



Needs and Resources Analysis for gender sensitivity and violence prevention programmes with male migrants and refugees in Italy

FOMEN Project

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1. INTRODUCTION

In this report we shall outline the results we obtained through the activities we carried out within FOMEN “Focus on Men”, an EU-funded project to raise awareness on and prevent gender-based violence with male migrants and refugees.

The six partners involved in the FOMEN project are: *Verein Fur Manner- Und Geschlechterthemensteiermark (VMG)*, the Austrian association that acted as a leading partner; *Drustvo Za Psiholosku Pomoc Society for Psychological Assistance (SPA)*, a Croatian association based in Zagreb; *Associació Conexus Atenciò, Formaciò I Investigaciò Psicosocials (Conexus)*, a Spanish association based in Barcelona; *Symbiosis Astiki Mi Kerdoskopiki Etaireia – Symbiosis*, Greek association based in Thessaloniki; *European Network for the Work With Perpetrators (WWP EN)*, German association based in Berlin, with the Centro Ascolto Uomini Maltrattanti (CAM) in Florence, and the University of Bristol acting as project experts and supervisors.

From September 2019 to April 2020 the collaborating associations, each one in their own country, carried out qualitative and quantitative analyses of the needs and resources of male migrants and refugees and the professionals working with them. Their objective was to set up and carry out educational programs on violence prevention and gender awareness-raising among male migrants and refugees, and capacity building programmes aimed at those professionals who work with migrants and refugees.

The qualitative and quantitative research referred to in this report mainly involved in-country stakeholders and experts in the fields of migration and inter-cultural matters, gender-based violence prevention and construction of masculinity.

A report on the creation and implementation of the programmes directed to both the migrant men and field experts shall be included in the follow-up actions within the FOMEN (Focus on Men) project.

The first section of the report outlines the situation in Italy, describing the statistics on migration flows and the legal and healthcare framework for migrants and refugees. The report then proceeds to detail the qualitative and quantitative research methods and the characteristics of the research sample group (3.1 and 3.2).

The fourth paragraph illustrates the qualitative analysis results. More specifically, this section shall analyse the evidence obtained through the interviews with the focus group discussing the migrants’ needs and attitude towards gender awareness and violence prevention (4.1); illustrate the requirements and methodologies of the prevention programmes aimed at male migrants and refugees (4.2); illustrate the needs of the experts when carrying out programmes on gender awareness-raising and violence prevention (4.3), include examples of best practices from Italian and European projects for violence prevention and gender awareness-raising among male migrants and refugees.

Paragraph 4.4. contains the results of the quantitative research obtained through on-line surveys directed to professionals in the field of gender-based violence and/or working with migrants and refugees.

Section 5 contains brief recommendations to set up and carry out gender awareness building and violence prevention programmes with male migrants and refugees (5.1), and capacity building programmes for professionals. These final observations will be useful for the upcoming stages of the project. Lastly, we recommend you read the final appendix regarding characteristics and effects of post-traumatic disorder.

2. MIGRATION IN ITALY: STATISTICS, POLICIES AND HEALTHCARE OUTLOOK

Immigration in Italy is a structural phenomenon which has been present for at least 25 years¹. The first immigration laws that have been enacted since the late 80s have been based on two main principles: on the one hand, restricting and combating illegal immigration (with very severe consequences), and, on the other hand, very weak integration measures. “In 2018 the Italian National Institute of Statistics (Istat), estimated that there are about five million foreign citizens living in Italy, which is the consequence of a very long process. Right now in Italy we have third-generation immigrants². According to the 2019 Caritas-Migrantes report, **Italy is the third European country with the highest number of foreign citizens legally residing in its territory (5.255.503, 8.7% of Italy’s total population)**. While work immigration has decreased, the number of migrants seeking asylum and subsidiary protection in Italy has increased. Even with a lower birth-rate (-3.7% in 2018, which brings them closer to the Italian average), migrants still largely contribute to the demographic development in Italy³.

On January 1, 2019, **the largest foreign communities** were the Rumanian (1.206.938 people, 23% of the total of migrants), Albanian (441.027, 8,4% of the total) and Moroccan (422.980, 8%). **The foreign population mainly lives in the most developed regions of northern and central Italy** (57,5% and 25,4% respectively), while in the South and on the islands the numbers remain lower (12,2% and 4,9% respectively) although they are slightly increasing. **The regions with the highest numbers of resident foreign citizens** are Lombardy (1.181.772 foreign resident citizens, 11,7% of the total resident population), Lazio (683.409, 11,6%), Emilia Romagna (547.537, 12,3%), Veneto (501.085, 10,2%) and Piedmont (427.911, 9,8%). **The provinces with the highest number of resident foreign citizens** are Rome (556.826, 12,8%), Milan (470.273, 14,5%), Turin (221.842, 9,8%), Brescia (157.463, 12,4%) and Naples (134.338, 4,4%)⁴.

¹ Colucci, M. *Storia dell’immigrazione straniera in Italia. Dal 1945 ai giorni nostri*, Carocci, 2018

² Colucci, M. *Storia dell’immigrazione straniera in Italia. Dal 1945 ai giorni nostri*, Carocci, 2018

³ Rapporto Caritas Migrantes.pdf 2019:

⁴ Rapporto Caritas Migrantes.pdf 2019:

http://s2ew.caritasitaliana.it/materiali/dossier_immigrazione/Sintesi_XXVIII_Rapporto%20Immigrazione_2018-2019.pdf

Italy has lived several migration waves⁵. From 2011 to 2017 Italy witnessed a growing emergency related to the migration flows of undocumented people coming from African and middle eastern countries. (Chart 1 and Chart 2)⁶.

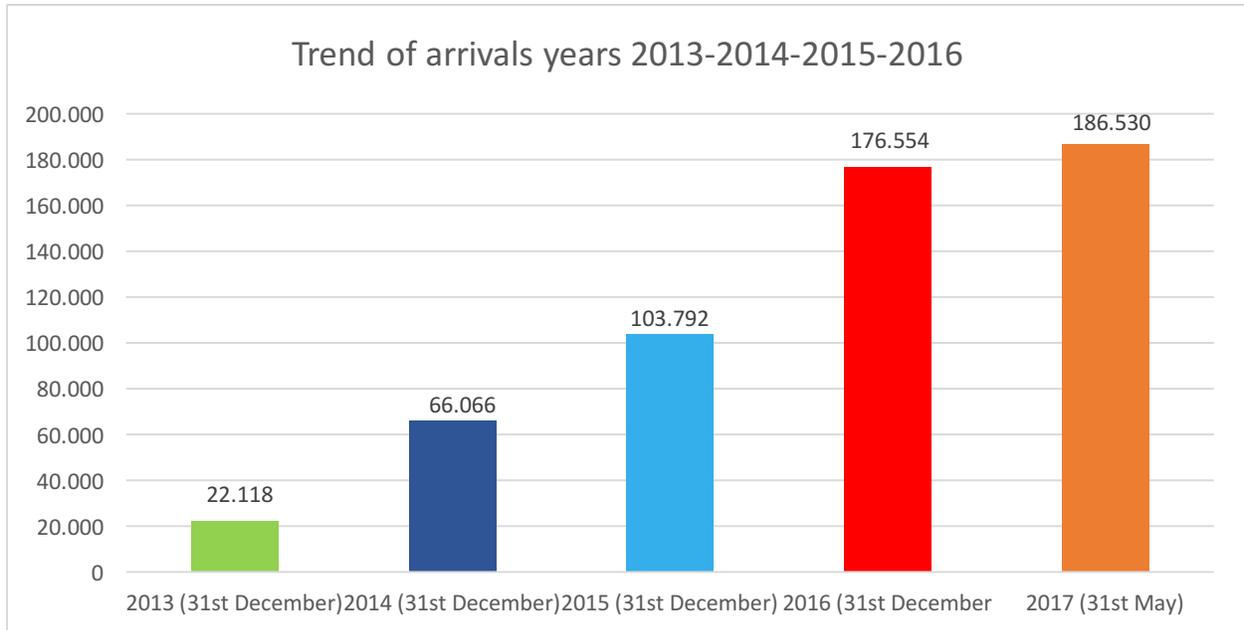


Chart 1: Resources of Ministry of Interior

From 2018, due to the political changes and the new decree on immigration and security, the number of arrivals in Italy decreased (Chart 2), however, the majority of migrants arriving in Italy via sea are still coming from African and the Middle East.

⁵ <https://www.internazionale.it/bloc-notes/annalisa-camilli/2018/10/10/storia-immigrazione-italia>

⁶ Date of Ministry of Interior

The chart shows the situation related to the numbers of migrants landing since 1st of January 2019 until 4th of September 2019 in comparison with data of the same period of years 2017 (-94,37%) and 2018 (-72,17 %)

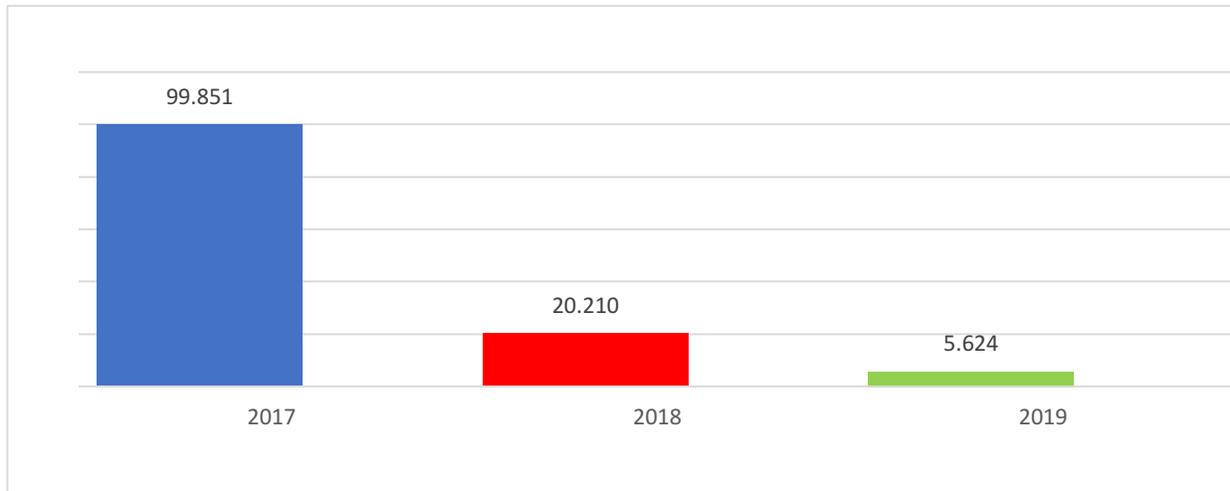


Chart 2

In the current regulatory environment, there is a strong tendency to seeing foreign people as “dangerous” and sanctioning them if they are “caught” without legal documents.

In the texts of numerous laws, immigrants are referred to as a potential threat for the society, e.g. as a *hostile presence*, in article 10-bis 1 of the 286/1998 legislative decree on immigration (*Testo unico immigrazione* in Italian), and in the 92/2008 decree-law “*Misure urgenti in materia di sicurezza pubblica*”, immigration court cases were given the same priority as terrorism or *mafia* related crimes. The first-tier reception centres, with the different labels they were given over the course of Italy's confusing legislative framework (i.e. CIE; CPS; CPT; CARA, etc., many of which are no longer used or have been replaced), and the Hotspots created in Italy and Greece by the European Commission in order to relocate the refugees, have become a sort of “non-place” for the immigrants: a limbo with a beginning but no certain end.

According to a report by the Italian Senate special commission on the protection and promotion of human rights (*Rapporto della Commissione Straordinaria del Senato per la Tutela e la Promozione dei Diritti Umani*), immigrants are often identified only after their arrival in the hotspots and without the help of interpreters or cultural mediators, thus denying their rights to receive adequate orientation to request international protection⁷. *The European directive 83 of 2004, applied in Italy with the legislative decree 251*

⁷ <http://www.centrosaluteglobale.eu/site/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/GAROFALO-Migrazione-e-Accoglienza-la-necessità-di-un-approccio-di-genere.pdf>



of 2007, states, however, that all foreign people arriving in Italy, whether legally or illegally, have the right to request international protection from the State. The request should then be examined by the relevant authorities that, after a hearing, decide whether to grant the international protection, either as political asylum (or refugee status) or as subsidiary protection. The third form of protection, humanitarian protection, was introduced in Italy in 1998 and then abolished with the 2018 decree on immigration and security (*Decreto su immigrazione e sicurezza*).

Those migrants who are granted asylum are transferred to second-tier reception centres part of the SIPROIMI network, (Protection network for people who have been granted international protection and unaccompanied foreign minors, *Sistema di protezione per titolari di protezione internazionale e per minori stranieri non accompagnati* in Italian) which have replaced and incorporated the SPRAR (protection system for asylum seekers and refugees, *Protezione per Richiedenti Asilo e Rifugiati* in Italian) and the CAS (special reception centres, *Centri di Accoglienza Straordinaria* in Italian, a hybrid between first and second-tier reception centres).

Obtaining political asylum means getting a residence permit that grants the status of refugee to those who demonstrate a well-founded risk of personal persecution in their own country, as stated by the *Geneva Convention* (art. 1)⁸. This permit is granted by the police and is valid for five years. The refugee status grants a number of rights, including: ability to work, access to civil service, access to the national healthcare service, access to social security services (Inps), access to education, ability to travel, family reunification and, after five years, Italian citizenship. Subsidiary protection is granted by a local commission to persons that cannot demonstrate they are being persecuted as per art. 1 of the *Geneva Convention*, but are still at risk of serious personal damage if they returned to their country. It is valid for five years, provided the pre-existing conditions based on which it was granted can still be demonstrated. Like the refugee status, subsidiary protection also grants a number of rights. One further type of legal permit, the special permits, were introduced with the in 2018 decree on immigration and security⁹ and are temporary residence permits that are granted in special cases (sickness, social and civil protection, protection against domestic violence, etc.).

The data we refer to is from 2018 and includes the following types of protection: political asylum, subsidiary protection, and humanitarian protection, while special permits were only introduced in 2019. According to the data from the Ministry of Interior, 95.000 asylum requests were examined in 2018. 7000 (7%) were granted refugee status, about 4000 (5%) were granted subsidiary protection, and 21.000 (21%) humanitarian protection. About one third of the total of asylum seekers were thus granted a form of protection in 2018.

⁸ http://www.integrazionemigranti.gov.it/normativa/documentiue/Documents/Conv_Ginevra1951.pdf

⁹ <https://www.interno.gov.it/it/speciali/nuova-normativa-immigrazione-e-sicurezza-pubblica>



These data are inevitably different in 2019, after the abolishment of the humanitarian protection. According to the data from the Ministry of Interior, about 81.000 asylum requests were examined from January to October 2019. 9000 were granted refugee status (over 11%, a significant increase compared to previous years), 5500 were granted subsidiary protection (6,9%), with 1000 humanitarian protection requests still not actioned since 2018. 67% of the requests were denied in 2018 while in the first 10 months of 2019 the number rose to 80%.

This data places Italy at the bottom of the list of European countries with the highest percentage of asylum requests that result into international protection. The EU average is of about 60% in the first instance, about 70% in countries like the Netherlands, Austria, Sweden, Germany, Denmark and Spain. Within the largest countries, only France and the United Kingdom have lower percentages (slightly over 30%).

The data on migrants' health shows that they are more exposed to infective diseases depending on their home and transit countries but also depending on their access to health services and deprived life conditions in transit and final destination countries¹⁰. The data also show a fairly low risk of transmission to the population of the host countries. The majority of those who arrive in Italy are in good health conditions, which confirms the hypothesis of the "healthy migrant" who was in good health when they left their country. While the Italian healthcare system is universal, many refugees and asylum seekers are often denied access to it due their legal status.

According to the report on the health of refugees and migrants in the WHO European Region (2019), there is a relevant number of other health conditions that could result in a disease for the migrant: non-transmissible diseases, mental health issues, mother and child health issues and work-related issues.

Such issues tend to get worse as the migrants spend more time in the host countries, due to continued exposure to negative social determinants, especially in the case of a faulty integration system. After the trauma of the displacement, the migrants' mental health is likely to drop (e.g. depression) due to the poor socioeconomic conditions and social isolation in the host country. Female refugees and migrants tend to show worse pregnancy-related indicators. Refugee and migrant women have more chances to protect themselves if they are more educated, have better knowledge of the local language, and the host country has stronger integration policies.

As for violence prevention, we find a few specific traits and barriers for female migrants and refugees: research shows that, also for female asylum seekers, violence within the family is the most frequent form of abuse (70% of the surveyed people), followed by human trafficking (52%), sexual abuse and rape (50%). Female asylum seekers have often been victims of sexual mutilation in their country of origin, while in Italy and Europe, where there is no such practice, they are victims of abuse, stalking and forced marriage. Furthermore, 15% of the interviewed cases come from countries where honour killings are still allowed¹¹.

¹⁰ Information Event "Rapporto sulla salute dei rifugiati e dei migranti nella regione europea dell'OMS"

¹¹ https://www.repubblica.it/solidarieta/diritti-umani/2019/09/17/news/bruxelles_il_progetto_a_sostegno_delle_donne_rifugiate_vittime_di_violenza_domestica-236240748/



From 2008 to 2016¹² an interesting ethnographic research on female refugees coming from Libya was carried out throughout the whole Italian peninsula and Sicily, which is the area where they usually arrive: during the research women were asked to talk about their story of migration and bureaucratic limbo. Women are often more vulnerable and isolated than men in the host countries due to a variety of reasons: continued exposure to all forms of gender-based violence in their home countries and during the migration journey; higher difficulty encountered when seeking asylum, especially when it comes to providing evidence or when they have suffered gender-based persecution, as they are not willing to tell or re-live their story; their child-caring role; pressure by male family members (husband, brothers, cousins, etc.); education and language, which are a great obstacle to the integration and cultural and economic independence of women and girls¹³.

Violence against refugee women is extremely hard to quantify because there are a lot of hidden victims that are ashamed or afraid of punishment by their family and revictimization by the institution of the host countries who could deny their status of refugees.

It is estimated that female refugees are more likely to be victims of gender-based violence than any other female group. It is therefore of paramount importance to create specialized services and improve the network of services for migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers. In general, it is important to raise awareness about gender-based violence, report more cases, create an international network of experts and provide services across multiple sectors (prevention of abuse, management of the consequences of violence, etc.), educate operators to take care of the migrant population from a gender perspective in response to prevention.

3. METHODS AND SAMPLE OF NEEDS ASSESEMENT

The needs analysis allowed us to gain an overview on the needs, resources and attitudes of male migrants and refugees and of the professionals involved in the fields of migration, education, prevention of gender-based violence and construction of masculinity, with the objective of implementing measures to prevent gender-based violence within the target population.

We used both qualitative methodologies (focus group and interviews) and quantitative methodologies (on-line surveys).

¹² <http://www.centrosaluteglobale.eu/site/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/GAROFALO-Migrazione-e-Accoglienza-la-necessità-di-un-approccio-di-genere.pdf>

¹³ EP – Directorate General for Internal Policies - Policy Department “Citizens’ Rights and Constitutional Affairs” – Gender Equality Study, *Reception of female refugees and asylum seekers in the EU. Case study Germany*, A. Bonewit – R. Shreeves, 2016

3.1 QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS: FOCUS GROUP AND INTERVIEWS

The tools the Centro Ascolto Uomini Maltrattanti of Florence used to carry out the qualitative analysis in Italy are:

- A focus group with 17 professionals in the fields of migration, education, prevention of gender-based violence and construction of masculinity. The focus group was led by four facilitators from the CAM association.
- Eight interviews with eight professionals and researchers in the field of migration and refugee assistance.

3.1.1. FOCUS GROUP

The focus group met in Florence in December 2019. After a short presentation of the CAM association and the project objectives, the 17 attending professionals introduced themselves and briefly talked about their motivations and work experiences. The experts who participated in the focus group work in the following fields: migration and inter-culturality (more specifically: reception of migrants, victims of human trafficking, prevention of violence amongst unaccompanied minors); prevention of gender-based violence through the work with perpetrators and measures of awareness-raising in the community using various methodologies (i.e. art-based or theatre of the oppressed).

The group of experts includes: a project assistant from *Salute Globale*, an initiative from the Tuscany regional government that coordinates international healthcare cooperation and migrant healthcare protection projects; a project assistant from *Organizzazione Internazionale per le Migrazioni (IOM)*, an international organization working with migrants part of *PROTECT*, a project for the prevention of violence against unaccompanied minors in the south of Italy; a cultural mediator from Nigeria also part of the *PROTECT* project; two educators from *Diaconia Valdese Fiorentina*, a social cooperative from Florence that promotes social activities within the local evangelic communities providing social services in situations of social exclusion, reception of unaccompanied minors and adult migrants; a psychologist and social worker helping victims of human trafficking to get reintegrated into society, and part of a community project to raise awareness about male stereotypes and models (*Progetto Arcobaleno*); a transcultural psychologist working in a first-tier reception centre in Florence for both Italian and foreign people, which is part of a local cooperative (*Cooperativa CAT and Associazione Porte Aperte*); two educators from a reception centre focussed on social exclusion (*Cooperativa il Cenacolo*); a local Report on the needs and resources analysis for Italy of the FOMEN project

emergency healthcare services coordinator (*Medici per i Diritti Umani, MEDU*); an artist, actor and expert in the theatre of the oppressed methodology working both in jails (*Compagnia Partecip-arte*), and outside jails with migrants in projects aimed at preventing gender-based violence; six operators (one psychologist, one psychologist and psychotherapist, one educator, one counsellor and two interns) from associations working in gender-based violence prevention through change-promoting programmes aimed at perpetrators (*CAM Ferrara; CAM Firenze; Maschile Plurale*).

The main objectives of the focus group were:

- Analysing the needs of male migrants and refugees to create suitable programmes to educate about prevention of gender-based violence with the target population.
- Analysing the needs of the professionals working with migrants and refugees in the field of gender-based violence, and, more specifically, understanding the needs to design and implement capacity-building programmes for professionals.
- Collecting and analysing examples of best practices from programmes carried out both in Italy and/or Europe, to identify criticality, strategies that allowed to reach the target population and motivated them to participate, contents and methodologies.
- Creating partnerships amongst professionals and organizations for the pilot implementation of the project.
- Collecting and discussing input on the quantitative surveys for professionals.

We used the World Café¹⁴ methodology to create four discussion tables on four main topics:

- 1) What do male migrants and refugees need to improve their gender awareness and sensitivity towards violence prevention?
- 2) What do professionals working with migrants and refugees need to better promote gender awareness and violence prevention?
- 3) Please share your experiences and best practices from violence prevention projects with migrants, refugees, unaccompanied minors, etc.
- 4) Your input will be useful to design a quantitative research. Which questions should be included in the survey for professionals about their needs and resources to prevent gender-based violence amongst male migrants and refugees?

3.1.2 THE INTERVIEWS

For the interviews we used the same guidelines as the focus group and adapted them to the needs of the experts we were interviewing. Using the same questions allowed us to compare the data. The professionals who were interviewed were: an educator from an international association active in the field of inter-culture (*Oxfam Onlus Italia*); the director of the social inclusion programme of a cooperative

¹⁴ Most of the World Café meetings are based on The World Café principles and formats (www.theworldcafe.com)



working in the field of social exclusion that has several offices in Tuscany (*Cooperativa il girasole*, *Consorzio Fabbrica*); the coordinator of a second-tier reception centre for individuals and families with social and housing difficulties (*Cooperativa il Cenacolo*); a coordinator of a healthcare services organization helping vulnerable people (*MEDU*); a researcher from the *Istituto degli Innocenti*, a leading institution for research, education and professional training for social workers in several fields (family, education, training, psychosocial, healthcare, law); an operator from the *Centro Ascolto Caritas*, an association active in the field of human rights both on a national and international level, and a psychologist and psychotherapist with extensive experience in the field of migration and asylum seekers in Italy.

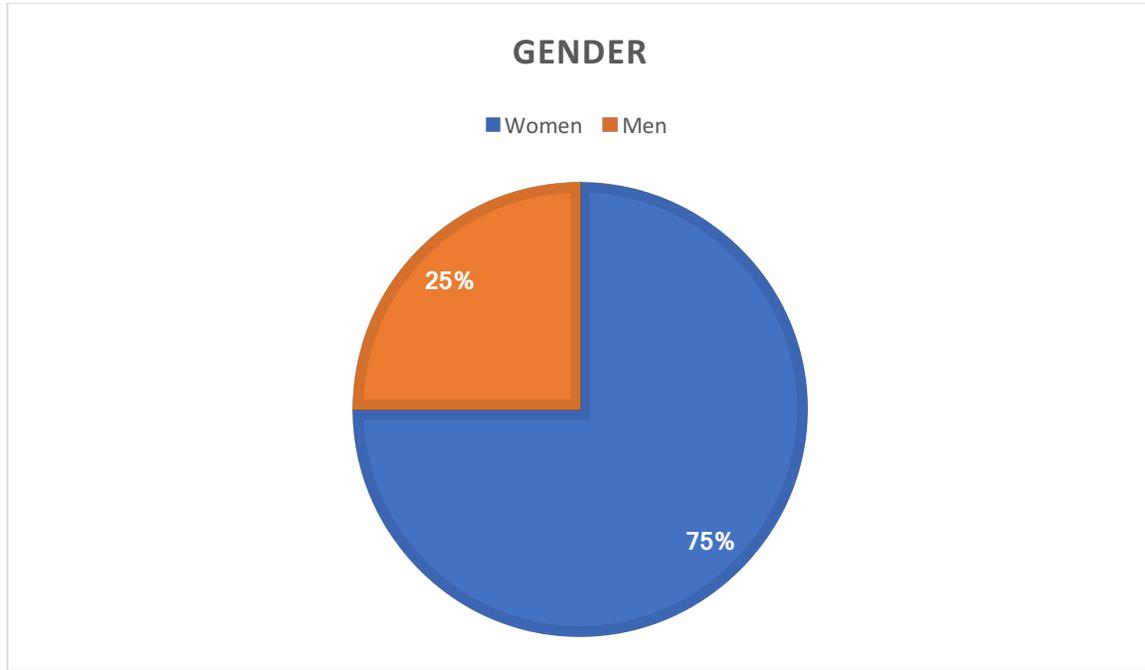
3.2 QUANTITATIVE SURVEY

The quantitative analysis was carried out through an on-line survey promoted and disseminated by the local and national CAM network.

The survey is divided in three parts. The objective of the first part was to collect personal information regarding the working areas of the interviewees, while the second part focussed on the needs of male migrants and refugees towards gender awareness-raising and violence prevention, as seen by the professionals we interviewed. We also analysed the needs of the professionals participating a capacity-building programme on the topics of gender and violence prevention. The third, optional, 15 minutes part contained open questions aimed at assessing the knowledge of the surveyed participants about national and international initiatives in the field of violence prevention and/or awareness-raising with migrants and refugees.

Below are described the characteristics of the sample group that participated in the survey.

In total, 60 people took the survey, of which 45 women (75%) and 15 men (25%). No one identified as non-binary or other (see Table 1 and Picture 1).

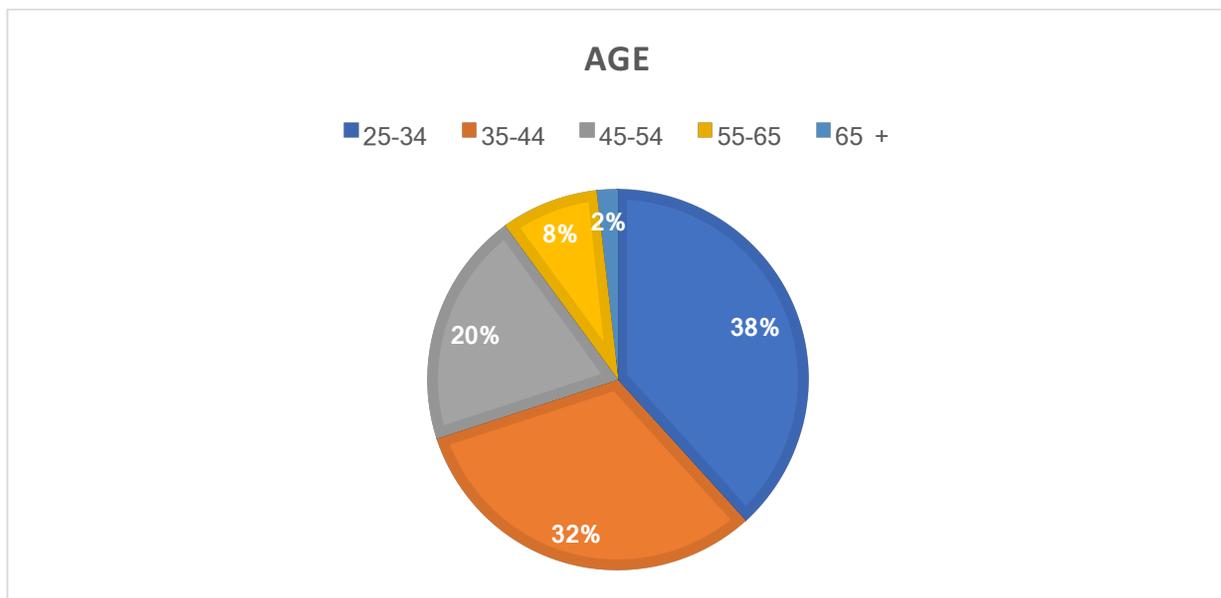


Picture 1. Participants gender

		Frequency	Percentage
Variables	Women	45	75.0
	Men	15	25.0
	Total	60	100.0

Table 1. Participants' gender: frequencies and percentages

The average age of the participants is 34-44 years old. There are no participants from the 18-24 age bracket (see Table 2 and Image 2).

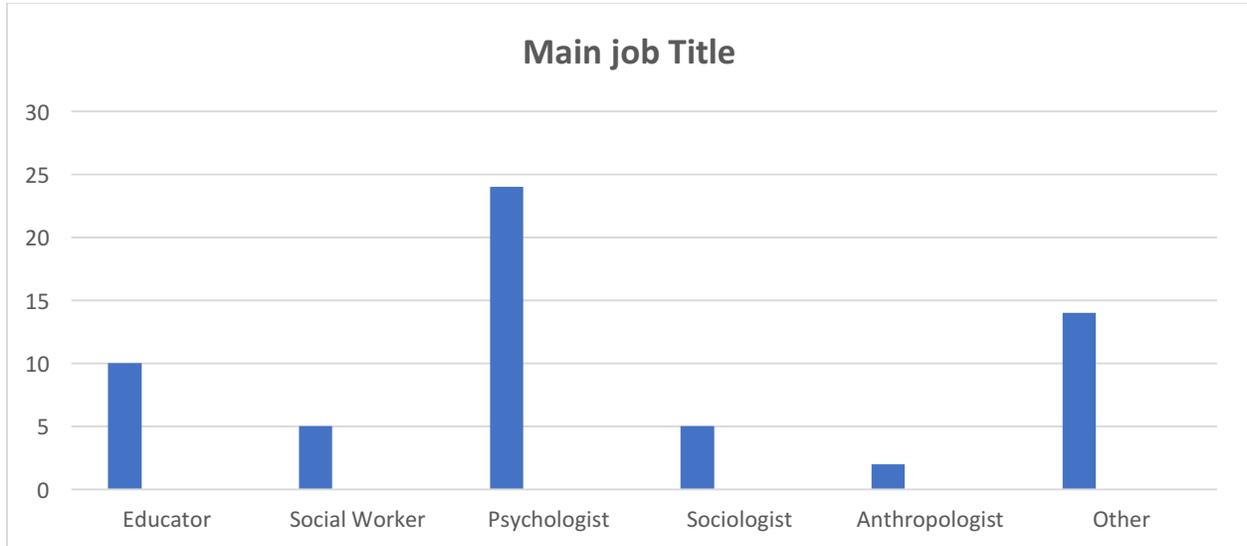


Picture 2. Participants age

		Frequency	Percentage
Variables	25-34	23	38.3
	35-44	19	31.7
	45-54	12	20.0
	55-65	5	8.3
	65+	1	1.7
	Total	60	100.0

Table 2. Participants' age: frequencies and percentages

Most of the interviewees (40%) work as psychologists and there are no doctors. 23.3% of the surveyed participants has a different job title from the ones in the list, such as: teacher, criminologist, project manager, pedagogist, social-healthcare worker, psychology trainee, official in the social/educational/cultural area.



Picture 3. Main job titles

	Frequency	Percentage
Educator	10	16.7
Social worker	5	8.3
Psychologist	24	40.0
Sociologist	5	8.3
Anthropologist	2	3.3
Other	14	23.3
Total	60	100.0

Table 3. Frequencies and percentages of the participants 'main job title

Most of them (93.3%) live in their official country of residence.

		Frequency	Percentage
Variable	Yes	56	93.3
	No	4	6.7
	Total	60	100.0

Table 4. Participants' country of residence: frequencies and percentages

The majority of the participants (93.3%) claim they don't have an international family background, only a small percentage (4%) claim they have (see Table 5). No one has ever been a refugee.

		Frequency	Percentage
Variable	No	56	93.3
	Yes	4	6.7
	Total	60	100.0

Table 5.

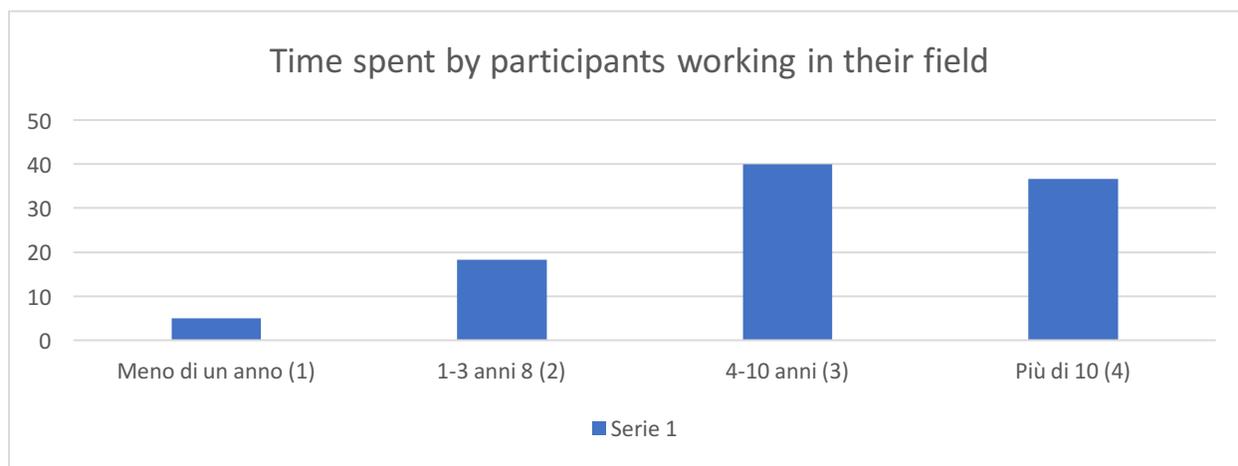
Participants' international family background: frequencies and percentages

73.3% work in the field of masculinity and gender, 63.3% work in violence prevention and 56.7% in migration and cultural education. 55% answered “other”, more specifically: minor protection, drug-addiction support services, social and educational services for minors, infant education, clinical psychology, psychology of work and organizations (see Table 6)

	Frequency	Percentage
Variable	Migration/ Inter-cultural background	34 56.7
	Gender/ Masculinity	44 73.3
	Prevention of violence	38 63.3
	Other	33 55.0

Table 6. Participants' working area: frequencies and percentages

40% of the surveyed participants have worked in their field for 4 to 10 years, 37.7% for over 10 years, 18.3% for 1-3 years, and 5% for less than a year.

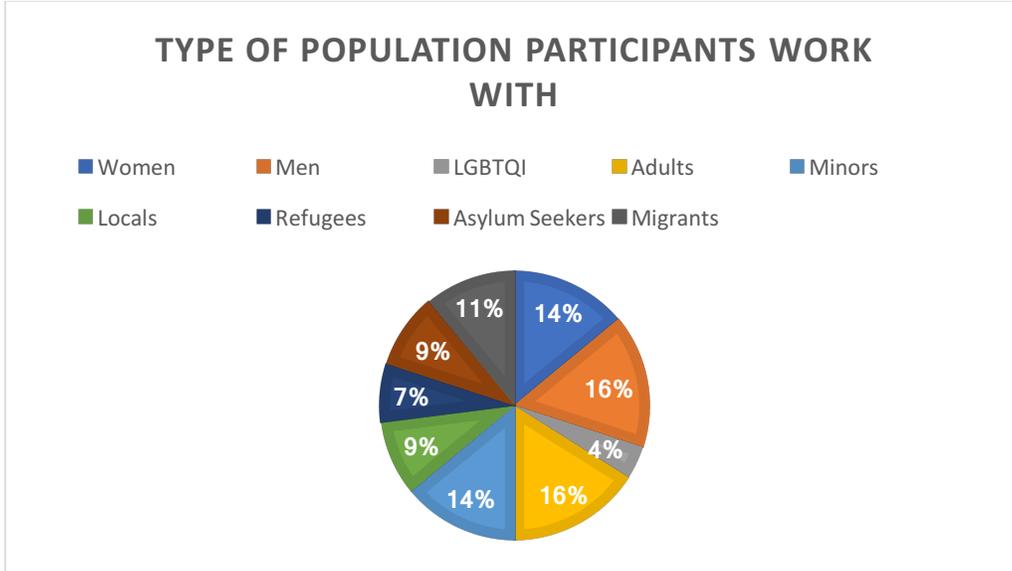


Picture 4. Percentages time spent by participants working in their field.

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Less than one year (1)	3	5.0
1-3 years 8 (2)	11	18.3
4-10 years (3)	24	40.0
More than 10 (4)	22	36.7
Total	60	100.0

Table 7. Participants' time (years) spent in their working area

A high percentage of surveyed attendees work with men and adults (73.3%), 63.3% work with women, 60% with minors, 50% with migrants. Low percentages of participants work with locals, asylum seekers, refugees and LGBTQI population (see Table 8 and Picture 5).



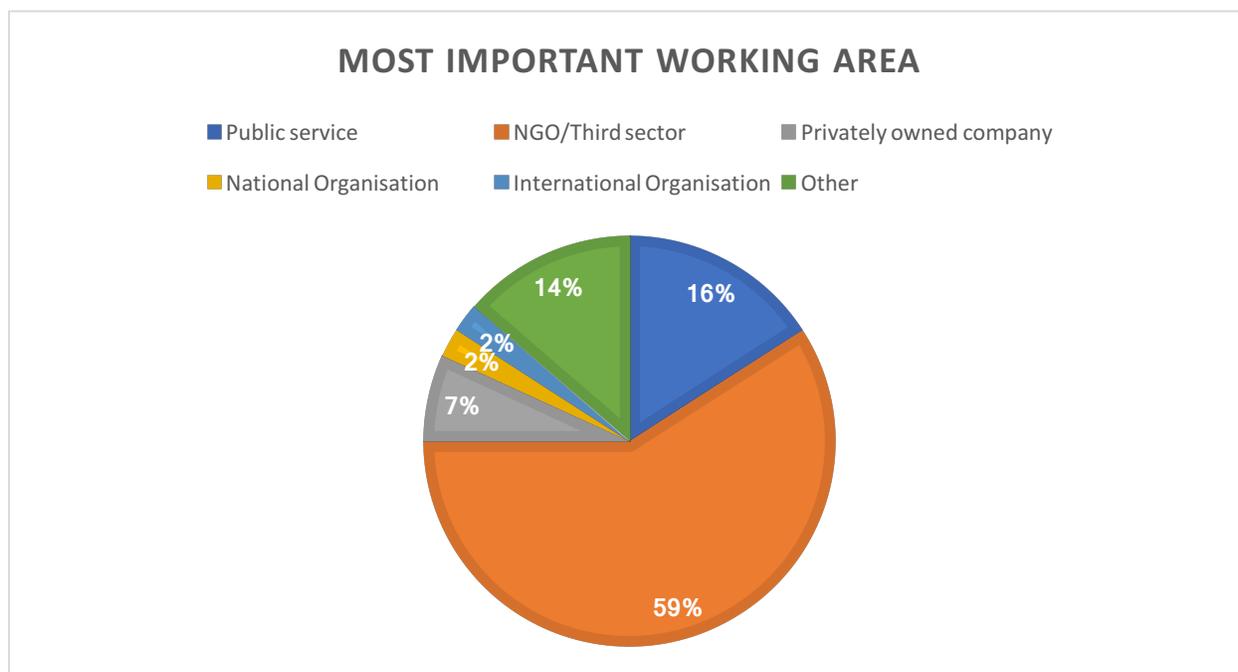
Picture 5. Type of population the participants work with

	Frequency	Percentage
Women (1)	38	63.3
Men (2)	44	73.3
LGBTQI (3)	11	18.3
Adults (4)	44	73.3
Minors (5)	36	60.0

Locals (6)	24	40.0
Refugees (7)	19	31.7
Asylum seekers (8)	23	38.3
Migrants (9)	30	50.0
Total	60	100.0

Table 8. Frequency and percentage of the kind of population the participants work with

43.3% of the associations the interviewees work with belong to the third sector, 11.7% are a public service, 5% are privately owned companies and 1.7% a national or international organisation. 16 of the interviewees did not provide an answer. 10% answered “other”, which correspond to social cooperative, international movement (see Table 9 and Picture 6).



Picture 6. Type of association the participants work for

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Public service	7	11.7
NGO/Third sector	26	43.3
Privately owned company	3	5.0
National organisation	1	1.7
International organisation	1	1.7

Other	6	10.0
Total	44	73.3

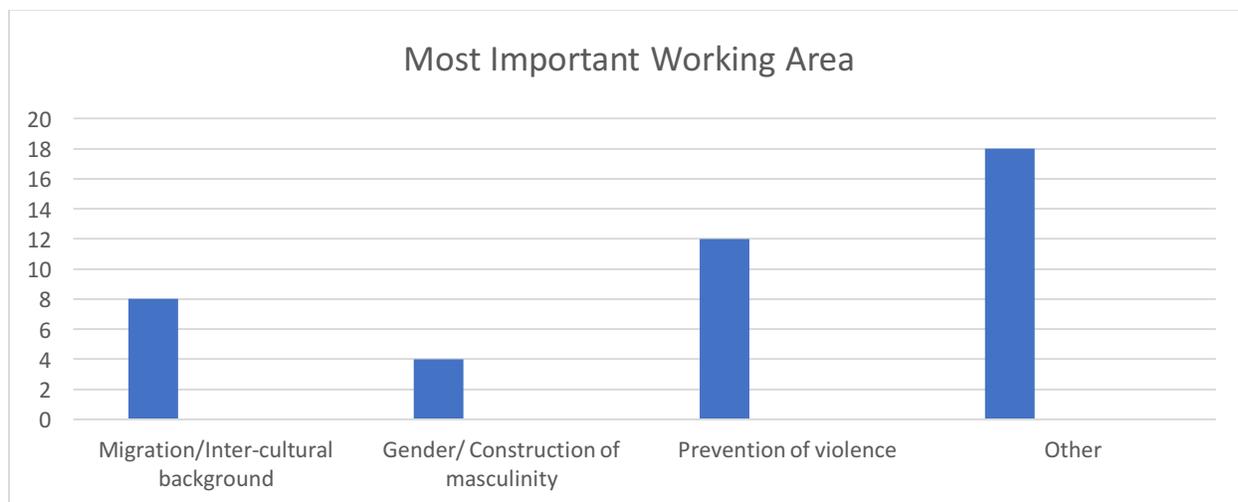
Table 9. Participants' type of association: frequencies and percentages

The associations the interviewees work for have 11-50 people on average. 16 people didn't provide an answer (see Table 10).

		Frequency	Percentage
Variable	Up to 10	14	23.3
	11-50	10	16.7
	51-100	7	11.7
	More than 100	12	20.0
	Total	44	73.3

Table 10. Participants' association size (number of people): frequencies and percentages

The associations' main working area is violence prevention (20%), followed by migration and inter-cultural education (13.3%), with a small percentage of gender and construction of masculinity (6.7%). A high percentage of surveyed participants answered "other" (30%), which corresponds to: reception, healthcare transportation, organizational well-being, addictions, social care services, educational services (with minors, disabled and elderly people), social services and on-line consultancy (see Table 11 and Picture 7).



Picture 7. Most important working area for the participant’s association

		Frequency	Percentage
Variable	Migration/Inter-cultural background	8	13.3
	Gender/Construction of masculinity	4	6.7
	Prevention of violence	12	20.0
	Other	18	30.0
	Total	44	73.3

Table 11. Participants’ association main working area: frequencies and percentages

4. RESULTS OF THE QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

In the following chapter we will outline the outcome of the qualitative and quantitative analyses carried out by the CAM of Florence (Italy) from November 2019 to April 2020.

The results were collected through a focus group, seven qualitative interviews and 60 on-line surveys. The research focussed on professionals and operators working in the field of reception, counselling, and integration of migrants; education; gender-based violence prevention and, especially, working with (male) violence perpetrators and the construction of masculinity.

The objective of these results is to define quality criteria to set-up and implement programmes on:

- *Awareness-raising on gender roles and gender-based violence prevention with male migrants and refugees*
- *Capacity building around the topics of awareness-raising on gender and violence prevention for professionals who work with migrants and refugees.*

The first paragraph (4.1) illustrates the needs and interests of male migrants and refugees as identified by the professionals and experts who attended the focus group on December 14, 2019 and took part in the qualitative interviews that were held in the following months.

Based on the analysis of those needs, requirements and methodologies were outlined that could be used to carry out programmes of awareness-raising on gender and violence prevention among male migrants and refugees.

Paragraph 4.3 outlines the needs, attitudes, skills, and knowledge that professionals and operators should have in order to carry out projects on gender-based violence prevention with male migrants and refugees. It is particularly important to identify programme contents that can be of interest and encourage participants to get actively involved, define the level of detail in which those topics should be discussed, and identify training opportunities for professionals in case they lack information on topics related to gender and violence prevention. Operators who would like to work in this field should first be given the opportunity to reflect upon their attitudes and their knowledge about social inclusion, integration, dynamics of violence in emotional relationships, and how their culture supports gender stereotypes. As far as skill training is concerned, the organizations should allow the professional development of their operators and encourage specific training initiatives to support these programmes in an efficient way.

Each organization should therefore support their operators in their own process of awareness-raising and skill development to get them prepared to promote and carry out programmes on awareness-raising and violence prevention among male migrants and refugees.



The needs, requirements and methodologies that were identified allowed us to define a few best practices (paragraph 4.4) and mistakes to avoid when carrying out programmes on awareness-raising and violence prevention among male migrants and refugees. These good and “bad” practices could be identified also thanks to the analysis of the experiences of participants working both in Italy and in other countries.

Paragraph 4.5 explains the results of the quantitative analysis collected through the on-line survey. Answers were analysed through a statistical software called SPSS. Surveys were carried out along the qualitative analyses and explored the same areas.

4.1 NEEDS AND INTERESTS OF THE MALE MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES INVOLVED IN VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND GENDER AWARENESS-RAISING ACTIVITIES

When analysing the needs of male migrants and refugees, the first focus area for professionals is the **economic conditions** they live in when they arrive in Italy. Most of these men are **not able to have their basic needs met**, such as: housing, balanced and consistent nutrition, job. More specifically: living with other men from different countries and cultures in a small and inadequate space, adapting to different eating habits and lacking a professional role, can significantly influence the individual's well-being and limit their chances to get acquainted with the new culture of the reception country and get integrated.

Another important factor is the need of **keeping in touch with their family and acquaintances in their home country**. In many cultures it is common for people to base their own choices on the support of their family, which influences the individual also from a distance and serves as a guide for them to navigate through the uncertainty of being "away" without any steady point of reference. The stronger their uncertainty caused by different set of rules, different habits, different ways of relating to people grows, the stronger their need for closeness and bond with their loved ones will be.

It also came to light that many migrants and refugees have difficulties understanding the principles upon which the reception countries' regulations are based, especially when it comes to their own protection and rights. This leads to a feeling of impotence and depression, with individuals not feeling motivated to identify their needs or the tools to manage them in the new situation. The long bureaucracy processes necessary to get an answer on their status lead to a permanent wait that makes it difficult for them to plan their future, identify any points of reference, build emotional relations, or look for a job.

In addition, **language barriers** make it even more difficult for migrants and refugees to integrate. Most of these people have received insufficient schooling in their home country. Those who have been schooled in their home countries generally have better tools and skills to learn the language and communication rules of the host country. Illiteracy has proven to significantly influence the ability to learn a new language and makes it impossible for the individuals to write, which is an obstacle in daily life. There will therefore be little contact between migrants and the people of the host country, except for the operators of the reception centres, and rare chances to get in contact with the host culture. This will in turn lead to lower chances to learn about the values and attitudes that guide emotional, gender-based relationship in the host culture, which will make it difficult for them to understand relationship modes, habits and customs, or even something as basic as greeting gestures. For instance, in some cultures of Northern Africa it is customary for men to approach women they meet on the street, which in the Italian culture is seen as an invasion of privacy. Not discussing these differences leads to misunderstandings that can result into migrant men being disparaged and isolated by the people of the host country. These sort of misunderstandings about relationship habits are bound to hinder integration and make it impossible for people from different cultures to integrate and get to know each other.

Migrants often experience serious and repeated episodes of violence during the **migratory process**, such as imprisonment, tortures, injuries, humiliation, witnessing executions, never ending journeys with no guarantee of reaching a destination, just to name a few. Experiencing human rights violations in such a direct way can leave a permanent scar and lead to a different perception of violence. It will be very hard for a man who has endured imprisonment, physical tortures, who feared for his own life while crammed on a boat with no guarantee of making it to their final destination, to understand the seriousness of violating the personal space of a woman they meet on the street, or the consequences of slapping their partner. This all adds up to the reaction to the **trauma** they experience during the journey to the destination country, which leaves deep physical and emotional scars¹⁵. The symptoms of the trauma experienced during the journey and the different vision they have of violent behaviours might lead the migrants or refugees to normalize violence in relationships.

As a further point to take into consideration we find the **power that the family in the home country holds on the migrant and refugee men and couples**.

Family units often feel entitled to take decisions based on the opinions and rules from their community in their home country, without taking into consideration the beliefs and habits of the society in the host country. For instance, when it comes to judging in legal proceedings, the Italian law doesn't take into account the family culture of the individual, especially in the case of minor protection while in other cultures these cases are often dealt with within the extended family. The head of the family, that is, the eldest person in the extended family, is the mediator in case of family conflicts and can take decisions to solve them (for instance in the case of parental responsibility and visits). It is not common to involve the legal system outside the family and the legal system does not rule over family matters and dynamics. This way of managing conflicts and family responsibility makes it difficult for migrants to understand why an external body (a judge in Italy's case) should intervene in family matters. Our legal system, in turn, when it comes to the protection of minors, often neglects the men's family members that are already in our territory: for instance, it might be more acceptable for the migrants if the child's care were entrusted to an uncle or a relative close the family, as opposed to an external service.

If men are not informed about the differences in the Italian legal system or women are not aware of their situation and the measures taken are not shared with them, any kind of intervention could cause them more harm than good. One of the risks could be, for instance, that women return to an harmful relationship before they have gone through a proper process of empowerment and independence or before being given a chance to reflect upon their rights and needs or a different way of being in a relationship. It is important for the men to also reflect upon and take responsibility of their own violent behaviours. Prematurely resuming such a relationship could pave the way for more violence. It is essential to find an effective way of communicating so that both men and women can get clear information on the Italian legal system, the situation they are in, the consequences of the measures taken and the legal

¹⁵ See Appendix for a more detailed description of acute post-traumatic stress symptoms.

obligations the operators have in case of a crime (e.g. obligation to report a crime). This allows them to set achievable goals within the Italian cultural framework and define effective strategies to meet their objectives.

It appears, however, that the migrant population ***lacks information on the services and counselling opportunities for both men and women available in their area***. To ensure the effectiveness of any measures taken, it is necessary to create a communication channel with both men and women and share information with them about the Italian legal system and their current situation. It is also necessary to provide information about the services available in the area, such as: name and aim of the service, how to make an appointment, how to get to the office, how to ask about the office, what paperwork is needed, just to name a few. It soon becomes apparent how difficult it is to guide an individual from a different culture through a completely new social system. Providing information is not enough: migrants need ***step by step counselling and support*** on how recognise their needs, how to submit an application or an inquiry and how to motivate it, how to identify the relevant service, how to find contacts and points of reference in the area, how to plan the journey to the office, how to prepare the paperwork and anything else that might be needed, how to correctly put their claim into words once they get to the office.

It is therefore necessary to effectively disseminate the information about the available services in each area and how to access them. Such communication cannot rely on the hope that the migrants will probably come across it and read it, but has to be actively promoted and explained keeping in mind the culture of reference of the individual so as to avoid resistance, fear or doubts. It is therefore important for the operators to forget all about what they think they know about their own culture and put themselves into the migrants' position in order to make sure they fully understand what they are being explained.

The next step is to plan the necessary actions to make sure the objectives are met.

As explained by one of the educators, part of a leading international organization for migrant reception and inclusion, the needs of migrants and refugees can be summarised in 4 main categories:

- Legal: support to navigate the legal system and define their legal status;
- Social and healthcare: access to the healthcare system;
- Reception: housing;
- Relationships: opportunities for social contact and inclusion.

Another area in which effective communication should be ensured is the **process to request and maintain political asylum** and how to renew residence permits according to the terms and conditions of the Italian legal system. As a consequence of trauma, migrants and refugees are often disoriented, suspicious and

afraid, which, in turn, makes them insecure about all the laws and rules that they don't know and may or may not allow them to stay in the host country, enrol in job seeker databases or language schools, access healthcare or force them to unlawfulness and even organized crime.

All the worries and uncertainty fuel their fears and create a vicious circle that puts even more distance between them and the operators of the services that are meant to help them, ultimately hindering their participation and integration in the society.

Moving on to the more specific topic of **violence in emotional relationships**, operators claim that most migrant and refugee men they worked with think that violence against women doesn't concern them. They think *violence was never present in their relationships and are not willing to participate in projects of violence and conflict management*. They are, however, involved in episodes of physical violence within the family, such as slap, tugs, insults, disparagement, threats to their female partners, both in their home and in the host country. They are often consumers of low-cost prostitution, thus participating in the exploitation of trafficked women. They use dating websites; their attitude is sometimes based on patriarchy and male privilege and they use sexist language against women.

At first sight there seems to be a disconnection between these men's values and attitudes. However, if we look at the situation in Italy, most Italian men also don't report any violence, while data from a 2014 study by the Italian National Institute of Statistics (Istat)¹⁶ shows that 31.5% of Italian women between 16 and 70 years old have been victim of a violent behaviour at least once in their life. Most of these behaviours would take place in their own homes.

This gap can be explained through some cultural elements that directly and indirectly support violence and find justifications for it. Each culture obviously has its own specific features, in some of them some elements are more prevalent than in others, however, in general it can be said that in every culture violence is rooted in and justified by gender roles and especially patriarchy. More in detail, patriarchy establishes universal and opposing masculinity and femininity models. Some of the beliefs and stereotypes on the role of women that are common to most cultures are:

- Women are responsible for the well-being of other human beings. Their value lies in their devotion and service to others. Their lives evolve around the care for other human beings.
- Women are naturally designed to love. Culture gives them this role as if it was embedded in their genes. Women are only complete when they belong to a man.
- **Bearing children is an essential duty** to assert their identity. Women are only happy and satisfied with themselves when they become mothers.

¹⁶ Istat Date <https://www.istat.it/it/violenza-sulle-donne/il-fenomeno/violenza-dentro-e-fuori-la-famiglia/numero-delle-vittime-e-forme-di-violenza>

- **Women have to be good looking and desirable.** Beauty makes women socially visible and accepted, turning them in an object subject to continuous attention and scrutiny.

On the other hand, the imperatives for men are:

- **Manhood is based upon power and strength** and is measured through success, superiority, competitiveness, status, etc. All of which must be shown also in the relationship to their female partners especially through control and abused mechanisms typical of psychological violence. Just to name a few: making decisions on her behalf assuming that the male's point of view is always right and valid, thus devaluing her capacity of choosing; defining her emotional space, i.e. what she is supposed to feel, with which intensity and how to express it.

Male privilege.

- **Masculinity is based on aggressiveness and audacity** and it's expressed through strength, courage, audacity, ability to protect oneself and use violence as a conflict resolution strategy. Some of the most heard comments about male violence are "If he slapped her, she must have deserved it" or "She provoked him". These beliefs blame the violent behaviours on women and do not highlight the violent behaviour itself, carrying the message that violence should be justified and accepted, Which, in turn, leads to normalizing violent behaviour in men in conflict resolution.
- **Manhood is based upon the ability to always feel calm and unmoved**, self-assured, and independent, and to hide emotions. Beside strength, it requires a high amount of self-confidence. Men are not allowed to be afraid, and if they are, they should hide it.

Some cultures have recently begun questioning these ideas that promote, support and justify violence and have created rules to define violence in a more precise way.

The Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention)¹⁷ which was approved in Istanbul on April 7, 2011 and open to signature on May 11, 2011 is "the first legally-binding instrument which creates a comprehensive legal framework and approach to combat violence against women and is focussed on preventing domestic violence, protecting victims and prosecuting accused offenders". The Convention is the first international treaty that contains such a definition.

"Violence against women" is understood as a violation of human rights and a form of discrimination against women and shall mean all acts of gender-based violence that result in, or are likely to result in,

¹⁷ Italian text of Istanbul Convention

<https://web.archive.org/web/20131220221333/http://www.lavoro.gov.it/ConsiglieraNazionale/LM/AREAINTERNAZIONALE/Documents/2011-05-11%20Convenzione%20Istanbul%20violenza%20donne.pdf>



physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.

Article 3, clause a of the Istanbul Convention

“Domestic violence” shall mean all acts of physical, sexual, psychological or economic violence that occur within the family or domestic unit or between former or current spouses or partners, whether or not the perpetrator shares or has shared the same residence with the victim.

Article 3, clause b of the Istanbul Convention

“Gender” shall mean the socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for women and men.

Article 3, clause c of the Istanbul Convention

“Gender-based violence against women” shall mean violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately.

Article 3, clause d of the Istanbul Convention

“Victim” shall mean any natural person who is subject to the conduct specified in points a and b;

Article 3, clause e of the Istanbul Convention

“Women” includes girls under the age of 18.

Article 3, clause f of the Istanbul Convention

These definitions and guidelines are applied through local and national laws that directly reach all citizens. Only with the existence of such laws it is possible to start a process of awareness. The enforcement of these laws contributes to the process of taking responsibility of the violent behaviours.

Each law system defines what is “right” and what is “wrong”, what needs to be prosecuted and with which consequences. All of this deeply influences cultures and relationships, and particularly family relationships. How each culture regulates family relationships will influence the creation of laws that can be more or less strict and aimed at controlling certain tendencies and vice versa.



It should not be forgotten that, for instance, physical violence on children was considered a valid educational tool until 1996. The European Social Charter¹⁸ had in fact **prohibited physical violence in schools in 1961**, though it had not had any impact on the single countries and their educational methods. The culture established that, in order to prevent and correct the students' inappropriate behaviours or acts of rebellion, it was necessary not only to verbally admonish them (obviously without offering any explanation, because the aim was for them to learn obedience and not to willingly follow a rule), but also to “show” them more concretely what was and what wasn't allowed.

There are no specific studies available on whether these “educational” methods are still applied in any country in Europe, however, physical violence in schools and in the family are legally forbidden in 52 countries. There is currently no law on this topic in Italy, however, in 1996 the Italian Supreme Court judgement 4904/1996 (Cambria) ruled against the use of corporal punishment as an educational or corrective method.

When discussing these topics with a migrant or refugee men it is therefore necessary to make sure they understand not only the Italian laws, but also the cultural framework they are based upon.

If a man understands that tugging his wife is a form of violence and that it is forbidden, it is possible that he will refrain from doing it to respect the law and not face any legal consequence. However, if he didn't go through a specific process to learn about responsibility, the consequences of violence and gender roles and power inequality, it is very likely that he will continue using psychological violence, by, for instance, not letting his partner decide for herself, not asking for her opinion, criticising her as a mother, or denying his daughter the freedom of choosing who to marry.

Learning about responsibility will help men to stop their violent behaviours and understanding the principles of equality and respect will help them avoid using psychological violence.

In this extraordinarily complex situation, migrants and refugees need concrete help to meet their basic needs for housing, balanced and consistent nutrition and a job. The ability to meet these needs depends upon a few previous necessary actions to support and allow the individual to integrate in a different social and cultural framework.

As previously mentioned, if migrant men are not familiar with the legal and healthcare system or the social services available, it will be difficult for them to learn a new language and they will not get in touch with the local culture and will struggle to have their basic needs met.

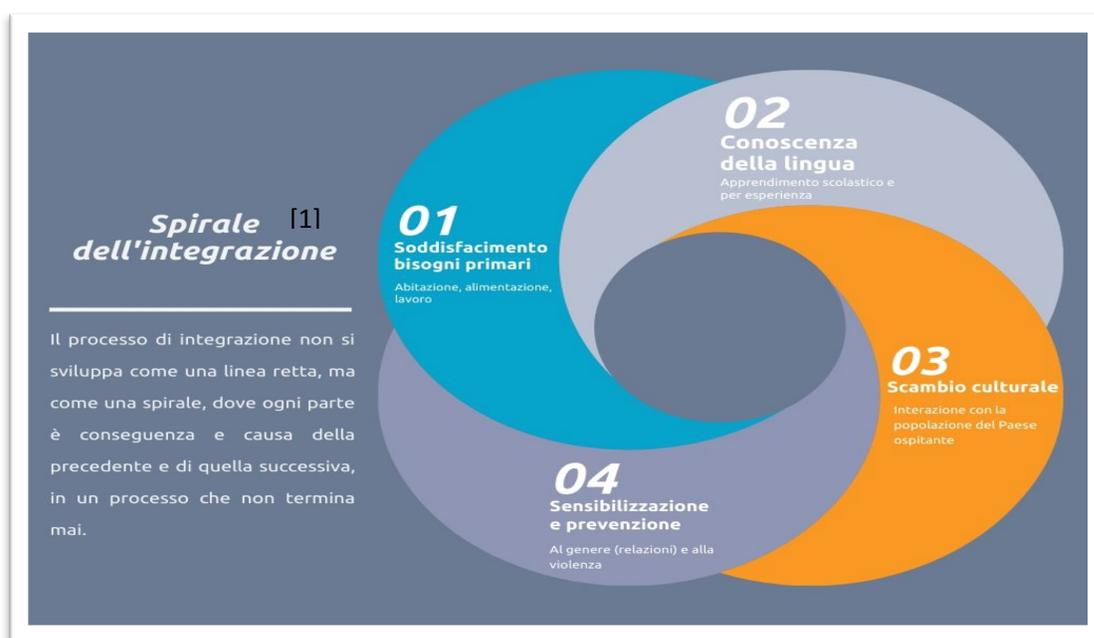
The integration process should not be visualized as a straight line but as a spiral in which each part is the consequence of the previous one and the cause of the next one, like in a virtuous circle.

¹⁸ Italian text of European Social Paper

<https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=09000168047e179>

Gender awareness-raising and violence prevention are therefore extremely important in the migrant and refugee men's path to integration and to the satisfaction of their basic needs.

At the same time it is fundamental for the operators who work closely with these men to also start a personal reflection on gender, to have the specific training and skills they need to be able to deal with violence-related topics, and, most importantly, to be an advocate of the need for awareness-raising and violence prevention programmes that are specifically tailored to the integration and the satisfaction of basic needs of migrant and refugee men.



Legend:

[1] Integration Spiral

The integration process should not be visualized as a straight line but as a spiral in which each part is the consequence of the previous one and the cause of the next one, like in a virtuous circle

01 Satisfaction of Basic Needs

Housing, nutrition, job

02 Knowing of Language

Education and experience

03 Cultural exchange

Integration with population of resident country

04 Awareness raising and prevention

gender and violence prevention

4.2 REQUIREMENTS AND METHODOLOGIES OF PREVENTION PROGRAMMES FOR MIGRANT AND REFUGEE MEN

This paragraph illustrates the ideal features of prevention programmes for migrant and refugee men according to the professionals who participated in the focus group and interviews.

Receiving information on gender awareness and violence prevention is of paramount importance in the migrant and refugee men's path to integration and satisfaction of their basic needs, as they are part of the virtuous circle we described earlier in this report.

Awareness-raising and prevention programmes are like open windows to observe these men's world but also for them to see the point of view of the host country. It is necessary that the capacity-building trainings for operators are clearly structured and feature the right content that will allow them to create effective programmes on gender awareness-raising and violence prevention among migrant men and refugees.

To this end, these programmes should contain:

- *Effective strategies to get migrants and refugees involved* based on their interests, perception of these topics in their culture, and mindful of how their vulnerability and trauma might influence their motivation to attend. The organizing institutions should offer carefully structured plans that are mindful of the men's motivation. This will boost attendance and protect operators from feeling powerless or burned out.
- *Actions to develop trust.* As previously mentioned, trauma, insecurity, vulnerability and fear make migrant and refugee men uneasy and suspicious about their new environment: if they don't understand the reasons for such activities and if they don't feel part of the idea of autonomy and integration that the institutions are trying to promote, they won't trust them or their operators and they won't get on board with the opportunities they are offered. Developing trust starts from transparency, i.e. sharing information and making sure its meaning and ultimate shared objective are understood. A person is more likely to trust another person or an institution if they can have a complete overview of their proposal, like a rock climber has a better overview of the mountain once they have reached the top.

It is therefore important for the institutions and their operators to build a strategy based on transparency to help men get acquainted with the new environment and available programmes.

In order to achieve this, institutions have to be actively invested in the programmes: operators cannot be efficient if they are not part of a network of professionals with the same objectives and don't receive clear guidance from the institution they work for. The institution and its operators must be aligned to be able to build trust. The interaction rules for men within the group are a good example to illustrate this point: *does the institution provide clear guidance or do the individual operators decide how to enforce the rules and how to deal with those who break them?*

There is always a lot of confusion and ambiguity around this.

As a rule, before the start of the in-depth work of programmes, a **system of rules** should be put in place that is understood by both the operators and the participating men that includes:

- ***A reduced number of rules that are clearly explained and clearly understood.*** It can be helpful to use visual tools to ensure that also those who have more limited language skills fully understand them.
- Define what the **consequences** are for those who do not follow the rules. They should be feasible and proportional to the transgression. They could be decided together with the men and should be shared with them, also in a visual way if needed. Consequences should be applied by all operators in case of transgression.
- Operators should commit to **enforcing the rules and applying the consequences** if they are not followed.

Rules are the first topic that should be discussed with the participants in gender awareness-raising programmes. They can be set together with them based on what they need to feel safe and comfortable in the group. Some examples of rules could be:

- Listening without interrupting;
- Don't judge others;
- Don't reveal details of what was shared within the group outside the group (especially in case of private details);
- Don't use their mobile phone and activate the silent mode;
- Establish how to interrupt an activities if it is not fully understood;
- Start meetings on time.

It is especially important to establish what the consequences for offenders are together with the participants. For instance, if one of them frequently uses his mobile, he could be asked to temporarily leave the group. Consequences can be visually represented together with the rules. All participant men must approve the consequence.

This will provide them with a clear guidance and a sense of control over the situation, as the rules of the game are clear, were commonly decided and approved and, what's more important, consequences for offenders are clear.

If, for instance, one of the men is asked to temporarily leave the group, it won't be perceived as an injustice but rather as the application of a rule that the person is aware of and has accepted.



According to the qualitative research results, in order to reach migrant and refugee men and encourage them to participate in groups for the prevention of gender-based violence, it is beneficial to partner with local associations, NGOs, cooperatives for migrant support and language schools for adults (CPIA).

It is also useful to get a community representative involved in the organisation of the programmes to spark the interest of them men from his community.

Another useful strategy suggested by the research is the **creation formal and informal group of migrants** such as dedicated helpdesks for migrants and refugees within the municipality, or, in some cases, involving religious leaders. Furthermore, it is possible to reach the migrants and refugees through the organizers of reception projects or social services that deal with families of foreigners facing difficulties.

Another option is to distribute flyers with information about the topics included in the programmes. Last but not least, in order to be able to reach the largest possible number of people, it was suggested to hold workshops within the SPAR/SIPROIMI network (Italian network for the protection of asylum seekers and refugees) to share information and raise awareness among migrant and refugee men on domestic violence.

It is also particularly important that these awareness-raising and prevention programmes are held in proper **physical spaces**, and meetings are held in the same space for the whole duration of the programme. To make the participants more comfortable, it is advisable that these spaces are outside the reception institution homes and are easily reachable by public transport. If possible, these spaces should be away from traffic and close to nature.

A suitable physical environment will help reducing tension and improve the chances for men to open up about relationships, cultural differences and violence.

For many of the men, talking about violence will mean **re-live the trauma** of the migration journey. It is therefore extremely important that the operators leading these programmes for migrants and refugees have a knowledge about the emotional and behavioural consequences of such trauma and the feeling of vulnerability it might cause. Operators involved in awareness-raising and prevention programmes must be aware of the emotional significance of these topics in the participants' lives.

It is also important to **monitor the emotional state** of the participants during the programme: observe their reactions, their non-verbal cues, or any sign of uneasiness. Such cues should never be ignored, and it is necessary for the person to receive the right attention. Depending on the situation, it might be useful for the operator to have a one-on-one with the person away from the group to allow them to "decompress".

It is advisable that the programmes are led by at least two operators so that any difficult situation can be dealt with a safer way for both participants and operators.



As far as the **contents** of these awareness-raising and prevention programmes are concerned, it is necessary to create a plan with topics and methodologies for each meeting.

As incredible as it may sound, and independently from culture, everyone has a completely different perception and **definition of violence**.

The first step should therefore be defining violence in all its forms and in different cultures. It might be useful to refer to the Istanbul Convention or the World Health Organisation, which define every form of violence as a violation of human rights. This will provide a common background for all cultures. However, it is also important to let the men express their doubts. For instance, corporal punishment in children education is not considered a crime in every culture. Each member of the group should be allowed to express their doubts without being judged. The operator will then help them bridge the gap between their cultural interpretation and the actual definition of that specific kind of violence.

Clear and understandable information on the **Italian legal system** should be provided. It should be understood by each and every man in the group that in Italy certain behaviours are considered crimes and are punishable by law. For instance, it should not be taken for granted that all participants know that following a woman walking on the street can be reported as a crime. What is considered a crime in Italy might not be considered as such in another country and vice versa.

The next step will be introducing the topic of **gender**, including power inequality, stereotypes, and gender roles in different cultures. How manhood and womanhood are interpreted in different cultures. What the consequences are if someone does not comply to these standards, what happens in their social group and what happens *inside* them. Participants should be encouraged to think about situations in which they did not comply to what their culture considers the masculinity standards. *How did other people react? What did you think? How did you feel?*

This usually brings up topics connected to strength, manhood, and, sometimes homosexuality. *What happens if a boy comes out as homosexual? How does his family react?* The reactions of the other members of the group will provide opportunities for the operators to understand the effects of stereotypes on people. Sometimes the reaction is laughter or jokes. Operators should take advantage of such moments and used them to work on prejudice and beliefs in a more direct way.

At this point it is advisable to discuss the **links between stereotypes and gender roles in violence**. *How could gender stereotypes and gender roles lead to violent behaviours?*

Here are a few **tips** to start a discussion.

- Courtship in different cultures;
- Sex education and contraception;
- Prostitution;

- Women's right to work;
- How religion relates to these topics.

It is important to use day to day topics that migrant and refugee men can relate to. **Start from their interests.** One of the groups of migrants, for example, claimed they were interested in knowing more about how to court Italian girls. Starting from this tip it was possible for the group to reflect together on courtship and what is culturally accepted, on gender roles and which behaviours can be interpreted as abusive or downright violent.

Given that most migrant and refugee men do not have the tools to understand how relationship between men and women work in the culture of the host country, it is very likely that women from that country will find some of their behaviours abusive. These men, in turn, can find the women's reaction insulting or racist.

Having these conversations is necessary to breach the gap in the communication between men and women so that it is built on a common ground and there are no misunderstandings.

It might be necessary or advisable to involve **experts** (lawyers, sex therapists, doctors, etc.) in these conversations. However, these experts should be able to convey the information in a simple and direct way, making good use of interaction and art-based methodologies. Operators should support them with their knowledge on these techniques.

The methodology used should always **take cultural values into account.** Both the men, as representatives of the culture of their home countries, and the operators, who represent the culture of the host country, should express their beliefs and values on the topics that are being discussed. The objective is to create a program for the whole group where everyone feels free to talk about themselves without fear of being judged.

In addition to the group activities, one-on-ones with some of the participants might be needed, in particular with those who don't have a good grasp of the language, in order to convey the contents discussed in the group with a more accessible language and make sure that they are understood.

Art-based methodologies are helpful to overcome language barriers as they used other communication channels aside from the language (art, theatre, music, movement, crafts, etc.). The methodology used should be tailored to the target group the programme wants to reach and facilitators will have a crucial role in making it possible to overcome cultural barriers: by also sharing their own story and being open to questioning themselves they will get closer to the participants and achieve better results. It is also recommended to involve cultural and linguistic mediators who are trained in gender-based violence prevention to help bridge the gap between the facilitators and the man participating in the programme. Mediators can use workshops to actively involve participants and make sure they focus their attention on



each one of them. Art, drama, drawing, theatre of the oppressed, humour are some of the tools that have been successfully used in these programmes to foster trust, openness and confidence within the group, which create a more comfortable environment for participants to be able to talk about violence.

When choosing the methodology to use, it is always important to keep the target group age in mind: for instance, games and role-playing work really well with young adults, as they are a way for them to use their social skills and create a network. It is recommended to also include Italian teenagers in these groups.

As also mentioned previously, it is necessary to invest in **training and awareness-raising also for mediators**.

The mediators should share the same views as the operators on the social and legal rules of the host country and should be aware of gender related topics and dynamics and how culture is involved in the distribution of power in relationships.

This is a fundamental step for mediators and operators to be aligned and avoid situations where mediators take the men's side, which are detrimental to the objectives of the programmes. Mediators who have not taken a critical look at their own beliefs and cultural stereotypes on gender will be at risk of conveying unclear or confusing information.

Finally, **religion** also plays a fundamental role in this process. Religion is an extremely important guiding principle for most migrant and refugee men. Religious values are passed on orally within the family and faith acts as an emotional compass,

making religion an extremely sensitive topic to handle as it belongs to both their personal and cultural sphere. When it comes to faith it is important to avoid clashes and make sure that both the operators and rest of participants listen with an open mind even if they do not share the same views.

Sometimes religious dogmas, or an interpretation of them, are used to justify certain violent behaviours. For instance, if a Muslim man states that corporal punishment and stoning are fair forms of punishment for infidelity and homosexuality because they are included in the Quran, it is advisable not to discuss the interpretation of the Quran but rather ask the man what he thinks and why he thinks they are fair. This is a way to move away from the dogma and towards critical thinking.

However, if the operator feels that the person is not open to discuss the topic, it is more advisable to move on to something else. Awareness-raising and prevention programmes should also allow for a reflection on scenarios that are less straightforward for participants.

These programmes should also be used as a platform to share **information** about social services in the area and is therefore important for operators to be up to date on their details and points of contact. It might be useful for the operators of the most relevant services to the topics dealt with in the programmes to attend a meeting and introduce the service directly to the participants, thus providing them with a clear



point of contact and familiar face and helping them to reduce anxiety around the possibility to actually access that service.

To further consolidate the programme objectives, it is very important for the operators to continue promoting awareness and prevention also **outside the programme**. One of the professionals from the focus group told us that they noticed more willingness to open up in the spaces outside the programme: for example when taking someone to a doctor's appointment, a situation where men feel closer to the operators and more open to a conversation. It is important for operators to be able to recognise these moments and use these opportunities to enter the men's world. Operators should also identify moments of the men's day to day life where they might be more open to reflect upon gender roles and help them develop a more consistent (not fragmented) idea over time.

Let us not forget that one of the most common features of men that are experiencing a state of vulnerability or trauma is **fragmentation** (see Appendix).

- Fragmentation of experiences: starting something and interrupting that process before finishing it. Doing something and then forgetting about it.
- Fragmentation of thoughts: moving from one topic to the other.

These are just a few of many possible examples that, however, still allow us to understand the importance of continuity from a formal to an informal space as an opportunity to turn a potentially fragmented experience into something that extends into the men's day to day life, which is also a form of intervention on trauma.

4.3 NEEDS OF THE PROFESSIONALS WORKING IN AWARENESS-RAISING AND VIOLENCE PREVENTION PROGRAMMES AMONG MIGRANT AND REFUGEE MEN.

The information that emerged from the interviews and focus group carried out with the professionals was instrumental not only to identify the needs of the migrant and refugee men participating in the programmes, but also highlighted the needs of the operators running the programmes. The objective is to define the quality standards necessary for the capacity building programmes for professionals active in the field of violence prevention and gender awareness-raising. The capacity building programmes are aimed at improving and maintaining the individuals' and organisations' skills, knowledge, tools and resources necessary to be able to carry out awareness-raising and violence prevention programmes among migrants and refugees.

To be able to carry out awareness-raising and prevention programmes for migrants and refugees, operators need be trained on **contents** of these programmes, that is, gender awareness, gender-based violence and violence in emotional relationships. More specifically, operators should:

- Be able to define in a clear and precise way each form of violence and the models through which they manifest (ecological model, violence cycle, power and control wheel) so as to be able to recognise a potentially violent behaviour;
- Be aware of the consequences of violence on the victims (women and children) and the emotional and physical damage they cause;
- Be aware of power and control dynamics and how they manifest through behaviours that show dominance, humiliation, isolation, threats, intimidation, disparagement or blaming of partners and or/children;
- See violent behaviour as a man's choice (men can choose to stop violent behaviours although they might not be able to do it);
- Take a clear stance against the use of violence, i.e. do not tolerate or justify any sort of violent behaviour;
- Work on their own social and cultural beliefs and attitudes about the perpetrators. It is important to identify and re-discuss these myths and beliefs. Here are the most frequently encountered amongst them:
 - "The perpetrators of violence are ill: they have a psychiatric or psychological condition"*
 - "Men become violent because of alcohol and the abuse of substances"*
 - "All perpetrators of violence have been abused or have witnessed violence when they were children"*
 - "The perpetrators of violent behaviours are always good/bad fathers"*
 - "Violent men can't change"*



- Be able to refer to international standards (Istanbul Convention, World Health Organisation) and national laws and standards (criminal code, safety plans for victims and local social services for victims and perpetrators);
- Be familiar with gender stereotypes and roles and how they manifest and support violence;
- Be familiar with the traditional masculinity models, both in their culture and in other cultures.

Operators should have the necessary skills in order to be able to:

- Identify the signs of domestic violence based on the language and behaviour of the participating men;
- Address violence with the participating men in a respectful and direct way/name the violence;
- Share clear and unequivocal messages about violence and its consequences;
- Encourage and motivate men who have committed acts of violence to contact the appropriate social services;
- Refer participants to the appropriate social services available locally and take them if necessary;
- Make sure that the women and children who have been victims of violence receive adequate support and safety programmes are put in place, collaborate with the social services;
- Work on the migrant and refugee men's motivation;
- Be free of cultural prejudice.

To consolidate these contents and skills and put them into practice, operators should:

- Continuously refresh their training;
- develop their professional network (both formal and informal);
- Identify and solve any difficulty in putting what they have learned into practice;
- Make sure that the information and knowledge they acquired is not forgotten but used in practice instead;
- Follow up on referrals to specific services.



Operators should be able to focus on men with a non-judgemental, welcoming, and empathic attitude and be particularly mindful of cultural differences. They must find the right balance in order to avoid confrontation and open a space for exchange on the topics of gender awareness and violence prevention. **Focussing on men** means to become their allies in their process towards the elimination of stereotypes and in their search for strategies to manage conflicts without violence; it means to stand by them through their inner conflicts and contradictions, show empathy when they feel pain about their behaviours or they become really aware of the consequences on their victims.

Focussing on violence, on the other hand, is the true objective of the operators' work, that is, stopping violent behaviours while promoting the resolution of conflicts without violence. The work to be done with the men on stereotypes or gender roles will therefore focus mainly on their connection to violence. Violence will remain the focus topic during the whole programme.

It is a leitmotif that begins with the introduction to gender and role awareness: making the connection with violence clear in this context is the first step taken by the operators to focus on violent behaviours.

Most of the professionals in this field claim they are skilled at “sensing” violence but not the intensity or “seriousness” of the episodes. “Violence against women is very frequent and it’s only reported by women when they ask for help. Men, on the other hand, never claim they have committed violence against their partner”, told us one of the experts we interviewed. It is therefore not enough to “sense” and detect violence: operators should be supported by a network of local services they can easily refer to and direct the participants to.

This way they won't feel alone or overwhelmed by the task at hand. The social services network should coordinate with the programme operators to help spread information about legal aspects and access to the programmes, thus promoting secondary and tertiary prevention.

In the light of these considerations it is necessary for the operators to also **reflect on their experience of violence and abuse** they might have suffered, perpetrated, or witnessed. It is necessary to go through this process for them to be aware of the emotions perpetrators could feel and the memories these might trigger.

This will allow the operators to name violence and define each behaviour with the right name, which is a fundamental part of the process for both the female victims to get recognition for their condition, and for the male perpetrators in their difficult condition to give a name to what is happening.

Given the very specific features of this phenomenon and the work needed to raise awareness and promote prevention, it has to be very clear for the operators that the safest and most effective way to act on it is within a **network**, that is, constantly interacting with all the services involved. Whenever a violent behaviour is detected and there is no network available to fall back onto, it is necessary to activate a process of protection of the victims.



Operators have to take a **clear stance** on violence and abuse and any beliefs or attitudes that might support them in order for men to be driven to take responsibility for the violence they perpetrated and be willing to embark upon a process of change.

Another relevant aspect that emerged from our research is **awareness-raising among cultural mediators**. Cultural mediators are often men and women that just happen to speak the migrants' language and Italian. If they have not been properly trained to be cultural mediators, i.e. trained to both translate the language and convey cultural elements, the concepts conveyed in the interaction might get altered.

It was reported that mediators would often address the men with the typical: *"Stop crying, it's not manly!"*, thus supporting a vision of masculinity based on strength and courage and interfering with the objective of the programme to raise awareness on gender.

Raising awareness about gender stereotypes and roles within relationships among cultural mediators has a great potential for peer education and mentoring.

Both these methodologies are based on the principle that peers are the best influencers when it comes to gender awareness-raising, as men feel they have something in common with them since they might have been through the same experiences or culture.

It is encouraged that trained cultural mediators co-facilitate educational programmes for gender-based violence prevention and act as a bridge between the service operators and the (migrant and refugee) attendees.

To overcome the **language barriers**, which was identified as one of migrants' needs, it is interesting for operators to be trained in non-formal education techniques that allow for a more direct bond among the group. It is particularly important to include linguistic and cultural mediators among the professionals who will receive a training on gender-based violence prevention, as they will have an essential role in the interaction with the migrants. One further element that should be thoroughly analysed in trainings for professionals is their experience managing emotions and frustration within a team.

Reflecting on gender and on violence is not only about analysing one's experience with violence, it is necessary for each operator to also understand how **their own gender** influences their credibility in the work with the participants to the programme. In fact, some female operators reported that they have felt powerless trying to communicate with migrant and refugee men without being paid attention to. In some cases, they had to rely on their male co-workers to be able to complete the task at hand. The question we want to answer is: "How much does the men's culture influence the way they value female or male operators and how efficient do Italian women actually feel they can be compared to their male co-workers"?

This question will have several answers depending on the individual and should rather be a guiding light through other cultures and our own. Women from our culture often do not feel they are being effective and expect external recognition instead of valuing themselves as such. When a female operator relies on a male co-worker to feel more secure and more credible, she ends up reinforcing cultural stereotypes, thus undermining the work they are trying to carry out towards gender awareness-raising.

Furthermore, it is essential for operators to not only have knowledge and tools to handle **trauma** within the group, but also, and more importantly, to receive information on how trauma manifests through the person's behaviour and attitude. The Appendix includes an in-depth description of the post-traumatic stress disorder caused by trauma and vulnerability among migrants and refugees.

It emerges that people who have suffered a trauma will experience changes both in the perception of themselves and in their relationships with others. Trauma can, in fact, compromise the perception of reality, judgement, regulation of emotions, defence and memory organization/integration. Traumatized men are likely to be more irritable, experience sleep and anxiety disorders, and try to self-medicate through substance abuse (alcohol and drugs). On a relational level, trauma might cause insecurity and lack of trust in men, who will withdraw and avoid situations that might remind them of the traumatic experience.

Furthermore, these men are also highly likely to be vulnerable to the possibility of being hurt again, which will make it difficult for them to adapt to new environments and new situations. This vulnerability is especially evident in their psychic functioning, due to the changes and the process they have been through to navigate the new national and international regulations.

Having a knowledge about the consequences of trauma and vulnerability, how they manifest and how to approach people who are experiencing them, will allow operators to help them deal with the fear of not being acknowledged or integrated.

In these cases, too, it is necessary for operators to have a sort of "mind map" to understand the men they are working with and be able to leverage their resources.

The operators' training is completed by an **in-depth and focussed knowledge about migratory processes and ethnic models and values**, especially regarding those ethnicities that are more present in their area.

All these aspects have a significant influence on the **men's motivation** to participate in the programmes. Many operators report their difficulties involving migrant and refugee men in the programme activities. Several of them also report that they had to do a lot of emotional counselling with men in order for them to start participating and this has caused strong anxiety and frustration in the operators, whose most common reactions are to avoid actively proposing these activities altogether or getting too involved in the counselling part (*maternage*).



Both kinds of reactions undermine the objective of the programmes of building the men's independence through the construction of new and significant values in the host country.

For instance, operators have reported that they must constantly remind the men about the activities or appointments and their importance, which makes them feel like they are the only ones who have an interest in them. In this scenario, men do not seem to grow any sort of motivation to take part in the activities.

We already mentioned that lack of motivation is part of the consequences of the trauma experienced during the migration journey and the violence they might have undergone. However, there are also some cultural aspects to commitment and appointment keeping: for instance, some men do not follow precise timetables and schedules as we do, but rather "time frames" and have to get used to the habits of the new culture.

Without this kind of information, operators are at risk of feeling confused or getting **burned out**. Like the migrant and refugee men, operators that find themselves in this state of powerlessness for a long period of time will get heavily **demotivated** themselves.

It is therefore extremely important for operators to be trained and supervised to be able to have the right information to "access" the migrant and refugee men's world and ensure their emotional security.

To these ends, all **capacity building programmes** for professionals necessarily require the involvement of public institutions and the creation of standard procedures to monitor and evaluate the initiatives also through follow-ups to promote and motivate participation. It is also recommended to structure the programmes in short modules, to avoid dispersion due to lack of motivation.

4.4 BEST PRACTICES IN GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AWARENESS-RAISING AND PREVENTION AMONG THE MIGRANT POPULATION

Research, bibliography, and best working practices in the field of violence prevention among migrant population show and encourage a number of intervention strategies, especially when it comes to approaching programme content.

It is therefore important to identify past experiences of gender awareness-raising and violence prevention programmes with male migrants and refugees in other territories, reflect on the best practices they yielded and on how to apply them to a different territory.

The first step will be to consult the bibliography and identify the projects that have already been carried out with our target audience. For instance, a programme aimed at raising awareness and preventing violence among adult migrants and refugees will feature a different methodology and contents compared to a programme for unaccompanied minors.

A few experiences that could be of interest for our target group were mentioned during the focus group and the interviews.

1. One of them was **“Men Talk”**, a violence prevention programme carried out in Austria by the VMG association. They structured their working model on the concepts of masculinity with migrant men in a series of modular conversations based on the Norwegian concept of Alternative to Violence (ATV), collaborating with other organizations such as Men's Work Austria (DMÖ), the Counselling Centre for Men in Vienna, the Salzburg Centre for Men and the lower Austria Counselling Centre for Men / Caritas St. Pölten. The project was designed to create a conversation with male asylum seekers on topics such as violence prevention, women's and children's rights, gender equality, sexuality, and relationships. More in detail, the programme contained 12 modular conversations on the following topics: definition of violence, equality, relationship, sexuality, law, authority, rules, children's rights, managing rage and powerlessness, honour and respect. The objective of these conversations is to raise awareness on equal rights and opportunities, recognising social diversity and promote social inclusion and cohesion. The conversation series takes place at the participants' reception home once a week for six weeks. For more information on the model and conversations, see. https://vmg-steiermark.at/de/men_talk

2. Another relevant example is the **“Boys in Care”** manual, created within the framework of the European project **“Boys in Care – Strengthening boys to pursue care occupations”** (BiC), carried out by six partners: Dissens – Institut für Bildung und Forschung e.V. (Germany), Verein für Männer und Geschlechterthemen Steiermark (Austria), Center of Women's Studies and Policies (Bulgaria), Istituto degli Innocenti (Italy),



Center for Equality Advancement (Lithuania), and The Peace Institute (Slovenia). The project was funded by the European Union and other institutions and took place from April 2017 to September 2019.

The objective of the manual is to offer information to male and female operators working with boys on how to support them in their choice of getting trained in caring professions. More in detail, the aim is for operators to be able to provide professional counselling also based on gender awareness. The information and methods contained in the manual are meant to help operators and trainers to work with two different target groups: training teachers, counsellors, social workers and educators on the one hand, and working directly with the boys on the other hand. The manual contains information and definitions about gender stereotypes, inequality, men's expectations, segregation of the work market and boys in caring professions, and is structured in six modules, each one covering a specific topic to support professional counselling while being mindful of gender. The method description is supported by practical information on how to implement them and examples of best practices. Each section of the manual can be used for pedagogues' trainings or self-training for any professional who works with boys, such as elementary school teachers, high school teachers, work counsellors, professional educators and socio-educational instructors, including those who are specialized in the work with men, social workers or any other expert in the field. We hope that this manual can become a practical guide and provide pedagogy professionals with tools to support their counselling work with boys based on gender awareness.

For further information and downloads: <https://www.boys-in-care.eu/it.html>

3. The third model we saw was **Progetto Aisha**, carried out in Milan, Italy, and aimed at combating violence and discrimination against women. The main objective of the project is to promote a vision of society where women and women can share rights and duties, enjoy equal opportunities, mutual help, and collaboration. Other actions the project wants to promote are: giving more value to women, supporting their freedom of choice and their social and economic independence; providing every possible tool for women to overcome violence and discrimination, with a special focus on Muslim women; contributing to the wider objective of protecting women of any nationality and religion; promoting women's well-being and their social and economic independence. The activities that are carried out within the project in the Milan area are: **public awareness-raising**, promoting a discussion about gender-based violence as a consequence of cultural heritage and prejudice to overcome; spreading information about violence and discrimination against women, helping them gain self-esteem and control over their choices, decisions and actions both in their personal relationships and in their social life; promoting **women's health** and their well-being on personal, family and social level; promoting women's social and economic independence and providing every possible tool for **women to overcome violence and discrimination**, with a special focus on Muslim women. Furthermore, the project: promotes educational and awareness-raising programmes for young people, carried out with interactive tools such as art, theatre and figurative workshops; promotes the collaboration amongst communities of different cultures and religions, assistance and cultural organisations in order to create a local support network; encourages best practices and innovative models of violence prevention that have been tested on a local level and can be extended to a national level; promotes awareness-raising and training initiatives for families about the role of each member in society and education, supporting couples and encouraging the value of the woman's role; promotes integration and prevents the social exclusion of women, young people and families that live

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outside the local social system, helping them overcome language and cultural barriers, traditional heritage, social isolation and fear of slander, social disapproval and stigmatisation).

For more information on the project please check the dedicated website: <https://progettoaisha.it/>

4. The fourth **project is called “Speak Out! Empowering migrant, refugees and ethnic minority women against gender violence in Europe”**, funded by the EU Daphne programme. The project was carried in different countries and contexts: Padua in Italy, Madrid and Barcelona in Spain, Helsinki in Finland and Amsterdam and The Hague in the Netherlands. In Italy, Padua was chosen mainly due to its experience with immigrant policies, its institution and association network and its strong relationships with the institutions and associations of the local area. The project’s main objective was to educate women to prevent and combat violence against migrant, refugee, and disadvantaged minority women. Around 300 women were involved in total, split into several groups, all of them migrant or with a migration background, refugees or belonging to minorities, and they received a 100-hour training. The results of the project were shared in schools in Padua and Venice and during public events both in the Veneto region and during national and international conferences, thus reaching many more people than the 300 women involved in the trainings. The participants to the project had the chance to learn how to recognise gender-based violence, how to become experts in topics related to violence against women and a reference for other victims of violence in their day to day life, in their cities and towards the institutions.

This approach, involving the creation of a mentor figure as a point of reference in the awareness-raising process to eradicate violence against women, was a real breakthrough in Europe. It is a brand-new role for the broader community: these women, with such different national, cultural and linguistic backgrounds, are empowered to become active citizen in their area even if they don’t have full citizenship in the country.

During the training in Padua, the participants created 11 “she-stories” on violence and how to overcome it and a “community mentor charter” about violence against women, with guidelines to establish peer-to-peer relationships in the broader Padua area. These short stories and the mentor charter were the main results of this training.

The final project report “*Migrazioni, Genere, Accoglienza Mentor di comunità e buone pratiche contro la violenza*” by Maria Grazia Peron is available (in Italian) at http://www.padovanet.it/sites/default/files/attachment/C_1_Allegati_16041_Allegato.pdf

There are several other associations and institutions in Italy that focus in the fight against discrimination and violence against foreign women, among which we would like to mention:

- *Almaterra* association in Turin <http://www.almaterratorino.org/>

- *Le Mafalde* association in Prato <https://www.lemafalde.org/>

- *Nosotras* intercultural association in Florence <https://nosotras.it/>

4.5 QUANTITATIVE ANALYSES

In the next paragraph we will explain and analyse the data collected through the on-line surveys.

The answers were processed through the SPSS software (version 21.00), that allowed us to carry out statistical and descriptive analyses based on frequencies, percentages, average, deviation and standard. The data refers to the questions contained in the survey and divided into 5 main research areas. Below are outlined the questions and the results of the analysis of the answers.

Needs of migrants and refugees in the prevention of violence and gender awareness-raising. Table 12 outlines the average answers to the items related to the question *“How important are the following needs for male migrants and refugees regarding gender awareness-raising and violence prevention work?”* expressed in a Likert scale from 1 to 5 (1: not important, 2: not very important, 3: moderately important, 4: somewhat important, 5: very important).

Most of the surveyed people maintain that the outlined needs are *somewhat or very important* in order for migrant and refugee men to develop a better gender awareness in their path to violence prevention. For the following items a clear tendency towards 5 (very important) can be noticed: item 6 *“Talking about the violence and discrimination they have been and are subjected to and its consequences as a basis for preventing violence”* (A=4.60; SD=.82); item 7 *“Reflecting on/talking about how the flight/migration and integration process has affected and affects their role and identity as men”* (A=4.5; SD=.81); and item 8 *“Discussing with other migrant/refugee men how to transform their role in family and other relationships in the country of residence”* (A=4.45; SD=.85).

		N	Average (A)	Standard Deviation (SD)
NH08_01	Learning about views and values and law on family and gender roles and equality in the country of residence (in comparison to the country of origin)	60	4.22	1.043

NH08_02	Learning about views, values and laws on violence against women and children in the country of residence (in comparison to the country of origin)	60	4.42	,962
NH08_03	Learning about views, values and laws on LGBTIQ* in the country of residence (in comparison to the country of origin).	60	3.98	2.013
NH08_04	Talking about their experience of flight / migration and related trauma with other refugee and migrant men	60	4.23	,927
NH08_05	Talking about the violence and discrimination they have been and are subjected to and its consequences as a basis for preventing violence	60	4.60	,827
NH08_06	Talking about difficulties and barriers to participate in prevention groups in the country of residence	60	4.27	,972
NH08_07	Reflecting on/talking about how the flight/migration and integration process has affected and affects their role and identity as men.	60	4.48	,813
NH08_08	Discussing with other migrant/refugee men how to transform their role in family and other relationships in the country of residence.	60	4.45	,852
NH08_09	Knowing about different forms of sexualised and gender-based violence and its consequences on victims/survivors	60	4.35	,880
NH08_10	Learning about flirting, dating, sexual and intimate relationships in the host country (as opposed to their home country)	60	4.08	1.169

Table 12. Averages on the NHO8 scale

Reach out to and motivate male migrants and refugees to raise gender awareness and prevent violence.

Table 13 outlines the average answers to the items related to the question **“How good are the following strategies to reach out to male migrants and refugees and/or motivate them to take part in gender awareness-raising and violence prevention programmes?”** expressed in a Likert scale from 1 to 5 (1: not important, 2: not very important, 3: moderately important, 4: somewhat important, 5: very important). The majority of surveyed people maintain it is *very important* to involve members and leaders of the local migrant communities, and *somewhat important* to inform about and promote the awareness-raising and violence-prevention programmes through: *public and state institutions working with migrants and refugees, NGOs, third sector organisations working with migrants and refugees; local communities or associations working with migrants and refugees*. The surveyed people find it less important to use flyers or a financial compensation to participate, and *moderately important* to use internet and social media (Facebook, Instagram, etc.) and *not to mention the word “violence” in the name or the promotion of the program*. This item deserves a more in-depth analysis: on the one hand, the surveyed people seem to maintain that using the word “violence” could push men away and not motivate them to participate in the programmes, however, on the other hand, this word is necessary for them to take responsibility (in secondary and tertiary prevention programmes) and to understand the content of the programmes (in primary prevention programmes).

		N	Average	Standard deviation
MO02_01	Informing about and promoting the work through statutory / public institutions working with refugees or migrants	60	4.05	,982
MO02_02	Informing about and promoting the work through NGOs / civil society organisations working with refugees or migrants	60	4.25	,985
MO02_03	Informing about and promoting the work through associations or local communities of refugees or migrants	60	4.30	1.916

MO02_04	Involving respected members or leaders of refugee / migrant communities	60	4.57	,673
MO02_05	Through flyers	60	2.42	1.853
MO02_06	Through website or social media (Facebook, Instagram, etc.)	60	3.32	1.097
MO02_07	Not mentioning “violence” in the name of the programme or dissemination efforts	60	3.00	1.179
MO02_08	Holding the sessions at or near their communities / places they live	60	4.23	,789
MO02_09	Offering financial compensation for taking part	60	2.18	2.425
MO02_10	Offering childcare	60	3.70	1.994
MO02_12	Offering a certification for taking part	60	3.50	1.172

Table 13. Averages on the MO02 scale

Table 14 outlines the average answers to the items related to the question “**How important are the following barriers preventing male migrants and refugees to participate in gender awareness-raising and violence prevention programmes?**” (1: not important, 2: not very important, 3: moderately important, 4: somewhat important, 5: very important). The majority of surveyed people think that one of the most likely obstacles to the participation of perpetrators to such programmes could be the fear of legal consequences in case violence is made public (A=4.08, SD=1.93) or having to commit to a certain number of sessions (M=3.80; SD=1.98).

		N	Average	Standard deviation
		Statistic	Statistic	Statistic
MO03_01	Feeling (doubly) stigmatized as migrants and (potential) perpetrators of violence	60	3.77	1.969
MO03_02	The issue is not a priority in their current situation	60	3.57	2.078
MO03_03	Lack of resources to attend (time, money for transport)	60	3.63	2.551
MO03_04	Having to travel to take part	60	3.08	1.994
MO03_05	Fear of legal consequences if violence is disclosed	60	4.08	1.934
MO03_06	Having to commit attend a certain number of sessions	60	3.80	1.981

Table 14. Averages on the MO03 scale

Creating a safe space to work with migrant and refugee men in violence prevention and gender awareness-raising. Table 15 outlines the average answers to the items related to the question “**How good are the following strategies to create a space that is as safe as possible within the work group on violence prevention and awareness-raising?**” expressed on a Likert scale from 1 to 5 (1: not good at all,

2: not good enough, 3: acceptable; 4: good, 5: very good). Most surveyed people think that all the above strategies are good or very good, as the average for all of them is 4 to 5.

		N	Average	Standard deviation
ES02_01	Promoting and creating an inclusive environment (no discrimination, but instead a diversity of cultural identity and masculinity type)	60	4.58	,619
ES02_02	Adapting the structural frame and contents to the individual needs of the participants (rhythm, limits, personal background/experiences)	60	4.28	,865
ES02_03	Clarifying rules of confidentiality (especially in which cases confidentiality will have to be broken – informed consent)	60	4.38	,804
ES02_04	Encourage active participation and conversation among all participants	60	4.40	,669
ES02_05	Creating informal spaces of interaction and relationship building (e.g.: excursions, cooking, visits to museums)	60	4.10	,986
ES02_06	Having cultural mediators or members from the communities as co-facilitators of the group	60	4.45	,891
ES02_07	Having linguistic mediators for each language in the group	60	4.42	,889

Table 15. Averages on the ES02 scale

Addressing intercultural and language issues when dealing with violence prevention and gender awareness-raising. Table 16 outlines the average answers to the items related to the question “How good are the following strategies to address intercultural and language differences when dealing with violence prevention and gender awareness-raising?” expressed on a Likert scale from 1 to 5 (1: not good at all, 2: not good enough, 3: acceptable; 4: good, 5: very good). Most surveyed people think it is a good strategy to have cultural mediators. It is interesting to observe that surveyed people think it is *acceptable to good* to use interpreters from the local communities or professionals that do not belong to the local

communities. There have been many programmes focussed on perpetrators in Europe that have tried to investigate which approaches could work better to combat violence among foreign men, starting from the risk factors and issues outlined above. Initially the groups were made of men from the same culture or community leaders from that same culture were used (often religious leaders) as intermediaries with the men. However, the risk was that a lot of information was not shared, which could be even more dangerous for the victims, who would find themselves even more isolated. In this approach there was even more emphasis on the cultural acceptance of violence. The limits of this approach led the organisers of programmes for perpetrators to a more plural vision of culture (WWP EN EXPERT PAPER 2018: Working with(in) Migrant Populations, Work With Perpetrators European Network).

		N		Average	Standard deviation
		N			
CL02_01	Using professional interpreters from outside the local community/ies	60	60	3.65	1.055
CL02_02	Using interpreters from the local community/ies	60	60	3.70	1.951
CL02_03	Using translation by group members	60	60	3.48	1.214
CL02_04	Having inter-cultural mediators	60	60	4.38	,885
CL02_05	Having country-of-origin nationals as co-facilitators	60	60	4.05	1.080
CL02_06	Using less or non-language-based methods (such as theatre, art, etc.)	60	60	4.12	,885
CL02_07	Using audio-visual / multimedia resources	60	60	3.95	,928

4.5 Table 16. Averages on the CL02 scale

Needs of professionals who work with male migrants and refugees on gender sensitive and violence prevention. Table 17 outlines the average answers to the items related to the question “Regarding the following needs of professionals who work with male migrants and refugees on gender awareness-raising and violence prevention: a) how important do you think they are?” expressed in a Likert scale from 1 to 5 (1: not important, 2: not very important, 3: moderately important, 4: somewhat important, 5: very important); and b) “to which extent are they met in your case?”, expressed in a Likert scale from 1 to 5 (1: not met, 2: largely not met, 3: moderately met, 4: mostly met, 5: completely met). It is particularly interesting to compare the two tables. Most surveyed people maintain that the below needs are somewhat to very important, however, at the same time, the majority of them think they have largely not or only moderately met them.

		How important do you think they are?			To which extent do you think they are met?	
		N	Average	Standard deviation	Average	Standard deviation
NP02_01	Having reflected on their own beliefs, stereotypes and experiences regarding refugees and migrants (discrimination / racism)	60	4.68	,624	3.10	2.967
NP02_02	Having reflected on their own beliefs, stereotypes and experiences regarding gender and violence (discrimination / sexism)	60	4.78	,524	3.05	3.005
NP02_03	Having reflected on their own beliefs, stereotypes and experiences regarding gender and violence in (male) refugees and migrants	60	4.60	,741	2.77	2.925

NP02_04	Knowledge on gender and family roles and relations in cultures of origin	60	4.62	,585	2.73	2.928
NP02_05	Knowledge on problems, difficulties and barriers in the process of migrant integration into a new culture	60	4.65	,659	2.88	3.370
NP02_06	Knowledge on the national system of accepting and integrating migrants/refugees	60	4.43	,698	3.13	3.045
NP02_07	Knowledge of the national legal framework on gender-based and domestic violence	60	4.52	,676	3.27	2.996
NP02_08	Knowledge of relevant protocols and referral mechanisms for addressing gender-based and domestic violence	60	4.48	,676	2.98	3.382
NP02_09	Knowledge and skills to be able to work with men on gender and masculinity	60	4.53	,769	2.98	3.006
NP02_10	Knowledge and skills to identify and address gender-based and domestic violence in perpetrators and victims	60	4.73	,548	3.05	3.039
NP02_13	Knowledge and skills for group work with clients from diverse cultures	60	4.20	1.894	2.50	3.327
NP02_14	Knowledge and skills for group work and managing group processes in preventive work with men	60	4.32	1.900	2.73	3.013

17. Averages on the NP02 scale

Examples of best practices in the field of violence prevention and gender awareness-raising with male migrants and refugees. 26.7% of participants know about programmes on gender awareness, masculinity, or prevention of gender-based violence with male migrants and/or refugees.

They mentioned the following programmes: *Men Talk*; *Esperienza di Banlieu* in Paris; “*Giovani e cultura. Percorsi di contrasto alla violenza di genere per l'integrazione sociale di minori a rischio e migranti*” (Young people and culture. Combating gender-based violence to socially integrate minors at risk and migrants), a project carried out by the Centro Ascolto Uomini Maltrattanti (funded by the Waldesian Church).

Only 8.3% of them have attended similar events. More specifically, the surveyed people mentioned that the programs would entail the following activities: *reflecting on gender stereotypes; trainings and awareness-raising initiatives for male violence perpetrators and their victims; working with migrants and refugees in one of the centres of the protection network for asylum seekers and refugees (SPRAR)*. They also mentioned that the topics handled during those activities would be: *Integration; preventing and stopping violence; awareness of the consequences of violence, reflecting on the concepts of sexism, gender equality and gender discrimination*.

Such activities were carried out through active participation of the attendees, psychodrama exercises and story-sharing within the group on the following topics: *Violence, gender and roles, reflecting on culture and cultural values, stereotypes and difficulties to approach a new culture, body awareness strategies to learn how to deal with emotions*.

According to the interviewees, the most difficult aspects and hurdles when carrying out these initiatives were mainly: *getting the migrants and refugees people involved* (due to language barriers, cultural and religious differences), *getting the social workers involved*. The participants have stressed the fact that it was possible to overcome them thanks to the use of expressive and creative activities, one of the participants acting as an interpreter, the presence of a cultural mediator, the collaborative attitude of the group.

The most important learnings from these programmes are: *the importance of dialogue; having an embracing as opposed to judging attitude; using body movement techniques to “physically activate” them; working with emotions as an “international and universal” way of communicating*”.

The last question was “***Is there anything else you would like to share, or do you have any other comments regarding the FOMEN project survey?***” and got the following answers:

- *A well-structured survey that shows how different cultural, social and personal background aspects intertwine when it comes to understanding both how to work with victims and perpetrators of violence and how we ourselves perceive these phenomena;*
- *Understanding migration laws and related topics;*
- *Discussing social rules, education and examples of social relations in the participants’ home countries;*
- *Create groups based on age, origin, culture;*



- *Being aware of the tools available to protect one's and others' rights and legal consequences to actions and behaviours;*
- *Importance of broader integration programmes;*
- *Participating in seminars about sex education and gender equality,*
- *Better explaining the consequences of violence.*

5. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

In the following paragraphs we shall summarize the evidence gathered through the qualitative and quantitative research carried out by the Centro Ascolto Uomini Maltrattanti in Florence we described earlier. The results are aimed at creating gender awareness-raising and violence prevention programmes for migrant and refugee men and capacity building programmes for professionals, institutions and services working with migrant population.

5.1 GENDER SENSITIVITY AND VIOLENCE PREVENTION WITH MALE MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

The gender awareness-raising and violence prevention programmes are a fundamental step in the integration and counselling process for male migrants and refugees, as they allow us to have a better understanding of their background, and, at the same time, they allow them to have a better overview on the culture of the host country.

Our research showed that the gender awareness-raising and violence prevention programmes with migrant men should use a bottom-up approach, that is, start with their migration history and trauma in order to create trust and to better adapt to their day to day needs.

In order for the migrant men and refugees participating in the programme to get more actively involved, it is necessary to define a few *Effective strategies to get migrants and refugees involved* based on their interests, perception of these topics in their culture, and mindful of how their vulnerability and trauma might influence their motivation to attend. This will boost attendance and protect operators from feeling powerless or burned out. *Building a space of trust* is another extremely important aspect that should be included in all programmes, in order for attendees to be less alert and insecure, which is very common in trauma survivors that find themselves in a state of “legal limbo”. This trust space extends both within and outside the group and encompasses privacy, transparency and freedom of expression and exchange both with the other participants and with the group facilitators, but also the *physical spaces* chosen to carry out the meetings. Choosing cosy spaces near their communities and easy to reach that are also close to green areas in which they can also join less formal activities will contribute to encourage a sense of safety and lower the levels of mistrust in the participants. Another important element to motivate participants and boost attendance is the *co-creation of rules* to run the group together with them. It will be necessary to also establish the consequences for those who break the rules together with them. Rules will not be imposed from above but will be discussed together with the participants to the awareness-raising programmes based on what they need in order to be able to feel safe and comfortable within the group.



To boost motivation, it is also recommended to hand out certificates of attendance at the end of the programme, refund public transport expenses and paying for food. The duration of the programmes should be medium to short (about two months), with short weekly modules including breaks.

These apparently minor details have proven to be particularly effective in the programmes on gender awareness-raising and violence prevention with migrants and refugees we have analysed¹⁹

Migrants can be reached more successfully when other local associations with similar objectives are involved and *formal and informal group of migrants are created*, such as dedicated helpdesks for migrants and refugees within the municipality or involving religious leaders. Another possibility to reach the migrants and refugees more successfully is through the organizers of *reception projects or social services* that deal with families of foreigners facing difficulties.

The programmes should be useful for the migrant and refugee men's day to day life and support their integration process. The programmes should meet certain quality standards and aim at *improving knowledge and information sharing* about the topics of the programmes, promoting *experiential and mutual learning* among participants. All of this will ensure high motivation and attendance and a good overall integration experience.

It is necessary to share information and counselling about the social services available in the area (schools for foreigners, healthcare services, game libraries, etc.), and involve experts who can help and advise migrants and refugees with legal matters, medical or sexual matters, just to name a few. These experts should be able to convey their contents in a simple and direct way, also using interactive and art-based methodologies. Operators should support them with their knowledge on these techniques. The use of *art-based and non-formal education methodologies* (such as pedagogical theatre, drawing, role-playing, drama, etc.) is recommended as it allows to overcome language barriers and promotes experiential learning, which is more effective and, ultimately, fun for the attendees. It is particularly important to create a space for *self-discovery* and dialogue with other participants and facilitators to promote *mutual learning* and social experiences that could continue also outside the group. Another necessary element will be involving linguistic and cultural mediators in the groups that have been trained in gender and violence related matters so as not to interfere with the programme with possible stereotypes and violent behaviours of their own.

As far as the programme content is concerned, the main topics to include are:

- *Definition of violence* in all its forms and in different cultures. It might be useful to refer to the Istanbul Convention or the World Health Organisation, which define every form of violence as a

¹⁹ https://vmg-steiermark.at/de/men_talk

violation of human rights. This will help avoid judgement and provide a common background for all cultures. Violence should be dealt with as a cycle, starting from the violence and discrimination the men might have suffered and its effects, which will lay the groundwork to talk about prevention.

- Information about the differences between the laws regarding violence against women and children in the migrants' countries and in the host country. Start a conversation on the *legal consequences* of gender-based violence crimes in the migrants' countries and in the host country. It should be understood by all men in the group that in Italy certain behaviours are considered crimes and are punishable by law.

- Discussion about the *topics of gender, power inequality, stereotypes and gender roles in different cultures*. These concepts could be explored starting from each participant's experience of how their migration journey and process of integration are having an impact on their role and identity as men. Exploring and connecting gender stereotypes to violent behaviours that could be originated by these stereotypes. Providing information about family values, benefits and disadvantages of equal opportunities, courting, asking/going out on a date.

- Understanding intimate and sexual relationships in the host country as opposed to their home country

- LGBT relationships and stereotypes.

- Seminars on topics of interest for migrants and refugees (parenthood support, migrant status, sexuality, contraceptives, etc.).

To sum up, all the guidelines collected so far about awareness-raising and violence prevention among migrant and refugee men should be paired with an intercultural approach that respects each individual, their vision of the world, their value system and their needs. Empathy, acceptance and trust are essential to these awareness-raising groups and are often mentioned by the participants in the research ²⁰. Feminism and gender perspective are the foundation of any intervention of awareness-raising and gender-based violence prevention carried out with migrant and refugee men.

²⁰ Arao, B., and Clemens, K., From Safe Spaces to Brave Spaces, A New Way to Frame Dialogue Around Diversity and Social Justice, 2013

5.2 CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMMES FOR PROFESSIONALS

The capacity building programmes for professionals who work in the field of gender awareness-raising and violence prevention among migrant and refugee population are at the core of the promotion of the best practices for the integration and inclusion of the target population. These programmes are aimed at improving and maintaining the individuals' and organisations' skills, knowledge, tools and resources necessary to be able to carry out awareness-raising and violence prevention programmes among migrants and refugees.

The knowledge and the skills to be gained in these capacity building trainings, necessary for the operators of gender awareness-raising and violence prevention programmes mainly revolve around these **contents**:

- Clear and precise definition of each form of violence and the models through which they manifest (ecological model, violence cycle, power and control wheel) so as to be able to recognise a potentially violent behaviour;
- Consequences of violence on the victims (women and children) and the emotional and physical damage they cause;
 - Power and control dynamics and how they manifest through behaviours that show dominance, humiliation, isolation, threats, intimidation, disparagement or blaming of partners and or/children;
 - Knowledge about the legal implications of domestic violence according to international standards (Istanbul Convention, World Health Organisation) and national laws and standards (criminal code, safety plans for victims and local social services for victims and perpetrators);
 - Stereotypes and gender roles and how they contribute to violence perpetration;
- Traditional masculinity models, both in their culture and in other cultures.
- Having a clear knowledge about the local social services and being able to refer participants to them according to their needs.
- How to deal with trauma and, more importantly, understanding how trauma can manifest in behaviours and attitudes (see Appendix).

Knowledge should be paired with the ability to recognize the signs of violence and discuss violence with these men in a direct and respectful way, openly naming violence, using questions to explore violence, being aware of the risks and being able to evaluate it.

It is necessary to recognize the importance of a synergic and coordinated network for operators to work together with other services to be able to refer men to these specific services or activate protection plans

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for the victims. Working in a network helps promoting quality programmes in the whole area around which the project is taking place. It is highly recommended that these capacity building programmes for professionals involve public institutions and the creation of standard procedures to monitor and evaluate the initiatives also through follow-ups to promote and motivate participation. It is recommended to structure the programmes in short modules, to avoid dispersion due to lack of motivation.

The capacity building programmes should also provide a space for reflection and discussion for professionals to better understand their own experience with the violence they might have suffered, perpetrated or witnessed, reflect on their own gender stereotypes and roles and how these influence their day to day life, and, last but not least their stereotypes about male perpetrators.

The reflection on violence and gender should be paired with knowledge about the family structures and values of, at least, the main cultures that are present in their area. Professionals in the field of awareness-raising and violence prevention should always use an intercultural, non-judgemental approach that is mindful of everyone's needs.

One further aspect that was thoroughly explored in the report is the importance of providing capacity building trainings also for cultural mediators, who, once trained, will be able to co-facilitate educational programmes on gender-based violence prevention for migrants and refugees, acting as a bridge between the service operators' and the participants' cultures. Finally, these knowledge and skills should be shared also using participation and experiential strategies and all the tools offered by non-formal education to overcome language barriers and other obstacles in the work with migrants and refugees.

APPENDIX

We include an excerpt of the article *“Trauma e vulnerabilità nei migranti richiedenti protezione internazionale”* (trauma and vulnerability among migrants and international protection seekers) by Emanuele Caroppo, Giuseppina Del Basso and Patrizia Brogna, published in 2014 on *REMHU - Rev. Interdiscip. Mobil. Hum.*, Brasília, Ano XXII, n. 43, p. 99-116, jul./dez. 2014.

In 1988 Henry Krystal²¹ and his collaborators outline the emergence of serious psychological disorders in subjects that go through traumatic experiences such as: concentration camp survivors, sexual abuse victims, torture victims, war survivors. The psychic trauma changes the victim’s sense of self and interpersonal relations; traumatic events might be re-lived through nightmares and flashbacks, causing regression in the experience and management of emotional relations.

On a cognitive level, trauma can compromise the perception of reality, judgement, regulation of emotions, defence and memory organization/integration. On somatic level, subjects are more irritable, experience sleep and anxiety disorders, and try to self-medicate through substance abuse (alcohol and drugs). On a relational level, trauma might cause insecurity and lack of trust in men, who will withdraw and avoid situations that might remind them of the traumatic experience.

Henry Krystal defines it as “catastrophic psychic trauma”,

i.e. A surrender to everything that is experienced as an unavoidable danger of external or internal origin. It is the psychic reality of this surrender to what one experiences as an unbearable situation with no escape, no exit, that causes one to give up and abandon life-preserving activity. The trauma thus start with the subject finding themselves in and surrendering to a situation that they experience as highly dangerous.

This traumatic process easily finds place in all conditions of high vulnerability.

The term *“vulnerable”* comes from the Latin *“vulnus”* which literally means wound, injury. This could refer to a physical or psychological wound and extend to the infringement of rights. Being vulnerable is not a state but the possibility of being wounded. Political refugees and international protection seekers are the kind of migrants that are forced to leave their home country and their loved ones with the fear of not being able to come back, are those who have no choice, given that the alternative would be torture, great suffering and, most of the times, certain death. Being vulnerable is part of the condition of being a refugee: *“The feeling of “not belonging” exposes them to the risk of psychological discomfort connected with the difficulty of recognising oneself and being recognised”*²²

²¹ KRYSTAL, Henry. *Affetto, Trauma, Alessitimia*. Roma: Magi edizione, 2007.

²² Cf. Vulnerabilità, risorse e resilienza. Dignitas. Disponibile su: <www.manuale-dignitas.it>.

Most of their discomfort is due to the difficulties adapting to the new place and new situations. Most of them very often show high vulnerability in their psychic functioning due to these very changes that pile on top of the legal process they have to go through. They live in fear of not being recognised, being deported, not being able to get political asylum; fear of not getting integrated in the host country due to the language difficulties and their skin colour; they live in reception centres and share their space with other foreign people experiencing the same difficulties but, often, with different habits.

The topic of loss needs to be addressed: the loss of the elements we mentioned above, but also the loss of part of themselves.

In his book *“Antropologia e Vulnerabilità”* (Anthropology and vulnerability), Giovanni Stanghellini²³ addresses the topic of vulnerability and how it has influenced psychopathology stressing out the separation between the individual and the rest of the world during illness. According to the author, every individual’s reactivity, every tragic attempt to rebuild the world they have lost, is “the cornerstone of every kind of anthropological psychopathology”. He also maintains that: “the condition that underlies the mental pathology is to be understood as an excessive resistance or an excessive tendency to surrender to the *phenomenological epochè* (suspension of judgement).

This is where dichotomies originate: authenticity vs. non-authenticity, proportion vs. disproportion, eurhythmics vs. arrhythmia, activity vs. passivity. In this sense, the vulnerability paradigm reveals how these looming threats are “inescapable modes of the fundamental structure of the human being”.

Arnaldo Ballerini²⁴, too, in the third chapter of his book *Caduto da una Stella. Figure della identità nella psicosi* (Fallen from a star. Identity figures in psychosis), writes about the concepts of prevalence and disproportion, about those elements that are part of every individual, but, when they become disproportionate and pervasive, become pathological and make the individual vulnerable to mental disorders. The importance and *weight* of our past is fundamental for everyone’s concept of temporality, however, when it prevails so much it becomes “irreparable”, when it makes the individual feel they are constantly lagging behind, that they are in a *deja-vu*, this disconnection between past, present and future fosters desperation and melancholic distress, as it is shown in a lesser degree in pre-melancholic subjects. On the same grounds, the non-problematic banality of common-sense, the quiet naturalness of experiencing the world of the other, is normal when it’s a balance between too much and too little, where too little would make us weird and too much would impoverish us of our originality.

The constitution of the other and the self are – from the phenomenological point of view – two components of the same process, which is the origin of the subjectivity of self and the objectivity of me. These are conditions for the construction of identity, a continuous process that takes place throughout time, i.e. it is not *one* phenomenon that originates from one psychological element or something permanent and unchangeable. Human identity is

²³ Cf. STANGHELLINI, Giovanni. *Antropologia e Vulnerabilità*.

²⁴ Cf. BALLERINI, Arnaldo. *Caduto da una Stella. Figure della identità nella psicosi*.



therefore a complex construction, related to both subject and context. It is always evolving and it is built throughout life, although it aggregates around a core that, at least during the first years of one's life, is consistent and ensures the continuity through which one recognises themselves and is recognised by others.

It is necessary to work on this "*continuity*" of identity with asylum seekers that show a deep fragmentation of their personal history and their traumatic experiences that undermine the aggregation process described by Arnaldo Ballerini, which is so important to recognise oneself and be recognised. From a psychopathological point of view this corresponds to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).



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