



This project is funded by the European Union's
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VIVIEN - Victim Violence Educational Network

An educational project to improve the ability to assist women victims of violence

NEWSLETTER N. 3 - VIVIEN Project

April 2020- English



Women and Disabled in coronavirus crisis:

Raising questions, looking for solutions

VIVIEN - Victim Violence Educational Network: *An educational project to improve the ability to assist women victims of violence*, aims to contribute to prevent and to tackle violence against women (VAW), with a specific attention to women with disabilities. VIVIEN is a European project of two years, started on the 1st November 2018, funded by the European Union's Right, Equality and Citizenship Programme and coordinated by Giolli Cooperativa, Italy. The project activities will be implemented throughout 4 European countries: Italy, Finland, Bulgaria and Croatia, gathering good practices and innovative models from all Member States. The project addresses current challenges and needs of civil contribution to governmental efforts to end violence against women and take into consideration the specific vulnerability and needs of women with disabilities.

Situation due to Coronavirus and COVID-19

All over Europe we are living in a situation of pandemic of COVID-19 caused by a coronavirus, as the WHO Director-General declare on 11th March 2020, and the consequential restrictions' measures to contain the COVID-19 adopted by the Countries. One of this measures is the lockdown, that we are all living.

At the same time many voices are rising to focus on the dangerous situation due to forced cohabitation in the home, that women at risk or victims of domestic violence live.

United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres, citing a sharp rise in domestic violence amid global coronavirus lockdowns, called on governments around the world to make addressing the issue a key part of their response to the pandemic.

Guterres said "violence is not confined to the battlefield. For many women and girls, the threat looms largest where they should be safest – in their own homes."

"We know lockdowns and quarantines are essential to suppressing COVID-19", he continues, "but they can trap women with abusive partners. Over the past weeks, as the economic and social pressures and fear have grown, we have seen a horrifying surge in domestic violence."

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The secretary-general said in some countries "the number of women calling support services has doubled" while "healthcare providers and police are overwhelmed and understaffed."

"I urge all governments to make the prevention and redress of violence against women a key part of their national response plan to COVID-19," he said.

Prevention, Preparedness and Response to Disabled Needs in Coronavirus Crisis

Human Rights Watch (HRW) notes that women and girls with disability face the same spectrum of human rights abuses that women without disability face, but **their social isolation and dependence magnifies these abuses and their consequences**. At the time when people are advised to stay home, people with disability face a new challenge by being exposed to isolation from the outside world in constant presence of their unpaid care givers. The statistics show though that most often the perpetrators of abuse against women with disability include family members, intimate partners, caregivers, and peers. **Behind closed doors, what happens at the time of COVID-19 epidemics with people with disability?** Do they have the needed access to services and/or do they experience new abuse deprived with restrictions of access to medical and social care and communication with the outside world?

"My access to the world is the phone... he just took the phone and put it somewhere where I couldn't get it... I couldn't yell enough to attract anyone. It was a nightmare"

Anonymous woman with disability

Envisioning specifics of disability in services

For planning of services, detailed knowledge of **which people with disability are facing which barriers to access services** is very important. Approximately 300 million women around the world have mental and physical disabilities.

With current lots of emergencies do governments not let people with disability behind? And women at risk of domestic violence?

You can contribute to the debate answering this question, reading other opinion, suggesting article, studies and so on, here: <https://vivien-project.eu/support-forum/>

The accessibility to services for women at the time of coronavirus

The accessibility to services for women at risk of violence or victim of domestic violence, at the time of coronavirus lockdown, diminishes, some services as courts are closed, legal advocates work only remotely, which makes it harder for women to access legal relief. With the intent to face and limit this problematic situation countries have started to introduce new measures to help women in seeking for help.

In Spain the pharmacies proposed "Mask 19" as code to report domestic violence. Aware of the

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fact that no one can leave their homes, not even to buy the masks, they have invited women victims of domestic violence to call saying "Mascarilla 19", ("mask 19 "). A password that will allow pharmacists to understand the request for help, activating the intervention protocol: the police will be notified, then the special "gender violence" section of the prosecutors, who will activate the protection system.

The city of Madrid has established an instant messaging service with a geolocation function and offers an online chat room that provides immediate psychological support to victims.

France has followed the "mask 19" example and introduced a separate initiative to encourage women to report domestic abuse in pharmacies and announced the state would pay for hotel rooms for victims of domestic violence and open pop-up counselling centres.

The constant work of project partners for women

In Croatia, B.a.B.e. continues to provide free legal and psychological assistance despite the COVID-19 pandemic. Our experts, lawyers and psychologists, assist citizens on a daily basis, regardless of the coronavirus situation and restrictions. In circumstances of isolation and confinement in one's own four walls, there is a global upward trend in domestic violence (since the abuser is at home all the time). Likewise, in this situation, people experience anxiety, depression and fear.

Psychological counseling organized by the association B.a.B.e. it has received an increased number of calls regarding domestic violence in the last weeks. There was an increase of 25% of conversations related to some type of domestic violence. In the last weeks, out of the total number of psychological advice provided, 75 percent are related to the issue of domestic violence. We provide legal and psychological advice by telephone, mail and video links. We are happy to provide a dignified and safe environment for women and children in our safe house and provide professional support to those in need.

We invite all those who need information or assistance to contact us:

by e-mail babe@babe.hr and telephone 01/4663 666 and 098/9824 641.

HOW TO ASKS HELP DURING COVID-19
EMERGENCY:

Antiviolence Center of Parma

- Contact us at the number : **0521 238885**

- You can call us when...you go out to do the grocery shopping, get gas, you go to the chemist, walks the dog, while you throw out the garbage...

- If staying home have become impossibile **call the police**

Ricorda di avere le ali!

- You can find us on **Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday from 9 to 13**
Tuesday e Thursday on afternoon from **14 to 18**.

uscire dalla violenza si può
CENTRO ANTIVIOLENZA PARMA

In Italy, ACAV, in respect of Italian covid-19 legislation, keeps open the telephone host and the hospitality houses for emergency. Furthermore the ACAV team continues to publish suggestions, on its social accounts, to facilitate victim of violence to contact Anti-violence Centre.

For more informations look at:

FB: [@Associazione Centro Antiviolenza di Parma](https://www.facebook.com/AssociazioneCentroAntiviolenzaDiParma)

Instagram: [@centro.antiviolenza_acav](https://www.instagram.com/centro.antiviolenza_acav)

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The importance of keeping in touch

As many activities in Europe, also our project is affected by the epidemic situation. The training and all the activities in presence are in standby. We are working to prepare the future activities, we are planning different solutions, we are doing back office work to improve our effort, we are keeping in touch with our multipliers, training participants and stakeholders. So in this particular moment, our suggestion is to keep in touch with our activities, and in general with the Violence Against Women problem, with on line channels. Our project offers several ways to keep in touch:

The web site <https://vivien-project.eu/>

The facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/Vivienproject/>

The twitter <https://twitter.com/ProjectVivien>

What we did before of the lockdown

The training for multipliers in Bulgaria



Before the COVID-19 epidemic exploded, Italian and Croatian trainer lead a training for multipliers in Bulgaria complemented with online training from Finnish trainers.

The training of 2 groups parallel took place in Sofia on 25 and 26 February 2020, attended by 52 participants from Sofia and Ruse, from the police, social workers, psychologists from educational

resource centres, health specialists from NGOs, trade unionists and students to increase their capacity to work with gender specific issues with emphasis on violence against women and girls with disabilities.

The Bulgarian trainees were very interested to learn about the foreign good practices and models of collaboration between institutions and services in Italy, Croatia and Finland and it provoked active debates in the small groups work.

The trainers also benefited to hear about the Bulgarian model of collaboration between institutions involved in protection of women victims of violence and existing good practices.



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One of the conclusions of the training was that such trainings except increase of knowledge and skills provide a good opportunity for networking between institutions and services.

On 27th of February 2020 the 3rd group of 31 multipliers was trained in the city of Plovdiv.

The research of the University of Parma

In order to identify the training needs of the professionals, 783 questionnaires and 119 projective interviews in the 4 Countries (Italy, Croatia, Bulgaria and Finland) were administered. The group of participants consisted of trained professionals who took part in previous training courses and untrained that did not take part in any training before.

Measured dimensions:

- empathy
- gender ideology
- gender system justification
- negative stereotyping of women
- beliefs on violence towards disabled women.
- motivations of male violence.
- motives for women's acceptance of violence.
- beliefs about secondary victimization

Through the administration of questionnaires, it was possible to evaluate the professionals' skills and attitudes. The projective interviews allowed to have a deeper understanding of underlying behaviour related to specific situations. Specifically, it allows participants to access and report feelings and motivations that may not surface using more rational question and answer interviewing techniques.

Briefly, our results seemed to indicate that, in general, participants, regardless of their Nations, tend to share a mostly similar view about gender violence, albeit the strong difference in composition of samples, in term of type of profession, prevents us to infer national differences and similarities. These similarities appeared also between trained and untrained professionals. However, some differences between Nations emerged both in untrained and trained groups.

In the untrained group, a different positioning of the four national sub-samples is observed in relation to the size of empathy (Bulgarian respondents expressed more difficulties than the others), adequacy of services for the disability (Finnish respondents declared, much more than the others that these services are not adequate), the explanation of male violence in terms of social status (mostly supported by the Croatian respondents), the explanation of the difficulty of women to denounce because they share a patriarchal ideology of gender relations (particularly supported by the Finnish respondents) and on the awareness of the risks of secondary victimization (which seems to be a concern exclusively for the Croatian respondents). In the group of trained professionals, the response averages appear very close for the dimensions related to empathy and attitudes towards gender differences. As for issues related to victims of violence with disabilities, the Bulgarian sub-sample is the one who expressed the highest levels of attention, while the Finnish one affirms the adequacy of the services dedicated to them. In general, there is an agreement among Nations with respect to: explanation of male violence derived from previous suffering and the persistence of a

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patriarchal ideology; not denunciation by the victims determined by their dependence and suffering. What is noted, however, are more extreme responses for Bulgarians and Finnish than for Croatians and Italians. Finally, the risks of secondary victimization caused by the operators are considered only by the Croatian sub-sample.

More detailed results of the questionnaires and all those related to the projective interviews can be found in the report of the research results, which can be found at the following link:

https://vivien-project.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Report-research_UNIPR.pdf

Results of Somebody method in training

SomeBody method was used in multi-professional trainings in Finland. Altogether 27 professionals from for example Mothers and Child Homes and Shelters or violence and crisis work participated in SomeBody method in Violence Work training. SomeBody method is used to support participant's body awareness, self-image and self-esteem. It's also used to improve emotional and social skills. SomeBody in Violence Work instructor education included six days of training. In addition, the professionals attending this training implemented, as a part of their client work, 10 group sessions for those who have encountered violence. In these sessions, they applied the knowledge that they had gathered during the days of training. The feedback from the training was collected by a questionnaire. 74 % of the professionals felt that because of the training they had started to consider the importance of their

"A great method! This increased understanding my own body and simultaneously opened my eyes to see how a bad experience can affect so holistically in the whole body."

Professional participated SomeBody in Violence Work training

own bodily communication when meeting a client. 74 % of the professionals also felt that they now considered more the bodily communication of a person who has encountered violence. All of



the respondents were of the opinion that the exercises taken during the training helped clearly or somewhat to understand the significance and importance of calming down when encountering clients. All the participants in the training experienced that they had clearly or somewhat received ideas on how to apply SomeBody method when working with those who have encountered violence.

The professionals attending this training implemented 10 times SomeBody group sessions with their clients, i.e. those who have encountered violence. The experiences and feedback of the clients have encouraged professionals to continue SomeBody activities also in the future. The most rewarding comments were: "I found the group more useful

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than any previous therapy” and “a unique opportunity to be under an accepting gaze without anyone calling for anything”. Comments from professionals have also supported the use of the method as a tool for violence work in the future: “the method works well and encourages the identification of your own body” and “some of the group members have improved their self-knowledge and self-esteem”.

More about Somebody method: <http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-951-633-300-0>

Next steps

We are planning how to implement the activities of the project during and after the lockdown due to COVID-19.

The University of Parma is continuing the part of research and in the next newsletter you can read the Report on Training Studies and the Mapping Best Practices.

Stay tuned!

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