initiative involving many partners it is important to consider the Spanish and British experiences so that these can be incorporated into the Hungarian system.

Julián Andújar Pérez, representing the Spanish Red Cross, shared the Spanish experiences about the tele-assistance programme that has been in service on the Iberian Peninsula for 20 years, and has incorporated the latest technologies since 2002.

The TECSOS Foundation was created by the Red Cross and Vodafone Spain almost ten years ago. Its objective is to offer assistance to the most vulnerable via technological innovations; therefore not only

women in danger of intimate partnership violence but also the elderly and the disabled can take advantage of this emergency device.

Tele-assistance has long been in use as a home service, functioning as a 24-hour help-line. Customer service reacts to a signal sent by the push button device and thus assure the security of about 500,000 persons free of charge - but only within the home.

With the spread of mobile communication, the need for out-of-home protection presented itself in the new millennium. TECSOS worked hard to create **mobile tele-assistance** from 2002-2004. Development of the localization technology presented the main problem, and that was solved by the GPS (Global Positioning System) navigation system.

Mobile assistance was introduced in Spain in three phases. First the amalgamation of home and mobile devices was tested. Then came social testing, in which procedures and the process of emergency signalling were put through the test, users were trained to use the new device and the devices were also changed a number of times. For example, the original red push buttons on the emergency device were changed to black for domestic violence victims due to the recognition that, in the case of an attack, the conspicuous colour could betray the emergency signal and place the victim in even greater danger.

The third phase involved a pilot project with 350 users testing the mobile emergency signalling. It was a great success, but for the service to become available to every applicant, the contribution of the Spanish state was indispensable, and in 2005 a government subsidy was awarded to the Red Cross, said Pérez.

The now six-year-old service has been used by 14,475 people in Spain and the dispatch service handles about 100,000 calls - not all of them emergencies - every year. According to the Spanish practice, mobile tele-assistance has three functions. When a cry for help comes in the case of an emergency, the dispatcher gets in touch with the police or calls the ambulance. But those in need can also use the device to request counselling and psychological assistance, through which the lives of distressed, lonely or suicidal persons can be saved. The third function is the so-called follow-up call, when the centre calls on the users and inquires after their health. This latter service plays a great role in consolidating a sense of security in the user, and strengthens confidence in the service.

The physical device in Spain is somewhat different from a mobile phone. If a victim of domestic violence applies for it, the device can be obtained if they meet two criteria: the person must have a permanent home and has to produce a valid court exclusion order against the batterer at the customer service of TECSOS.

Pérez explained that thanks to continuous innovation, emergency calls can now be traced with relative precision even if they originate in a building where GPS does not function. The victim can be pinpointed anywhere in Spain and help can be dispatched even far from the caller's home, since when the emergency signal reaches the Madrid centre, after pinpointing the location the dispatcher informs the competent local authorities in the area about the emergency.

The next objective of tele-assistance is to develop emergency signal software for mobile phones other than a certain model of Nokia in order to make the emergency mobile system that has already saved lives in many cases simpler and more convenient.

The UK experience differs somewhat from that in Spain, as in Britain they have just completed the testing phase. **John Liversidge, recently retired Chief Superintendent of Crime Prevention at Thames Valley Police**, shared his professional experience of long years and highlighted the psychological background of domestic violence.

According to Mr. Liversidge, one in every four women in Britain becomes victim of intimate partnership violence - sometimes in its non-physical form - and two such women fall victim to murder every week. Another dumbfounding piece of statistics cited by the British expert was that the first complaint submitted to the police by the victim is usually preceded by 30-35 counts of aggression. The intervening period while battling the dilemma over whether to make a complaint can span years, even

decades, during which the victim goes through various stages such as shame, fear and an inability to take decisions.

In 2010, 11,000 complaints were filed with the police in Britain. The police recognise that these cases must be handled as a higher priority and that the training of police staff also constitutes an important part of prevention and intervention. In Britain, a personalised security regime is drawn up for every single victim, safe houses are put at their disposal, specialised courts, attorneys and defence lawyers protect the women on the legal side and, alongside home emergency units already available, mobile emergency signalling will be introduced with the support of Vodafone, hopefully in the near future.

Mr. Liversidge asserted that this system will not only improve the victims' quality of life, but considerable public expenses can also be saved since the costs related to solving a single case of domestic violence murder can amount to £1.5 million while the introduction of the TECSOS devices would cost only £50,000 per person.

Györgyi Tóth, chairperson of NANE, drew attention to the same conclusions when describing the situation in Hungary and speaking about the damaging consequences of domestic violence on society as a whole. According to Ms. Tóth, this type of aggression, mostly taking place within the walls of the home and often considered a private affair, is indeed a public matter. It places great burdens on healthcare services, the victims' ability to work is endangered when their physical and mental health suffers, social care resources are wasted, therefore it causes considerable economic losses - not to mention the psychological burden, pain and fear suffered by the women and the children of the families as a consequence of violence.

The mission of NANE is not limited to supporting victims, but it also acts as an intermediary between victims and state organisations. In the **Vodafone Programme for Women's Security**, it represents the victims; it knows their stories and background. The objective is to restore a sense of security to the victims and to return control over their own lives. According to Ms. Tóth, the technical conditions are in place but the legal environment still impedes the actions of the authorities and the justice system in particular often hinders work to prevent domestic violence.

Police Lieutenant Erika Katona (Crime Prevention Unit, Budapest Police Headquarters) stated that while a couple of decades ago the ability of the police to act was limited, legislation has changed positively since 2002, thereby giving the police increased scope for action.

According to legislation in force, the competent court should issue an exclusion order within 72 hours in the case of domestic violence and, since 2009, police are entitled to intervene even if no criminal offence is committed. The regulations covering police actions stipulate that officers must attend the scene immediately after a complaint is received and, according to the Constitution, a case of domestic violence overrides the protection of privacy.

Lt. Katona said that this problem coming into the limelight necessitated action of a social dimension, but drew attention to the fact that many cases of domestic violence still go undetected. Therefore, a special emphasis must be placed on open communication and on a problem-solving attitude, necessitating training to allow for correct legal and professional action by the police.

NANE Association, as responsible for the methodological co-ordination of the project, will provide practice-oriented specialist training to officers of 11th District Police and the staff of **Top Cop Security Plc.** who will run the Operations Centre. The security firm has been in the business of remote inspection for 13 years and offers its own dispatcher service for the mobile emergency signalling program. **iData IT Engineering Co.** will contribute as the operator of the mobile emergency signalling solution. Managing Director Lajos Szabó stresses that the social field was not new for the company, since it had already assisted the elderly and autistic children with a similar service.

The pilot project will kick off after the necessary training in July, with 30 endangered women to be issued with devices for a period of one year. It is evident already in the preparatory phase that an even closer cooperation between the NGOs protecting the rights of assaulted/battered women and children, on the one hand, and the police on the other, is developing. Even the process of collecting national experiences gives opportunities for prevention, and for saving or improving lives.