

ITALIAN PERPETRATORS PROGRAMMES. Defining GBV from pro-feminist and non- feminist perspectives



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PROGETTO DI MONITORAGGIO,
VALUTAZIONE E ANALISI
DEGLI INTERVENTI DI PREVENZIONE
E CONTRASTO ALLA VIOLENZA
CONTRO LE DONNE



Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche
Istituto di Ricerche sulla Popolazione
e le Politiche Sociali



Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri
Dipartimento per le Pari Opportunità



Monitoring, Evaluation and Analysis of interventions to prevent and combat VAW (2017 – 2020)

2
areas of
work

1° WORK AREA: **Mapping** support services for women victims of violence (Women's Centres and Shelters, Territorial Anti-Violence Networks) and Treatment programmes for Perpetrators

4
objectives



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)

6
working
package





Outline

1. Framing the gendered perspective in international guidelines and standards for PP
2. Italy: overview on perpetrator programmes
3. Focus on two case studies
4. Analysis of approaches and operative practices
5. Discussion



Gender approach

(international guidelines)

Programmes should still work from a gender analysis understanding of violence against women.

(COE Minimum Standards, 2008)

Programmes should incorporate a gendered perspective, i.e. an understanding of the relationships of violence with structural inequalities and power relations between men and women and with the underlying historical and social constructions of masculinity and femininity. Further, they need a critical awareness of the intersections of gender with other social locations such as nationality, race, class, age, physical or mental ability, or others.

(WWP Guidelines, 2018)



The ecological model

(international guidelines)

Programmes should use an ecological model to understand the complexity and different paths that may lead up to violence and how perpetration factors may be disrupted at the societal, institutional, community and individual levels

(Hester and Lilley, 2014)

Programmes should use an ecological model to understand the complex factors and pathways that enable and influence perpetrators' use of abuse. This includes, but is not necessarily limited to:

- society (macro) – e.g. impunity, **devaluing women, masculinity**, children's status, media violence;
- institutions (meso) – entitlement, failed sanctions, discrimination, **“honour” codes**, poverty;
- family/peers/community (micro) - peer approval, stereotypes, myths, rewards, opportunity, family stress, obedience code;
- individuals (ontological) – **masculine sale**, emotional and cognitive deficits, growing up in families unable to provide basic care, depersonalised sex, stimulus abuse, early trauma.

(WWP Guidelines, 2018)



Perpetrator programmes in Italy: a recent history

HISTORICAL DELAY

(Le Nove, 2014; 2017)

- First programmes ran during the first decade of 2000
- 29 programmes at the **end of 2014**
- 44 treatment programmes at the **beginning of 2017**

The first programmes (except the CAM of Florence) were **not** usually triggered by women's or feminist movements and did **not** share the same approach



The institutional and legislative context

- Law n.119/2013 (so called Law on Femicide)
- Extraordinary Action Plan against sexual and gender-based violence (2015-2017)
- Strategic Plan to combat violence against women (2017-2020)

It provides new resources to fund treatment programs, emphasizes the need of their integration within local anti-violence networks and highlights the importance of creating a national intervention protocol based on the most effective models of treatment for incarcerated perpetrators.

WEAKNESS: In Italy, National Government and the Regional Administrations have not yet defined Minimum Standards to evaluate PP that apply for funding.



Guidelines of RELIVE (2014)

(Italian Network of Perpetrators Programmes)

GENDER PERSPECTIVE: The theoretical framework of programmes should include an enhancement of feminist elaboration and a recognition of the existence of an unequal power in gender dynamics and relationships, related to masculinity and femininity, which have relevance at individual, social, cultural, professional, religious and political level

ECOLOGICAL MODEL: Violence has to be considered a phenomenon deriving from the interweaving of a multiplicity of factors at an individual, relational, social and cultural level. For this reason it is necessary to develop an integrated theoretical model, which considers all these aspects in an interconnected way



Mapping of Anti-Violence Centers and Perpetrator Programmes

Anti-Violence Centres N=338



Perpetrator Programmes N=54





The gender perspective within the Italian Perpetrators Programmes

Approaches (N, %)

Approaches*	n	%
Cultural	21	40.4
Socio/Psico-educational	32	61.5
Psychotherapeutic	45	86.5
Others	13	25.0

* More than one option could be ticked

Goals of the Italian Programmes (%)





Two Case Studies

Pro-feminist Program

- Activities started in 2009
- N° of affiliated Centres: 5
- Position in Relive: founder member
- Socio/psico-educational approach

Non-feminist Program

- Activities started in 2009
- N° of affiliated Centres: 6
- Position in Relive: founder member
- Criminologic and clinical approach



Relive: negotiating self-definitions

Pro-feminist Program

We wanted to have a birthright with respect to maintaining these feminist principles, gender perspective, which already in the network becomes more difficult, because there are consolidated centers, have different histories, have traditions more or less strong from this point of view and how do you verify what they say on paper with respect to how they really act ...?

Non-feminist Program

Initially, it was proposed that the first point of the guidelines should be the reference to feminist principles[...] Well, we have brought our own criminological experiences and in the end there is no such clear statement, not so openly feminist [...] **we've mediated a lot on these points.**

It is called "Relive - Relationships free from violence", which is actually a broader concept



Genealogy

Pro-feminist Program

We focused on the idea of **male change**, as part of the white ribbon campaign. We started more on the normal side of male violence, in line with a **cultural and social** project of change, with a gender reading, with a feminist reading of male change and violence.

Non-feminist Program

Initially, the mission of the CIPM was to spread on the territory **restorative justice practices, penal mediation and interventions centered on the tripartite victim, author and community.**



Who is the author of violence?

Pro-feminist Program

They are **normal men**, who act violence with their partners but - and this we suspected but we did not know - that on the one hand minimize and justify, but on the other hand have the perception that what they are doing is wrong.

Non-feminist Program

...about this author thing once I was told, "**Why don't you say man?**" Because I'm a criminologist: 9 out of 10 are men, maybe 1 is either a woman or a homosexual, it's true, those are the statistics. it's clear that they are men in 90% of the times.

We also deal with intimate relationships in crisis and that **are for example related to homosexuality, where there is not so much gender discourse**, there is a discourse of quality of the relationship.



Methodology

Pro-feminist Program

In all the documents we refer to there is the determining element of feminist perspective, in which there is the centrality of the victim.

This methodology overwhelms the classic paradigms of counselling and care. In contrast to the normal therapeutic relationship, in which the person seeking help is protected, we chose to protect the partner.

It is revolutionary: with a feminist and gender approach, you cannot have a clinical psychological approach without having filtered it through an analysis of power relations, gender inequalities, etc.

Non-feminist Program

We deal with authors because we want to avoid victims. We are interested in the quality of life of the author because he no longer hurts anyone.

Our approach is multidimensional. The first dimension is that of the **forced factor of the law**, to treat a person, even if this person has no desire. This approach is different from the clinical one, where the patient goes to the service because he wants to go and pays.

The second dimension is that of **clinical listening**. The third dimension is **criminological knowledge**: we work with conduct that can be highlighted as a crime.

The fourth dimension is **socio-psychological and educational**

Working with perpetrators



Definition of GBV

Pro-feminist Program

It is about **gender relations with cultural and social constructions.**

When you are working on violence you cannot ignore the work on inequality and therefore on female empowerment.

An **ecological model**, in which the centrality of the intervention is the victim, women and children!

Definitions and positioning

Non-feminist Program

It's **not always gender-based violence** because there's hatred towards women (which is very much present, we see it). Maybe it's really linked to **impulsiveness**: one is impulsive in all areas and can commit crimes of all kinds, even against women.

From a criminological experience [...] already the **term femicide is problematic**, because the uxoricide or who kills a woman does not necessarily do so in a perspective of gender violence. Not necessarily [...]



Intervention with authors

Pro-feminist Program

- 1) **Initial interviews:** 5 interviews to assess motivation and risk
- 2) **Psycho-educational group:** 26 sessions on predefined themes
- 3) **Follow-up therapeutic group:** free discussion

Moreover:

Parenting groups: 3 hours a month in which the authors tell the story of everyday life with their children

Absolute denial groups: who do not recognize that they have committed a crime or who have a level of discomfort or who have a defensive system that would blow up the dynamics of the other group.

Non-feminist Program

- 1) **Initial interviews:** the man makes 3 or 4 psychological interviews for psycho-diagnosis and 3 or 4 interviews with the Criminologist on the crime, legal and procedural aspects.
- 2) **Treatment:** this can only be individual interviews, group placement and interviews, or group only

Moreover:

Support and responsibility circles: 3 trained volunteers meet periodically with those most at risk

Groups for family members: to help them manage the author's treatment, how not to deny, minimize, how not to feel stigmatized in their own community "all these dynamics that take care of no one and are also these dynamics of restorative justice".



The approach

Pro-feminist Program

The need to do **psychoeducational pathways is born to gradually face the mechanisms of defense**, denial and minimization, of attribution of responsibility to the other, to build skills to see and recognize physical, psychological and emotional violence, and build a different language with men.

In my opinion, men work better in structure

Non-feminist Program

The approach is criminological-clinical: on the one hand it takes care of the avoidance of recidivism (clinical) and on the other hand of the prevention of violence through social cohesion projects (restorative justice).

Restorative justice integrates the effectiveness of the penal system. That is, it supports it with different tools that refer to a non-punitive paradigm. In some cases, the aim is to recover relations.



The gender roles of practitioners

Pro-feminist Program

The confrontation between men can favour openness with respect to certain themes, also because talking about violence can arouse shame and embarrassment.

When there is only one woman, we miss the male and men have a more seductive way of being in a group and less conflictual.

Even for male operators, this type of work should be a transformative path also for operators.

Q: and what is the role of women in groups?

P: **The man-woman dynamic is reactivated in the group.** We work a lot in the immediate reactions of men and the relationship with women workers provides an important working material. Models positive relationships

Non-feminist Program

Psychologist: "Working with a man and a woman, because it brings back to the **mother/father dyad** so this certainly helps. It is not always possible, because men in this job are less than women and therefore becomes more difficult.

Criminologist: "we probably hold a role that is a bit different from their female representation. In fact, **we work, we lead the group, so this has a certain impact.**

Working with perpetrators



Defining success and change

Pro-feminist Program

MACRO LEVEL:

There are multiple levels at which we work on change. On the one hand, we know that the whole **cultural and social context** and the aspect of inequality must change, but this requires intervention at the macro level (i.e awareness raising in schools).

MICRO LEVEL:

With the individual men we want to stop physical violence as a first step. And I believe that we must be aware that the process of change is complex but we must take measurable criteria, take the steps we can, be realistic.

Then we have to work on psychological violence, and with different men we have different results, the type of result is not uniform.

Non-feminist Program

MACRO LEVEL:

Success should not only be measurable in quantitative terms. It is necessary to evaluate **how much you affect the system**. We have contributed to a legislative evolution during the preparatory work for Law 119/2013. The change has led to help men not only after conviction, but already in the trial phase.

MICRO LEVEL

Success is when we realize that there is an assumption of responsibility not only symbolic, such as that which the penalty basically attributes to you, but a real responsibility, **when the author recognizes the damage to the victim (...) when he really feels that he has caused pain.**

In the long run, we aim not only at the elimination of recidivism but also at desistance



Gendering programmes: from theory to practice

With regard to the gender approach, the differences between the two programmes analysed are very clear, at a level of self-representation.

Despite differences in self-definition, practices do not show a gender-sensitive way to treat abusers.

The reference to the gender approach and feminist principles seems to be more tied to the positioning within the field of anti-violence, to a "struggle for recognition" within the anti-violence field.



Gendering the ecological model

Despite the explicit reference to the Ecological model, in the pro-feminist practices the focus seems to be only on the author (individual level).

On the contrary, due to the reference to the restorative justice, the non-feminist program addresses also families and community, but no gender problematization emerges from the interview.



From self-definition to practice

Despite the gender approach and the ecological model are assumed as basic approaches for perpetrators programmes within the Relive guidelines, it seems that the two programmes are still not applying them in a consistent practice... [to be continued]

Thanks!

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