

# What Efficacy? The Evolution of Treatment Programmes in Italy between Social Control and Perpetrator Accountability

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VALUTAZIONE E ANALISI  
DEGLI INTERVENTI DI PREVENZIONE  
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# ViVa project

## Our objectives

ViVa Project  
I ed. 2017-2020  
II ed. 2022-2025

Two national  
surveys on PPs

Two main levels

- analyzing main characteristics and practices of specialized and general services in the field of anti-violence;
- evaluating the policies and the measures foreseen by the national anti-violence plans

Mapping and analyzing main characteristics of perpetrator programs (managing bodies, organizational aspects, staff, training, network, activities, data on men, loans, etc.)

- 1st national survey 2018
- 2nd national survey 2023

Qualitative focus on programmes' evaluation of effectiveness



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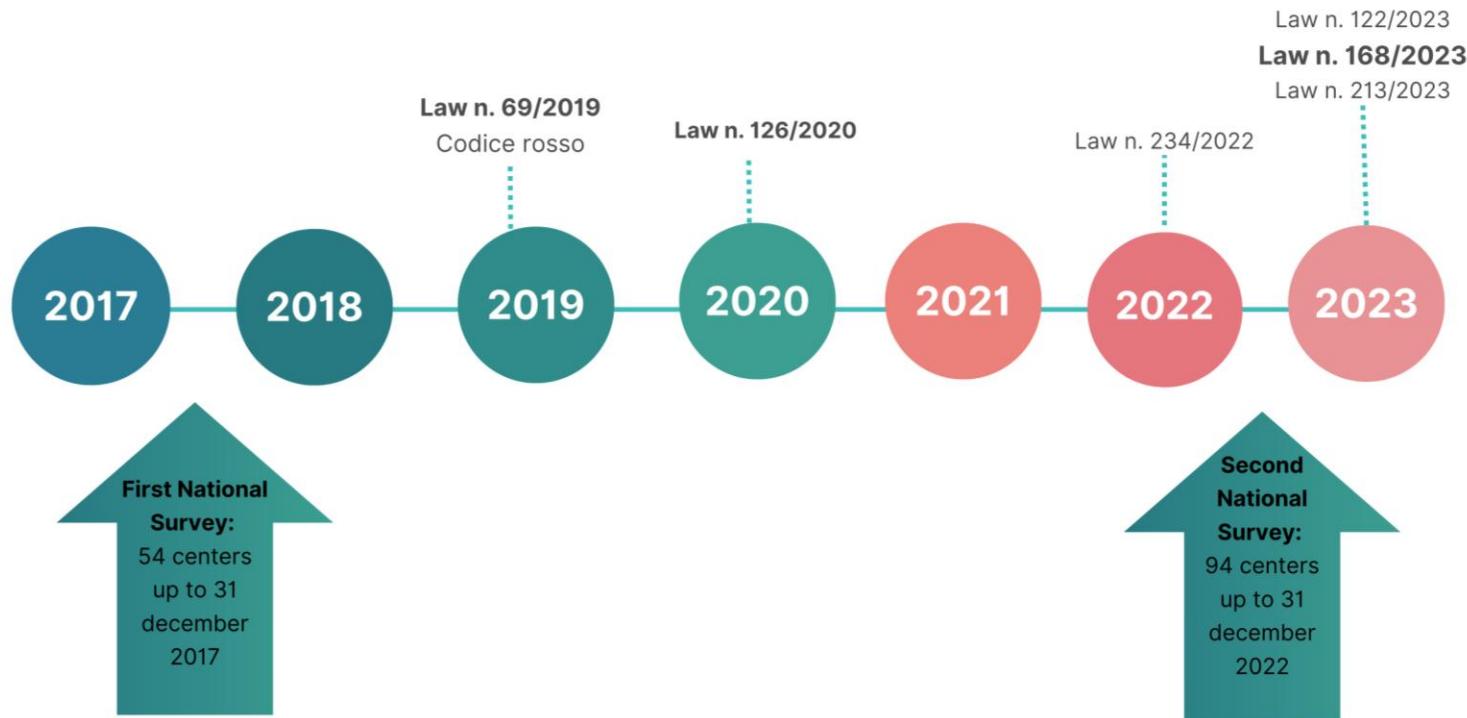


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## Main contextual changes in recent years



## The dramatic increase in men attending PPs and the change in men's motivation to participate in PPs

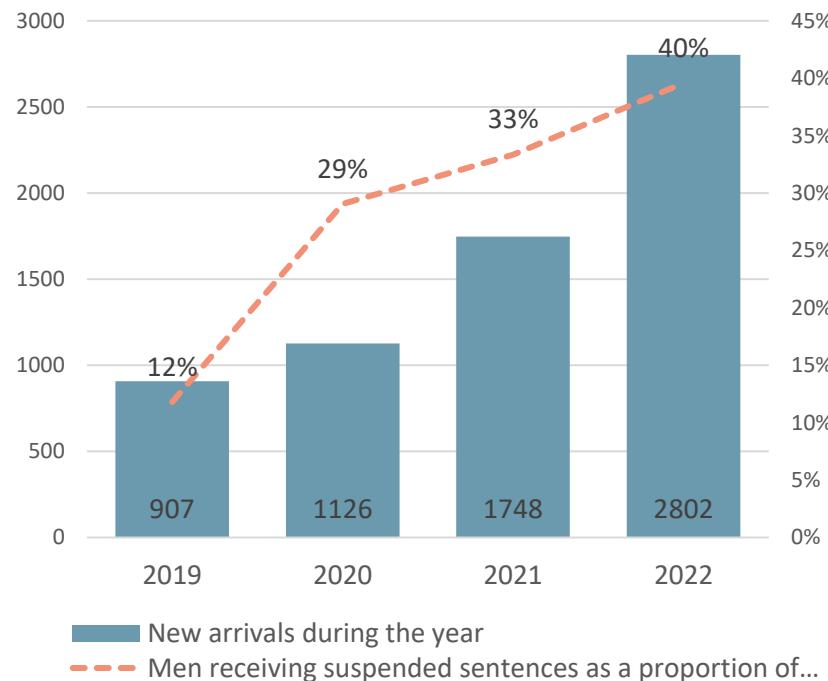
Men attending the  
PPs in 2017:

**1214**

Men attending the  
PPs in 2022:

**4174**

Men receiving  
suspended  
sentences as a  
proportion of new  
arrivals. Years 2019-  
2022



# The demand for accountability from stakeholders and civil society

PPs as a shortcut to avoid prison?

The concern is that these **PPs are becoming places of quick penance and bleaching whereby the man goes through the intervention and suddenly becomes candid, good and gets the positive report** [Women Services Representative c]

The risks of a psycho-medicalizing approach

Violence is not seen as a product of learned behaviors, conditioning and values but rather as a product of pathological aspects that need to be treated. This is important and also serious, we should shift the focus from a health aspect to a cultural and political one [Cav Network].

Is partner's contact dangerous?

**Their indicators are based on what the woman tells them during the [contact partner] interviews, which is whether the man continues to be an abuser, stalker, etc. They should make their own indicators, don't bother the anti-violence centres and leave the women in peace.** [Women services representative b]

Does high recidivism mean lack of effectiveness?

They pretend to ignore that **male violence is the crime that has the highest recidivism rate. To admit such a thing is to recognize that the tools put in place cannot guarantee immediate rehabilitation.** [Women Services Representative a)]



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## The evaluation of effectiveness as a practice of accountability by Cuavs

**2017:** 63% of the total number of Cuavs declared to carry out some form of evaluation, among which only **6%** by external bodies.

**2022:** 60% of the total number of Cuavs declared to carry out some form of evaluation, among which only **15%** by external bodies.



Qualitative research:  
**5 evaluation projects**  
14 Cuavs



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# What are the goals of the evaluation projects?

## Primary goals of the evaluation projects

- Validation of the intervention model 3 4
- Improving the programme's intervention 1 2 5

## Secondary goals of the evaluation projects

- Creating an effectiveness assessment tool 1 5
- Exploration and knowledge about the field 1 5

# Evaluation Projects Overview

Projects	Evaluation Design & Methodology	Object of evaluation
P1	pre-post quasi - experimental study with self-report questionnaires, partner reports (where available)	Treatment outcomes (T0-T1) Psychological, personality and cultural characteristics of users
P2	Standardized, longitudinal measurement of treatment outcomes and the impact of violence on victims with IMPACT questionnaire	Treatment outcomes (T1-T3); <b>impacts of violence on victims (T1-T3)</b>
P3	1. Qualitative-quantitative monitoring of treatment outcomes; 2. Modeling of the "integrated treatment program"	Treatment outcomes (T0-T1); methodology of intervention
P4	Qualitative-quantitative data collection on impact of warning procedures and treatment outcomes in 11 cities	Treatment outcomes ; psychological, personality and cultural characteristics of users and (ex)partners; training administered to FFOO operators
P5	Qualitative-quantitative analysis of the effectiveness of treatment; participant observation	Treatment outcomes (T0 -T3); psychological, personality and cultural characteristics of users



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## Conceptualization of success: what, how and for whom?

### Interruption of violence and reduction of the risk of recidivism [Criminological approach]

We consider the effectiveness of moving from the intervention of intercepting the perpetrator of violence to accompanying him along the **criminal pathway**. Our question is: How much does the treatment affect **relapse recidivism**? [O4]

### Responsibility, reflexivity and awareness of the behaviour impact [Psychological approach]

I believe that the most important indicator, although difficult to monitor and to assess, is **responsibility**. So how much that man took responsibility for what happened in **the way he dialogues, tells what happened, and reflects on the consequences** that there may have been on the other person. [O1 - practitioner]

### Increased agency, safety and wellbeing of (former) partners and children [Gender based]

In general terms, **all programmes should work towards victims' safety**. So, we could discuss how do you define victim safety? For me it's pretty obvious: that there's **no fear**, that the **consequences of the man's violence are not there anymore**, that the **victim feels safe and empowered**, that the **children is also feeling safe** [V2 - researcher]



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# Conceptualization of effectiveness: expectations and social function

## Should the definition of effectiveness also include prediction?

It is important to reflect on what are the **expectations** on this work. If these expectations are the nullification of the possibility of committing violence or a 100 percent success rate, these seem beyond any logic to me. No one thinks that everyone who comes out of drug addiction services will never use substances again. On the PPs instead there is an **idea that somehow we are magic and we are going to cure all the male perpetrators of violence in this country**. [O5 - practitioner]

## Can the definition of effectiveness also include the function of social control?

[...] **the function of the PPs is also quite independent of treatment outcomes**. [...] if PPs are aligned with the **Istanbul standards** and a **gendered approach**, and if they do the **work embedded within a network of services**, there may be value in not taking some of the men in. [...] I would not want **all the debate about outcomes to obscure the social monitoring function of PPs**. For example, for very dangerous subjects who are often sent back to the territory. [...] What do we do with these perpetrators? [P2 - practitioner]

# Reflections on the conceptualization of and intervention in male violence

**The evaluation of efficacy as accountability depends on the conceptualization of violence and theory of change:**

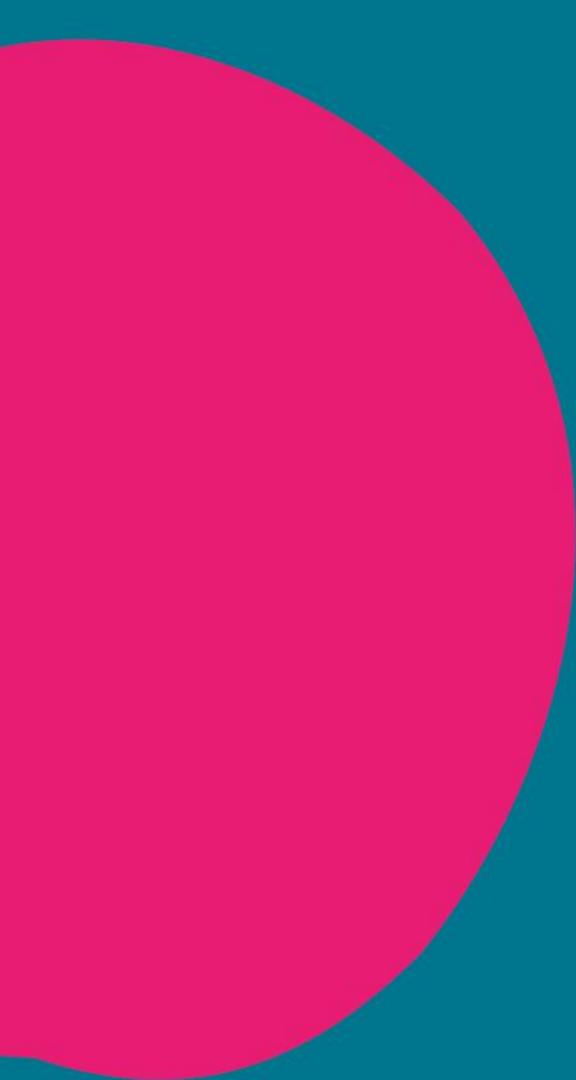
1. what is (the cause of) violence?
2. how can it be treated (methodological tools)
3. what is the aim and the target of the program?

**Facing the psychologizing and criminological shift of GVB policies only gender-based approach can deal with structural, cultural and relational dimensions of male violence**

# Reflections on the conceptualization of and intervention in male violence

**The function of programs overcomes individual treatment:**

- identifying and monitoring cases in territorial networks
- primary prevention and social awareness on male violence and masculinity
- social change



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