

L.e.A. - Work and Reception

***Research intervention about
the phenomenon of violence
against women in the
Abruzzo Region***

Intervention line A



Body actuator: Le Onde Onlus

Local point of reference: Ananke women's association

Partners: Pescara City Hall, Pescara Province, Councillor Office of Provincial Equality, Consortium Development system Mediterranean

The intervention bases knowledge on sex related violence by women's associations and experts of different disciplines that, in the last twenty years, have developed conversational practises and methodologies useful to the emersion of the emersion of the phenomenon and its contrast.

The project has taken up the evidences emerged from investigation carried out at international and national level.

The intervention combines different levels of investigation taken in the region with a pilot scheme wich has addressed the main problem related to building ways of autonomy for women and their children:
the work.

The project provided the contemporary development of two action line:

Line A) Search

Line B) Pilot scheme

It was a search – intervention

The planned activities have been monitored
evaluated by an external evaluation

For information: Abruzzo Region – Regional Council – Active Department of Employment – Integrated Regional Training and Education Service Active – Employment Policies for the Promotion and Support change finding work

www.regione.abruzzo.it/x/ConsiglieraParita/

For information on activities and products:

www.leonde.org

www.sportelloananke.it

Line A - The research

- The research takes up the concept of sex related violence, as formulated by ONU and UE: a **violence that in relational imbalance between sexes and desire to control and possession by masculine and feminine that combines into phisical violence, sexual, economic, psychological..**
- **Frame of reference**
Intra and extra family violence against women is a problem that has difficulty to find definitive solutions, especially if identified tools don't constantly control about the effectiveness.
- **Territory of reference**
The research considered four provincial territories – Chieti, L'Aquila, Teramo, with a particular attention to Pescara to carry out the pilot action – and Mountain Communities Vestina (Penne – Loreto).

The path of intervention on research

The research consists of :

- Mapping of main public and private social and medical services and security forces involved in the treatment of violence situation against women in the territory and public and private services in the area dedicated to training, guidance and working employment.
- Identification of possible “best practise” in regional and/or national, through the examination of main active labour policy and equal opportunities and conciliation policies.
- Realization of interviews to “25 privileged witnesses” to take the characteristics and dimension of phenomenon.
- Realization of 5 focus group, one for each provincial capital of Abruzzo region and for Mountain Communities Vestina, addresses to operators.

In all stages of research, it tried to never lose what remains the **central subject** to which the results of entire work have to come back, especially about the advantages: **women victims of violence and their needs.**

Mapping Services: a description on the move

- Mapping activity involved the main social and medical services, public and private, Security Force and the structures dedicated to training, guidance and working employment that women victims of abuse and violence can call for help.
- Survey card, sent to 290 managers/referents of many services already mentioned, takes a summary of the project with the information on purpose, timing and modalities of completion.

Partecipation in mapping of authority involved in the regional territory

	Cards sent	Cards came back	Other aswers
Chieti	57	27	-
L'Aquila	53	21	1
Loreto Aprutino - Penne	25	9	1
Pescara	108	41	5
Teramo	47	19	-
TOTALS	290	117	7

Mapping Services: a description on the move

Only one third of 117 services that give back the card, seems to find directly cases of violence against women, with greater concentration in Pescara territory, while remaining share of authorities is not directly involved in the violence or hasn't contact with the phenomenon.

Involvement of services in the violence problem

	Authorities involved in violence	Authorities are not directly involved in violence	Authorities are not involved in violence
Chieti	7	11	9
L'Aquila	7	9	5
Loreto Aprutino - Penne	5	3	1
Pescara	14	14	13
Teramo	6	6	7
TOTALS	39	43	35

Mapping Services: a description on the move

About two thirds of 39 services involved in the problem, don't adopt actually any procedures to handle situation of violence; this seems to underline the trend of single operator to determine independently his/her own intervention fragmented and, sometimes, stereotyped, instead promote with other services into a unified strategy.

Services have procedures compared to cases of violence

	Authorities where there are procedures	Authorities provide for the future activation of procedures	Authorities where there aren't procedures
Chieti	2	3	2
L'Aquila	3	1	3
Loreto Aprutino - Penne	0	1	4
Pescara	7	1	6
Teramo	5	0	1
TOTALS	17	6	16

Mapping Services: a description on the move

Protocols' lack of institutional intervention reflects on the **difficulty** of service to integrate the common care of victims.

Protocols intervention in active network

	Authorities where there are protocols	Authorities provide for the future activation of protocols	Authorities where there aren't protocols
Chieti	1	3	3
L'Aquila	0	1	6
Loreto Aprutino - Penne	0	1	4
Pescara	4	5	5
Teramo	0	1	5
TOTALS	5	11	23

Qualitative analysis: items from territory a reading about some testimonies received

The qualitative phase based on twenty-five interviews to privileged witnesses, five in each territory, and a realization of five focus groups with involvement of 44 subjects, mostly women. A different tool of analysis corresponds to each phase, although the adopted prospect has always been described.

The collected information has been read on the basis of three different aspects :

- **Perception of violence**
- **network**
- **Job**

Selected witnesses for interview have been chosen on the basis of their knowledge of reference territory and their availability and interest in the topic.

Belonged services	Pescara (1)	Chieti (2)	Teramo (3)	Comunità Vestina(4)	L'Aquila (5)
Social Territory Service	X	X	X	X	
Order Force: particularly Police of State and Town Police	X			X	X
Public Administration, Councillor of Equality, Manageresses		X	X	X	X
Trade Union		X			
Employment Centres	X	X	X	X	X
MedicaServices of II level			X		
First Aid	X				X
Caritas Associations and other associations	X				
Family Consultories USL				X	
Female Associations		X	X		X

Qualitative analysis: items from territory

To perceive the violence: the value of the reception

The knowledge about the complexity of this theme appeared besides the different professional and territorial feature of the witnesses and participants of focus group because asked sollicitations showed the attention on the matters that violence to women asks them in the 'daily practice'.

By different witnesses we know the violence is a phenomenon that has many facets:

- it's **transversal** respect for age, culture and profession
- It's characterized by an increase of the contemporaneity but it's especially distinguished by a **great knowledge** from victims women
- It's not always expressed directly but with **implicit requestes**
- It has **home as privileged place**
- It has additional elements for **immigrated** women
- It's in connection to **social and cultural aspects** that subtend violence (female associations)
- The necessity that women start to **undertake** (female associations)
- The necessity to **specifies formation** to better welcome the questions of care

To perceive the violence: the value of the reception

Transversality and sex related violence

The witnesses give the necessity to put in the service practice an approach of phenomenical orientation rather than behavioural, that surely subtends a more integrated and extensive interpretation of sex related violence 'that bases its own model of intervention on the recognition among violence as a fact, relationship and suffering'.

“the violence is a violence in all sectors...when someone abuse you however he's using a violence”

To perceive the violence: the value of the reception

More knowledge

All interviews are agree to record more social attention about the theme, but more than study in depth this speech reflecting on the contents that come through media, they stop on the implications between evolution of the right and recognition of the problem (from private to public):

“After all only from few years the violence to women is penally a crime against person. It especially is a cultural turning point for women who finally realize to be abuse...a slap, the humiliations are not more ‘normal’ or expected to receive!!! Now we know ‘the violence to women’, the women give this name to all male behaviors used against our wish, in the past, violence name didn’t exist”

Perceiving violence: the value of welcome

Home as the best place

According to contemporary literature and recent surveys, as well as interviews and focus groups, nowadays the imagery of family as a safe place has been challenged:

“Let’s think about a quarrel in a family, in which the husband takes a position and considers his wife incompetent and idler, attacking her with disdainful words... I’ve been hit by the fact that the women who try to rebel are accused of being worn-out and told to see a psychiatrist. People tend to connect a case of violence to a woman being in problematical conditions, or to an immigrant subject... but this is a common mistake... In these needy situations, the phenomenon is just more evident. I’ve noticed that these women report the fact to the police more often than women living in protected environments”

Perceiving violence: the value of welcome

Immigrant women

Our local witnesses don't seem to reflect so much upon immigration, even though this might be an (obviously direct and implicit) important datum to understand if services are really accessible, flexible and enjoyable.

The immigrant women interviewed by us, instead, have got different perceptions. They usually come from the Balkans and work for or refer to services or associations, and they point out the need for a retrain of their qualifications got in their original country. It is a matter of fact that their qualifications are not acknowledged: these women have a very high probability to be unsatisfied their needs and ambitions, or just with finding a job.

“Several of these women are teachers, nurses, professional women... their educational level is middle-high, but its quality is not legally acknowledged here. Prejudices increase rapidly, especially after the recent crime news”

Perceiving violence: the value of welcome

Social-cultural aspects

The evidence seems to lead to the conclusion that deprivations can block a woman who already is in a situation of isolation and exclusion: a situation that brings a guilty feeling, often expressed in a guilty attitude against oneself:

“As far as I am concerned, I think that, looking from the cultural point of view, the strongest violence is represented by the effort of excluding women. Unfortunately, women experience violence - especially familiar violence - with a great guilty feeling: “If this is being done to me, I must have done something to deserve it”. I think it’s terrible to accept the fact that the person you love can hit you; we should start from the problem of the perception of violence, because it’s an important reversal of a cultural trend”.

Perceiving violence: the value of welcome

Need of training

We have noticed a “not much stereotyped perception” and this is good at all. It might be bound to the gender oriented approach, used in this research.

In the different phases of the survey, the researchers who were firmly present on the territory started from an exchange of opinions, reasoning and talking about their own experience with awareness, in an atmosphere of open-mindedness and relationship.

Since all the partakers have asked for an individual training, we can interpret this as a request for an update to the whole organizative structure and for better opportunities to an interdisciplinary exchange. All the interviewed persons seem to rate necessary an investement on formative training, as a key element for the organizative and structural innovation.

In this sense, we'll point out the presence of a gap between their sensitivity and their consciousness as individuals, and the structural organization of the services they belong to. This gap is absolutely not expressed by the operators, but it's wide if we think to the urgency of the requested updating, both theoretic and operative.

For a close examination: voices from territory. Acting in network

Our network: “A network is a whole given by subjects and organizations, that build arranged knowledge, relations and actions aiming to interacting with services in order to plan activities, at different levels, against the violence on women, by using integrating interventions.

We noticed that, among the professional figures who have taken part to the focus and to the interviews, the ones who already have a direct awareness of the problem are usually able to point out the critical quality of the interventions, even suggesting which changes have to be brought.

Acting in network is essential not only to prevent and fight the phenomenon of violence on women, but also to propose projects aiming the settling of women in the world of work.

For a close examination: voices from territory. Acting in network

A further basic item of the action in network is the power in **creating services** capable to deal with three main aspects of interventions that prevent violence on women: first aid, welcome, support in the way out. All this wants to lead to the creation of a specific service where it doesn't exist yet, like an Anti-violence Centre; at the same time, it'll be necessary to reorganize the existing networks, in order to coordinate strategies and to connect the different resources on the territory.

“I think that the network is indispensable. Without a network the operation can't be finished, there's no decisive contribution. That's why I can't imagine interventions for women experiencing violence, if they aren't inserted into an effective and efficient network. I would involve school, because also teachers must be able to recognize situations bound to a violence; the Public Health Services (Asl in it.), hospitals, the First Aid... because they're the first place where we can spot a woman who has experienced a violence. I would involve churches, too, where women disclose their heart. Finally, I would involve the public authorities, that can activate, besides Anti-Violence Centres, also services that help a woman in her all day life, as for example crèche, for babies. The action of police, carabinieri and tribunal can be very important...”

Acting in network

The outcomes of the research point out three aspects of the action in a network:

- **the need of a formalized procedure**
- **the lack of receptive structures**
- **the importance of the Anti-violence Centres**

The comparison among some networks that are going to formalize procedures and spread useful numbers is evident:

“I think that the network has done big steps... There’s been a constant operativeness among some knots of the network. With the First Aid, for example: guide lines are being defined and a dialogue has been started about the taking in charge. Some authorities have caught the meaning of the net and procedures are being written down with social services. The Anti-violence Center has entered the social plan, so it will become one of the services of the city of Pescara: that’s why we need to conclude the procedures, especially the ones undertaken with the First Aid. We have talked about rules with police and carabinieri and we have planned informatives with the public prosecutor’s office”

Acting in network

The lack of receptive structures doesn't allow a prompt intervention in case of estrangement. This is a problem that gives a strong sense of impotence to an operator who tries to intervene:

"... It's important for a woman to have places where she can talk, but she needs concrete answers as well, and we see it by ourselves... Our structure is always full, but we haven't been able to allow women in emergence for a while... There's the need of a structure for emergencies and not only for a hospitality for six months".

The **Centre Anti-violence** has been described both as a good service for women and for a resource for the operators of the network:

"Why a Centre Anti-violence? Because it's fundamental. The first step of a woman needing psychologic support, looking for the best way out. Here, something always happens: every day a needing woman comes... They are often sent for me because they ask for a certification of a police doctor, but the good is that they come to know that in Pescara a Center Anti-violence exists, so they can go there and talk with an expert who can address them towards the best service. On the other hand, a network is meaningful in this sense: elude the dispersion..."

Work

Some worthy considerations have raised from the interviews:

- work as **independence**
- work as inner **repair**
- work as a moment of **training**

Everyone considers work as the first and fundamental way to reach the **economic independence** for a mistreated woman. It's important both in the cases in which the woman chooses to break the spiral of violence, and in those in which working is considered a significant incentive to take the courage and report systematic situations of violence within the family.

“Working is important and most of all necessary for all women. A woman can take care both of her family and of her work, if she's free to arrange her duties. Working allows women to make choices in autonomy... Let's think of a woman wanting to split up from her husband: if she hasn't got a work and therefore her independence, she will slow all her choices and she will give up a lot of things, because she depends on her husband. For a woman in trouble, who has decided to get out the violence, work is still a sheet anchor. The chief target is earning money, in order to plan a life from the start and make it more peaceful for children too”.

Work

A violence bound to money, always correlated to some kind of psychologic violence, often compels a woman to a subdued condition to the partner and prevent her to make choices in autonomy.

The lack of economic autonomy and therefore of a job, besides, leads a woman to depreciate herself. It provokes a strong decrease in self-confidence and in the confidence in her abilities, ending up to a passive acceptance of the events:

“A job becomes important because, a part from cases of physic violence, there are women wanting to get more autonomy, to build a different future, even in cases of simple legal separation, where there is no violence but women are liable to be blackmailed under an economic point of view because they have no choice. Neither women are always aware of this kind of violence, but they express a trouble and can't face the situation just because the first problems concern money and the power her husband has on the choices she can do, especially as long as children are involved”.

Work

It's worthy talking of **upgrading of the working level**, which should follow the psychologic support. A mistreated woman needs to be followed, oriented, prepared – emotionally, too – to a new professional experience, so that she has a better awareness of the route she's undertaking and of the difficulties she's going to meet:

“Most mistreated women going to social services are young women, about 25 - 45 years old, therefore still in their prime. Generally, we talk about women who left their job after the marriage and dedicated to their family, and in their family have found themselves trapped. Even if they wanted to integrate again in the world of work, they would have objective difficulties, both at a psychological level and at a training one”.

The network and work

The partakers of focus groups and the interviewed persons who are directly linked to Politics of Work have pointed out several considerations which are useful to define the best modalities, services, tools and kinds of synergies among the authorities of the network where is possible to help the insert of this typology of women in the world of work.

“Here in Pescara we have started to insert women in the world of world through trainings, which are one of the preferred ways of firms, to begin a relationship which may become a real relation of work. Through aimed orientative interviews and the examination of competences, we can help women to enforce their self-perception, even through useful information on the market of work. Enforcing self-confidence is indispensable for who has a very low self-esteem and needs to be lead to self-recognition, self-rearrangement and needs to look the world from another point of view...”

Final considerations

This research, in its different phases:

- has moved both official and unofficial operators throughout the region, since it hasn't included only the existent services.
- has allowed to reassemble the environment under a social point of view, by involving the several local agents in first person.
- has activated exchanges and comparisons among the agents, even more meaningful if we think of the taking in charge of the problem of violence.

Quoting Timpanaro: *“An analysis of the phenomenon of violence on women, beginning with the answers given by services, is surely an important modality to get a global picture of the structure and of the culture, but mostly to understand the ability of the authorities to recognize and face the problem”*

Final considerations

The key actions to start to change the system of help in a way out the violence are:

- Training **agents**, not only on the basis of the features of the phenomenon but also based on the methodologies which can be useful to make it come to surface, on the kinds of the helping requests, and on the strategies used in sharing it with other services.
- **Building local Anti-violence networks** and defining concrete connections among the services.
- Starting **specialized services**, by applying a regional law, that are able to learn from the experience and gender culture of the existent Anti-violence centres, and become “territorial poles”, competent on the subject.
- Developing **preventive actions**, up to the cultural changes, through the teamwork among the educational system, the media and the local identities that can grant the passage to a different interrelation between genders a real empowerment for women.
- **Implementing an operative programme**, that is multidisciplinary, that touches the local system and foresees the necessary monitoring and evaluation levels, both about the walk of women both about the integration of procedure among services.

Final considerations

As regards to the theme of job some considerations come out from listening of who works :

- The adequate training of who works to the counters of Employment Centers.
- The involvement in the local networks of the persons responsible, increasing them (through specific moments of job) to the economic appeals of the territory and determining an integrated dimension of effectiveness that is found on the resource-woman and not on the insertion-victim.
- The promotion of lines intervention guarantees the structure of individual itineraries that go from the orientation to the working insertion, in which every makes his/her part without overlaps and useless redundances.

It's possible to come out of violence

It's already more difficult to build a happier life. The fullness of the existence comes from the strengthening of own identity and the social recognition of strength and resources of which we are holders.

The job is a fundamental point of passage for the women, even more for the one that lives it as "ransom" and opportunity of full autonomy.

The project has individualized a way, we leave to whom of it competes.

THANK YOU

