A multi-agency approach in the development of anti-violence policies in Italy: national and local perspectives

Maura Misiti, Pietro Demurtas, Alice Mauri, Marta Pietrobelli, Angela M. Toffanin
IRPPS-CNR (Italy)

ECDV - European Conference on Domestic Violence
Oslo, 3 September 2019
Multi-agency: an approach

Policies’ development (national, regional and local levels)

Effective, comprehensive and co-ordinated policies encompassing all relevant measures to prevent and combat VAW, offering a holistic response to VAW (IC, Art. 7 – par. 1)

Support-services’ development in the framework of local networks

Co-ordinated measures implemented by way of effective co-operation among all relevant actors playing a role in preventing and combating VAW (IC: Article 7, par. 2)
To what extent has a multi-agency approach been adopted in the development of VAW policies in Italy? A first assessment

**Activism level**
- The role of women’s and feminist movements in the development of policies and practices in the country

**Institutional level**
- Strategic National Plan (2017-2020)
- Agreement on women’s centres & shelters standards (2014)
- Guidelines on sexual violence for the health sector (2017)

**Territorial networks level**
- Evidence from on-going VIVA project
The role of women and feminist movements in Italy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THE ITALIAN ROUTE OF WOMEN'S ACHIEVEMENTS</th>
<th>ROLE AND PRACTICES OF FEMINIST MOVEMENTS</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL</td>
<td>Late sixties and all along the '70s: mobilization, reflections and publications by Italian feminist movements on reproductive health, sexuality, vaw and gender roles</td>
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<tr>
<td>1970: Divorce Law, confirmed by referendum in 1974</td>
<td>Feminist and women movements' mobilization after Circeo Massacre</td>
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<td>Family law is reformed</td>
<td>Mobilizations against VAW in Rome (Unione Donne Italiane) and all over the country</td>
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<td>Abortion Law, confirmed by referendum in 1981</td>
<td>1979</td>
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<td>Honour crime is abolished</td>
<td>Presentation of the Citizens Initiative Law against sexual violence (1996)</td>
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<td>National law against sexual violence</td>
<td>1996</td>
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<td>First survey on sexual violence Italian National Institute of statistic (ISTAT)</td>
<td>21 anti-violence centres all over the country</td>
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<td>Urban Project: “Anti-violence network among the cities”</td>
<td>First national conference of D.i.Re.network anti-violence women's centres</td>
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<td>Law against violence within family relationships</td>
<td>1997</td>
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<td>Setting up the national helpline 1522</td>
<td>1998</td>
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<td>First national survey on VAW (ISTAT)</td>
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<td>National Law on stalking</td>
<td>2000</td>
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<td>First National Plan against violence and stalking</td>
<td>Over 80 anti-violence centres all over the country</td>
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<td>Italy ratifies the Istanbul Convention and Law on Femicide</td>
<td>2001</td>
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<td>National minimum standards for of women's centres and shelters</td>
<td>2006</td>
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<td>National Extraordinary Action Plan on sexual and gender-based violence</td>
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<tr>
<td>National Strategic Plan on male violence against women</td>
<td>2010</td>
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<tr>
<td>VIiVa project + ISTAT research on specialist support services</td>
<td>2011</td>
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<td>185 anti-violence centres all over the country</td>
<td>Publication of CEDAW shadow report</td>
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<td>First mobilization against VAW of “Non una di meno”</td>
<td>2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>Publication of “Non una di meno” anti-violence Plan CEDAW shadow report (Lavori in corso network)</td>
<td>2014</td>
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<td>338 anti-violence centres all over the country</td>
<td>2015</td>
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<td>Publication of GREVIO shadow report</td>
<td>2016</td>
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<td>2017</td>
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Co-ordinated and multi-agency approach - Institutional level

- Italian National Strategic Plan (2017-2020)
- Guidelines on sexual violence for the health sector (2017)
- Italian Agreement on women’s centres and shelters standards (2014)

Multi-agency approach

Health local services and hospitals have to develop protocols with local networks to protect women

Women’s centres and shelters have to participate in local networks (art. 7)
Italian National Strategies on VAW 2010-2020

National Plan against violence and stalking (2010)


National Strategic Plan on male violence against women 2017-2020
23 November 2017

- First Plan drafted following a participative methodology: stakeholders (national, regional and local administrations), relevant NGOs, women's centres and shelters, labour unions, ISTAT and CNR
- It defines the whole strategy to prevent and combat male violence against women and domestic violence in Italy, in line with the Istanbul Convention
2017-2020 Plan – what is new

• Structural interventions:
  ✓ Mapping all specialist and general services operating at national level
  ✓ Monitoring and assessment alongside the implementation
  ✓ From strategic to operational: an institutional involvement

• Recognition of women’s centres and shelters’ role

• Recognition of multi-agency approach in supporting and protecting women victims through local networks
2017-2020 NAP and the governance through local networks

The level of local governance lies on the "territorial anti-violence networks":

- To guarantee **operational connection** and communication between general and specialist services working in the field of prevention, protection and fight male VAW
- To allow for an **effective protection** of female victims of violence, together with their children
- Respecting their autonomous decisions

Anti-violence centres, shelters, local social and healthcare services/system, police, local municipalities, law enforcement and judiciary system, labour services
Presence of actors, per area of interventions, in the 192 anti-violence territorial networks mapped in 2018

ViVa mapping 2018
2017-2020 NAP & ViVa project: Monitoring, Evaluation and Analysis of actions to combat VAW

2 areas of work

4 objectives

6 working package

1° WORK AREA: **Mapping** support services for women victims of violence and Treatment programmes for Perpetrators

2° WORK AREA: **Supporting policies** to prevent and fight VAW, through: 
- ex-ante and in itinere analyses of the national plan on VAW (2017–2020)
- ex post evaluation of the previous national plan (2015–17)
Territorial anti-violence networks in Italy: draft data from on-going ViVa project

Quantitative study

- 338 anti-violence centres (CNR - Istat survey, 2017)
- 54 treatment programs for perpetrators (CNR survey, 2017)
- 192 territorial anti-violence networks mapped (CNR survey, 2018)

Qualitative study (on-going)

- In-depth interviews with 35 anti-violence centres, 5 shelters, 6 perpetrators programmes
- 5 focus groups with general services

Documents analysis (on-going)

- Network’s protocols collected through anti-violence centers
Involvement of anti-violence centres in territorial networks

- Antiviolence centres in networks coordinated by public territorial institution: 66.1%
- Antiviolence centres in networks coordinated by other subjects: 12.3%
- Antiviolence centres which DO NOT participate to antiviolence networks: 21.6%

- Antiviolence centres collaborating with other antiviolence centres or shelters: 89.9%
- Antiviolence centres DO NOT collaborate with other antiviolence centres or shelters: 10.1%
Territorial anti-violence networks in the experience of antiviolence centres

“The network started informally in 2011, there was a responsive territory. Then it got formalized in 2014, thanks to a regional project. For us it is rather easy to speak with institutions, no matter what the political party is. It is true that bureaucracy has complex and long procedures, but our collaboration is positive.

At the operative level, we are the coordinators. The municipality has a political role. The network, for us, is a system of mutual support both for the women and for the actors involved. I really feel that the centre is not by itself, but it is part of a system of services that works.” Anti-violence women’s centre North-A, 2019
Territorial anti-violence networks in Italy: challenges emerging from data

“Communications between technical and political levels sometimes do not coincide: it is challenging to bring content from the technical to the political level. There is a gap, which could be draining. Moreover, sometimes we see that there is inadequate communication within administrations: operators risk of not knowing procedures properly”. Anti-violence centre North B, 2019.

“Being part of a local network is helpful (…) If the networks aims at offering opportunities to women, sharing good practices is meaningful. However, if we just sign protocols that are too strict, bureaucratization is a risk. Today, compared to the past, there is a more bureaucratic logic, which is too top down. The network and the resources are at the core of the intervention: women come after.” Anti-violence centre North C, 2019
Preliminary conclusions

• A multi agency approach resulted crucial both in the definition and in the implementation of a NAP, within different levels of administrations and local networks

• Different administrations play different roles in the development of anti-violence policies in the country

• The analysis shows the specific characteristics of local networks in Italy and highlights strengths and weaknesses of a multi-agency and participatory approach
Strengths of a multi-agency approach

Policies’ development (national, regional and local levels)

- Recognition of women’s centres role (at the national, regional and local levels)
- Feminist contributions to VAW policies, mainstreaming a gender approach, with women at the core of interventions
- Different administrations sharing commitments in protecting and supporting women

Support-services’ development through local networks

- Holistic response to women subjected to violence
- Anti-violence centres call institutions to their roles and responsibilities
- Different institutions may speak the “same language”
- Women re-victimization can be avoided
- Formalised networks through protocols may avoid gaps in the systems, procedures and operators turn-over
Weaknesses/challenges of a multi-agency approach (1)

Policies’ development (national, regional and local levels)

• Not all institutions/agencies may share the same view on VAW

• The operationalization of the NAP is a slow and complex process (*funding, governance, changes in administrations*)
Weaknesses/challenges of a multi-agency approach (2)

- Difficulties in coordinating different bodies/institutions
- Risk of lack of operationalization of local networks’ agreements
- Risk of excessive bureaucratization: women’s needs and choices may not be at the centre of the multi-agency approach
- Political and operational levels within local networks may clash on timing, approaches and procedures
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Thank you!

progetto.viva@irpps.cnr.it