

Empowerment and income support measures for women with experience of gender-based violence: Italian policies

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Background

Viva project

Evaluation and Analysis of Interventions to prevent and combat violence against women
2017-2021
2021-2025

WP4 focus on

National and local policies for socio-economic empowerment of women GBW survivors

Today contribution

Interventions to support survivors' economic autonomy from national and regional policies to local interventions



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2013-2023 public power's intervention

SOME RESULTS

greater efforts to the intervention process

increased funding

structural intervention in fieri

poor integration of the measures at national and regional level

specific and nonspecific measures coexist

lack of homogeneity

conditionality



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EMPOWERMENT AS A PROCESS

Theoretical framework

- Redistributive social justice: empowerment as theoretical principle and emancipatory practice (Magalhães et al. 2019; Sen 1999; Perkins & Zimmermann 1995; Batliwala 1994).
- From *community organising* (Stein 1997; Bacqué 2013) to *social work* methodologies: beyond welfarism, paternalism and infantilisation (Le Bossé, 2003)
- Critical approach to development studies (DAWN, 1984)
- Structural transformation at individual, collective and social level (Sharma, 2008)
- Debate on conditionality (Mazzeo et al. 2017, Dentale 2022).
- Liberal versus liberating empowerment (Sardenberg, 2008)
- Empowerment process model (Cattaneo e Chapman 2015, 2010)

Power relation as central issue



Italian context: some data

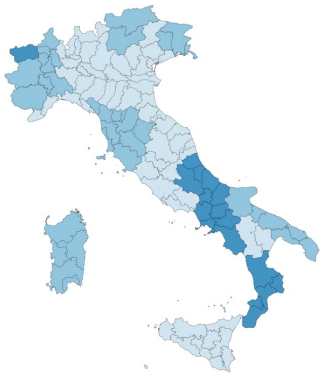


52,2% women employed
(EU: 69,3%)



women's workday: 11h 35'
(5 hours unpaid care work)

men's workday: 10h 13'
(2 h 27' unpaid care work)



Italian welfare state:

- Familistic based system
- Based on workforce
- Reproduces a stratified citizenship's model based on gender, age, job's contract, migratory status (Mef, 2023)



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Italian policy for authonomy: equality, sameness, differences

Which kind of empowerment?

- **Antiviolence Plans** (2015-17; 2017-20; 2021-2023/4)
- Strategy for Gender Equality 2021-2026
- **Income support measures: «Reddito di Libertà»** (Freedom income)
- **Not-specific measures** (Job's policy, National Inclusion Program and Poverty Program 2021-27, European EFS Plus and ERDS program, «Reddito di cittadinanza/assegno d'inclusione»)

Public power's interventions

Promote empowerment if

- critical consciousness raising (individual)

- voice, participation and agency

- democratisation (fulfilment of women's rights) including material and symbolic resources

Intensify disempowerment when

- victim blaming, prejudices, racism

- silencing women and (institutional) blocking of their agency

- failure in respecting women's rights and lack of resources (to support women)

Magalhães et al., 2019, p. 166



«Freedom income»

Reddito di libertà

Freedom Income applications submitted, granted and paid and budget.
Years 2021-23

	YEAR			TOTAL
	2021	2022	2023 (until April)	
submitted applications	2.737	1.902	400	5.039
successful applications	2.253	412	5	2.673
budget used				13.046.400
remaining budget				253.604

60,5% women
in AVCs and Shelters are
financially dependent
and at **poverty risk**

2021:
56.000
women supported by AVCs
2.400
hosted in a shelter

Inps: 2023



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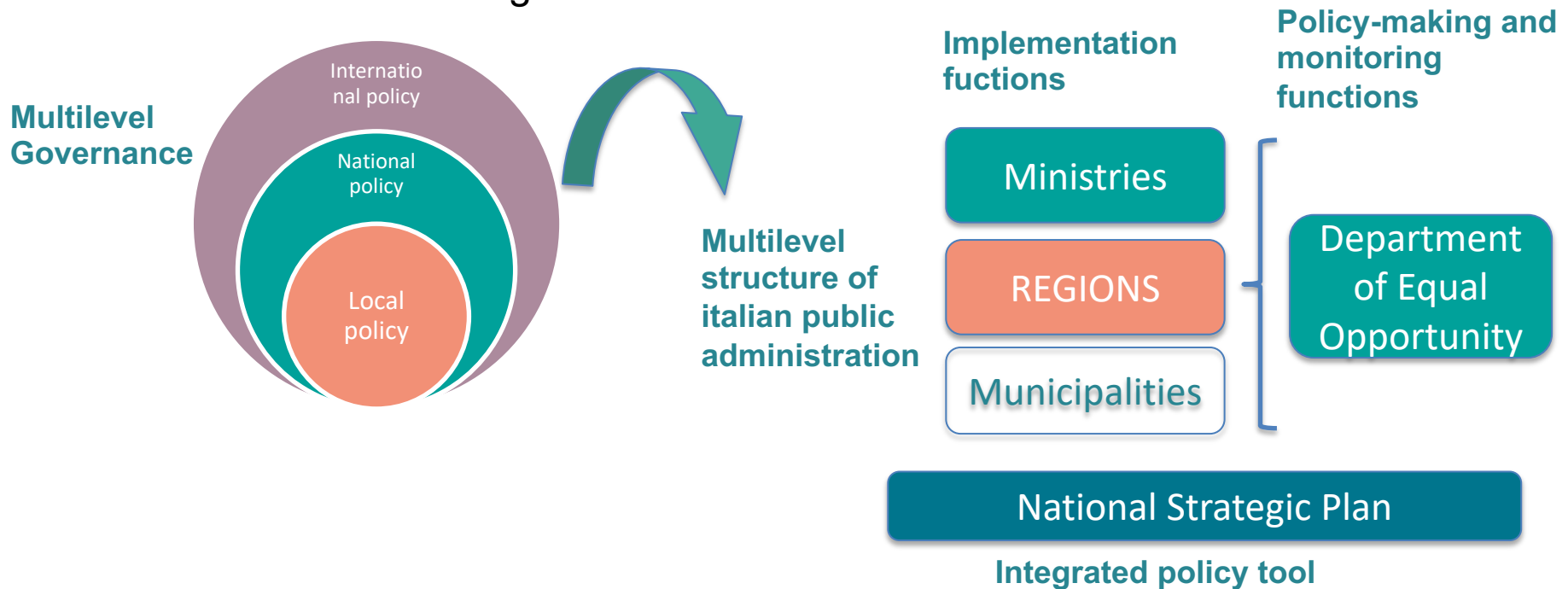


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Italian context - Italian regions and antiviolence policies

Italian regions are:

- responsible of antiviolence policies within their competences in social policies;
- co-actors in guiding and planning and co-financing national strategic objectives to counter male violence against women.



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Italian context - Italian regions and the empowerment of women

National
Strategic Plan



Regional goals



Promotion of empowerment, financial autonomy, and a gender approach in labor policies in favor of all women, as a means of preventing and countering male economic violence



Integration of planned interventions into support and reintegration pathways, both for the emergency phase and in fostering employment, housing and empowerment in the pathway out of violence



Activation of economic, financial, employment and housing empowerment pathways

Use different areas of public policies

Italian context - Italian regions and economic autonomy

Strategy of analysis

Analysis of regional laws and administrative acts in order to understand measures adopted by regions to support economic autonomy

Results

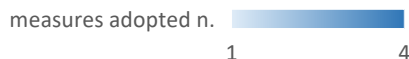
Measures adopted by regions could be classified in two main categories:

Income support for the regional population

Income support specifically for women GBV survivors

Italian context - Italian regions and economic autonomy

At a glance



Measures adopted	Regions
Income support for the regional population	Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Liguria, Apulia, Veneto
Redditi di libertà	Lazio, Sardinia, Sicily
Other supplementary measures and special funds	Lazio, Apulia, Sicily, Tuscany
Social economic assistance and judicial paths	Lazio, Autonomous provinces of Trento and Bolzano, Piedmont, Apulia, Sardinia
Economic support for children	Campania, Friuli-Venezia Giulia
Other regional initiatives	Valle d'Aosta, Lazio, Autonomous provinces of Trento

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Key Insights from previous Research

1. At **local level** an effective empowerment strategy requires a **blend of policies** and resources to address individual needs.
2. **Anti-violence centers play a crucial role** in supporting women's agency, but **they don't formally manage** all the resources needed.
3. Local governance relies heavily on **anti-violence networks**, but their presence and functionality vary significantly.
4. **Municipalities should guide the welfare system**, yet the Italian system is **fragmented**
5. Significant **reliance on family support**, which is problematic in cases of violence against women.
6. Empowerment strategies require **public leadership to coordinate** fragmented measures and public-private partnership

Methodology: multiple case studies

Identification of case studies:

1. In-depth interviews with **key witnesses** from feminist and anti-violence networks
2. **Desk analyses** of regional acts
3. In-depth interviews with **regional officials** responsible for equal opportunities and anti-violence policies

Selected cases:

- characterized by: adoption of innovative measures, strong public-private partnerships, and attention to multiple vulnerabilities
- one each in area

Reggio Emilia (North)

Carrara (Center)

Barletta (South)



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Context Analysis:

Objective: Describe socio-demographic characteristics of the municipalities, local welfare systems, and socio-economic empowerment measures.

Activities: Desk analysis of datasets, secondary sources, regional regulations, planning documents, and interviews with key witnesses.

Macro-Level Analysis:

Objective: Analyze the conceptualization of socio-economic empowerment in policy planning. Describe empowerment measures for women victims of violence at the local level.

Activities: Desk analysis of protocols and agreements, and in-depth interviews with responsible for equal opportunities and anti-violence policies

Meso-Level Analysis:

Objective: Analysis of the characteristics and dynamics of the anti-violence networks promoted by the local authorities.

Activities: Desk analysis of the local plans, focus groups and social network analysis with the territorial services involved in empowerment interventions.

Micro-Level Analysis:

Objective: Analyze the implementation of policies and working practices by social service operators

Activities: Group interviews with social services, using a street-level bureaucracy approach, as well as with anti-violence practitioners.



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Many thanks!

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