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A model analytical plan

ViDaCS - Violent Dad in Child Shoes

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1 Summary of report

ViDaCS analytical plan model (henceforth ViDaCS model) aims at contrasting violence of men against women, assuming that this type of violence is mostly common in family relationships, as European and national statistics denounce (WHO, 2012; Istat, 2007, 2017).

Specifically, ViDaCS plan proposes a theoretical and operational model to understand and identify appropriate implementation measures fighting gender violence, and in particular domestic violence.

In an ecological perspective, ViDaCS theoretical and operational model (henceforth ViDaCS model) focuses on violence, regarding its trigger factors and its effects, and analyses the roles and responsibilities of all those are dramatically involved in it.

The aim of ViDaCS project aims at applying an integrated and holistic theoretical and operational model for understanding and intervention of domestic violence, overcoming the fragmentation of measures to contrast gender violence. ViDaCS model help in defining of problems and possible solutions.

ViDaCS plan responds to the indications and needs emerged from the activities carried out in the Workpackage 2; the plan is a meta-analysis deepening of the deliverables (2.1, 2.2. and 2.3).

The data collected by interviewing the personnel involved in fighting gender violence services are relevant (the data are described in detail in "Map of needs and resources report", Deliverable 2.2); the research data, even if located in a situated territorial context, confirm the international as well as national literature (See Literature and project repository, Deliverable 2.1). Obviously, some data collected are specific expression of cultural and social characteristics of the territorial context, where the Project is implemented.

A briefly description Neapolitan context, where ViDaCS project is implementing, will be given in the section 2.2.1.

The document is structured as follows:



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Description of ViDaCS theoretical and operational model, including a briefly synthesis of the main qualitative data collected; and

b) Recommendations to support the development of perpetrator treatment and professional capacity building actions.



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2 Description of ViDaCS theoretical and operational model

ViDaCS model is implemented for combating gender violence, and in particular domestic violence.

The literature, analysed in D. 2.1, supports that the prevalent domestic violence manifestation is the violence that men act on women in the presence of children (Devries et al., 2013; Garcia-Moreno & Watts, 2011). The domestic violence expressions, predominantly between intimate partners, are: emotional, psychological, physical, sexual violence, abuse, control, threatening behaviour and coercion (Ruddle et al., 2016).

Therefore, ViDaCS model is addressed mainly to intervene in fighting domestic violence. The challenge of ViDaCs project is to ensure maximum dissemination of the model proposed among all those involved in contrasting gender violence' services and, in particular, in domestic violence, creating a productive collaborative network that intercepts stories of invisible domestic violence reaching those perpetrators not involved in justice processes.

The invisible perpetrators are identified as the "unsuspecting" man, socially integrated but who manifests a psychological need to evacuate difficult emotional experiences to tolerate, defensively blaming women for their violent behaviour.

In an ecological perspective (I. Prilleltensky & O. Prilleltensky, 2007), ViDaCS project proposes a holistic and multidimensional model for understanding and intervening to reduce violence of men against women; the multidimensional approach is widely supported in order to identify the risk factors of violent behaviour (Krug et al., 2002; WHO, 2010).

The ecological approach integrates different levels: individual, relational, organizational and collective/community; these levels are already analysed in the literature, but mostly separately from each other.

To better understand the specificity of ecological approach used in ViDaCS model, a brief and concise description of the different approaches proposed in the literature is given.



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Therefore, social, feminist, cognitive-behavioural and psychodynamic approaches will be described in the following paragraph.

2.1 Gender violence: different theoretical perspectives

Different theoretical models identify and explain the factors that induce gender violence: social approach, feminist approach, cognitive-behavioural approach and psychodynamic approach.

The **social approach** observes the social context and considers how the norms, stereotypes and gender roles and attitudes towards violence influence gender relationships (Shen et al., 2012; McCauley et al., 2013; McNaughton et al., 2015). According to this approach, violence is legitimized within adherence to traditional gender norms and roles. Specifically, the woman's adherence to the female gender role lead her to a high tolerance of physical, sexual, psychological and emotional violence (Faramarzi et al., 2005)

The **feminist approach** highlighted the influence of patriarchal culture and its effects on women, family and society. In this approach violence against women is perpetrated by men in order to maintain control over women (Chiurazzi and Arcidiacono, 2017).

The **cognitive-behavioural approach** discussed that the violent behaviour of the perpetrators is based on sexist attitudes, gender stereotypes and misogyny typical of patriarchal culture with precise psychological implications. According to this approach, the intervention with the perpetrators must be directed to a re-education to increase awareness of his behaviour and thus undertake an alternative to violence (Hilderand & Freeman, 2016).

The **psychodynamic approach** examines in greater detail the intrapsychic processes of the individual. Violent Behaviour is an external manifestation of a pathological variance of aggression. Violence is the expression of the failure of the psychic process of integration, which leads man to project the split parts of himself on his partner through the process of projective identification, thus allowing the expulsion of intolerable internal parts.



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2.2 ViDaCS theoretical and operational model in the ecological approach

Then ViDaCS model will be described in each level, following a sequence going from the collective to the individual level.

Each level will be also integrated by some principal data emerging from qualitative research (described in detail in deliverable 2.2) to individuate the needs in contrasting to domestic violence in the territorial area where ViDaCS project is carried out. This description is even an example of operative application of ViDaCS model.

2.2.1 Collective/community level

In an ecological perspective ViDaCS theoretical and operational model (henceforth ViDaCS model) assumes that the collective level in its cultural, legislative and political elements has a strong influence in the constructing of collective perception of gender violence and, consequently, has a strong impact on individual 'psychological growth.

The ViDaCS model considers the cultural dimension expressed in social representations and in the ways of establishing social, as well as, intimate relationships.

The model, that inspires ViDaCS assumes the inevitable interconnections between the collective levels that are closer to the individuals.

We introduce, as an example, a briefly description of the context, where ViDaCS project, is implementing.

Naples, metropolitan city of Mediterranean Europe, is an interesting case study for deepening the domestic violence, as a territorial context in which historically patriarchal culture has rooted and influenced women social condition.

In Italy patriarchal stereotypes concerning family life and women representations are still widespread (Arcidiacono, 2016). High female unemployment (only 48.89% of women among



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16- 64 years are employed) is a specifically gender based problem strictly connected to women role and their quality of life.

In the last year 30.000 women resigned from work because of pregnancy; children care services are inadequate (EUROSTAT, 2017) and there are only 22,5 places in children' nest for every 100 children among 0 and 3 years (ISTAT, 2016); furthermore although the Italian law is promoting life work balancing, and recent regulations according to the EU Istanbul convention are fighting against gender based violence, overcoming gender inequality is still a major goal; i.e. the 2016 gender global index gap rate Italy in position 50 and US at 45 in compare with Iceland, Finland Norway respectively at the first, second and third place (<http://reports.weforum.org/global-gender-gap-report-2016/rankings/rate>).

Naples is characterized by a high rate of unemployment, which penalizes above all women, in their economic autonomy and social realization.

The poor social recognition of women emancipation is also reflected in women search for reciprocal support with other women.

A research with women association active in Naples and its province shows that the support of women offers mutual solidarity and support but not a strategy for increasing visibility and advocacy for women recognition and empowerment (Di Napoli, Arcidiacono, forthcoming).

These socio-cultural characteristics make the Neapolitan area an interesting case study for the whole Mediterranean European area, and for the understanding of the cultural system that influenced the relationship between men and women.

2.2.2 Organizational level

The organizational level deepens how services, such as social services, public security, parishes, schools, neighbours, extended families, doctors, hospitals and the workplace, interact with each other and how they produce resources and support in the direct or indirect management of domestic violence.



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The interaction between the services is an essential element, because it offers support, resources and participation, creating a functional network in fighting domestic violence.

At the organizational level, the interconnections between the services contrasting domestic violence in the territorial community, where ViDaCS is implementing, are absent. As emerged from the collected qualitative data, a support among services and a collaborative participation in the management of domestic violence is lacking, due to:

-) *Absence of knowledge between the services that deal with victims and those who deal with the perpetrators*

Among the respondents poor awareness of current interventions and treatment of the perpetrators of domestic violence towards partners or ex-partners emerged. This is due to either the specificity of the work setting of the respondents (e.g., anti-violence centres) or to a personal lack of interest and awareness of the issue.

All the respondents highlighted the importance and the need for sharing and collaborating among the various institutions and organizations active in the field, even though in reality there appears to be a lack of communication between anti-violence centres for woman and those dedicated to men.

-) *Distrust towards a possible and effective collaboration between the services*

The resignation towards the difficulty of change in men who perpetrate domestic violence brings to light the issue of the already scarce funds dedicated to anti-violence centres for women.

-) *Absence of a common and integrated model of domestic violence*

From the qualitative data collected, it emerges that the operators working at the centres fighting gender violence do not share a common model for understanding violence.



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Personnel working exclusively with women use a more 'feminist' and social approach in their representation of domestic violence, while, those working in a more systemic perspective present a rather multidimensional and ecological approach to the phenomenon, recognising the different levels: individual (rational and emotional), relational and sociocultural.

The absence of a common model of domestic violence makes the exchange more difficult among the services fighting against gender violence.

On the contrary, having a common model would facilitate the creation of a network including the fighting gender violence' services that intercept the invisible perpetrators, raising their awareness to request help.

2.2.3 Relational organizational level

At a relational level, the intervention procedures adopted by personnel are considered. These modalities, affected by the operators' social representations and emotions towards the protagonists of the violent scene, can unaware negatively influence the taking charge of domestic violence.

In particular, this issue is stressed when the operators were faced with the perpetrator, as emerged both by the interviews conducted and the activity of the 2 days' workshops. In fact, operators' emotions of fear and anger towards the perpetrators as well as their collusion with the perpetrators 'modality of denial lead the personnel respectively to an attitude of refusal towards the perpetrator or to the minimization of the violent act. A specialized training is useful for all those working in gender violence services to improve their procedure for taking charge both victims and perpetrators (see Section 3 recommendations).

2.2.4 Individual and relational level

At an individual level, the analysis is directed to the individual's characteristics and his/her ways of establishing intimate relationships.



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Based on the data collected by operators' interviews, ViDaCS model proposes to illustrate only the main characteristics attributed to the perpetrator.

The choice to deal with only perpetrators' characteristics is linked to the purpose of ViDaCS project, which aims at implementing an emotional and behaviour self-assessment package dedicated to the perpetrators to enhance their motivation to the treatments dedicated to them.

The representation of male perpetrators of violence emerges as being non-stereotypical, and, as for women, there is no specific social class or generalisation to make. However, often the men present the following traits: Fragility and pathological narcissism (power based on maintaining the oppressed); Seductiveness and manipulation (even with treatment personnel, male and female); Difficulty in communicating and reasoning; these are men who "act" out their emotions, as they find it difficult to tolerate the reasoning process. This confirms what in literature is defined as lack of emotion regulation and self-regulation (Cole, Martin, & Dennis, 2004; Cook et al., 2005) and lack of interpersonal skills (Davies & Cummings, 1994).

Concerning the perpetrators' possibilities of change, the motivation is strictly related to: the presence of children: paternity is defined as a "double-bladed sword" and a grey area; it can become a cause for violence ("the beginning of the violence often starts with a pregnancy" many stated), the object of emotional blackmail, an instrument for control over the woman (denying authorisations in the case of minors); the threat of the loss of the woman and/or the role as father; the loss of a loved one (e.g. a parent); Internal and authentic motivation (supported by insight) is considered the most valid for the maintenance of treatment and change; and extrinsic motivation, like that supported by law enforcement and court orders, or by a partner's wishes, brings about a higher chance of either not applying for treatment or non-compliance in a short time.



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3 Recommendations to support the development of perpetrator treatment and professional capacity building actions

The assumption of the ViDaCS model is that the individual well-being can be only reached if the relational, organizational and collective levels are also in a state of well-being. In light of this assumption, the ViDaCS plan proposes recommendations for the treatment of perpetrators that take into account the four levels considered in ViDaCS theoretical - operational model described in section 2.

3.1 Guidelines for perpetrators treatment

The recommendations are based on the guidelines defined in 2-days Workshop Report (see Deliverable 2.3), below synthesized:

- Attention to prejudices and perception of the authors of violence often shared by the same operators;
- Attention to the "Denial" that men "bring" in the treatment;
- Attention to victim's denial:
- Building of treatment space: "How to create a resource space?",
- Reflection groups, therefore, have been considered a fundamental resource in this work context.
- The distinction between conflict and violence in front of the child:
- The need to build more scenarios for serious games that fit the various age groups, because there are many cases and different stories and experiences change so much over the years.



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3.2 Recommendation for the ecological level

The main recommendations that ViDaCS proposes to combat domestic violence are detailed below for each level.

3.2.1 Collective/community level

At collective level, ViDaCS plan suggest interventions promoting a new cultural system, based on values of respect and fairness between men and women, fighting gender violence and in particular domestic violence. Following two specific actions are suggested:

a) **Educational interventions**

Formalizing protocol of collaboration with educational institutions to disseminate values of respect and fairness to deconstruct traditional gender roles rooted in a patriarchal culture.

The laboratories, by participatory and experiential methods, aim at inducing an emotional experience, which will facilitate access to the most intimate social representations, learnt in familiar contexts.

The interventions at school intend also to create a network between school and dedicated service to report cases of domestic violence.

a) **Promoting of family well-being**

Promoting a culture of family wellbeing where father's responsibility is more visible and recognized in politics, in history and in practice (Featherstone & Peckover, 2007; Humphreys & Absler, 2011).

At collective level, recognizing the important role of paternity in promoting family wellbeing increases awareness of one's responsibilities in men (Featherstone & Peckover, 2007; Absler, 2011).

3.2.2 Organizational level

At the organizational level, the recommended interventions should aim at:



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- a) Promoting a collaborative network between the services that deal with gender violence victims and perpetrators;
 - b) Defining a common and synergistic procedures in order to bring together and avoid the fragmentation of interventions fighting violence, especially when the financial resources allocated are limited; and
 - c) A memorandum of understanding with the local Police Headquarters, of a stronger collaboration with the network that precedes the taking charge of the people and introducing some services intervention, directed to perpetrators under judicial measures.

3.2.3 Relational level

At relational level the recommendations are directed to the operators and in particular are directed to all those who get in touch with the perpetrators. A specific training would be necessary. The training programs should be directed:

- a) To gain a specific model for understanding violent behaviour;
- b) To increase reflexivity, by which the personnel will be aware of their own emotions and thoughts, so facilitated in not taking only a one sided position;
- c) To support the operator in coping with the denial mechanism, typically used by the perpetrator; and
- d) To increase the operator competence in facilitating the process of perpetrator awareness of their violent actions and help them to find new strategies for coping with negative emotions.

It is also suggested to introduce a discussion groups for the operators, where they could reflect together on their experiences in the perpetrators treatment.



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3.2.4 Individual level

At the individual level, the recommendations are aimed at reaching the 'invisible' perpetrators, that is those who are not in judicial system.

The *invisible perpetrators* are those who in social relations are integrated, but in intimate relationships they are not able to be not violent.

The guidelines suggest intervention increasing perpetrator awareness of what happens "a moment before" the violent action and increasing, also, their motivation to request help through emotional experiences, that stimulate their father responsibility.

Assuming ViDaCS project, the perpetrators should lower their denial mechanism, increasing their awareness of the harms of witnessing violence.



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