



Interview of the Month

WORK WITH PERPETRATORS NETWORK

*Interview with Alessandra Pauncz
Executive Director of WWP EN*

INTERVIEWED BY VIBEKE THOMSEN, SHECANHECAN

1) Can you tell our readers more about the mission and objectives of the European Network for the Work with Perpetrators of Domestic Violence (WWP)?

The European Network for the Work with Perpetrators started as an informal network of programmes working with Perpetrators that wanted to share experiences and good practices. We formalized our network in 2014 and now have more than 60 members from over 30 European countries.

Our mission is to prevent violence in close relationships as a gender-based phenomenon and to foster gender equality. More specifically, the mission of the association is to improve the safety of women and children and others at risk from violence in close relationships through the promotion of effective work with those who perpetrate this violence, mainly men.

In other and more simple terms, we believe that to stop violence against women we need to hold men accountable and that is what we are committed to doing.

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2) WWP launched the Impact Toolkit to evaluate whether the main goal - to increase survivors' and children's safety - is achieved through programs focusing on perpetrators of domestic violence. Can you share with us your conclusions of this review?

In order for men to stop their violence, we think that we need to set up a system that holds them accountable. Victim safety-oriented perpetrator programmes are part of this system. To understand if these programs are working, if the violence is stopping and if the women's space for safety is increasing, we have been working over the past 10 years to develop an effective tool to measure change. That is what the IMPACT toolkit is.

For more information, you can watch this short video.

<https://www.work-with-perpetrators.eu/impact>

We now have a valid methodology for perpetrator programmes to evaluate their work and the impact of their change. You can get some more information:

about IMPACT here: <https://www.work-with-perpetrators.eu/impact>

3) What has the impact been of your 2018 Responsible Together Campaign? What are the main obstacles to overcome when engaging men and boys to end violence against women and girls?

Each year, we focus on a different topic for our Campaign and in 2018, we were addressing some gaps in the system responding to domestic violence. We realize that services that work with victims of violence sometimes do not know about perpetrator programmes. The goal of the Campaign was to help services and the public to understand the importance of holding men that are violent accountable. We also developed a postcard that supports men in becoming aware of their violence. It is a way of testing their own behaviors out and understanding if something might be critical (www.work-with-perpetrators.eu/fileadmin/WWP_Network/redakteure/Campaign/WWP_Postcard-FINAL.pdf).

One of the challenges of engaging men and boys is finding the right way of talking with them. Generally, many Campaigns are focused on a zero tolerance message in which the position of victims and perpetrators is polarized as good and evil.

Real life situations are often more complicated than this and men that use violence don't perceive their partners as passive victims. In order to target men in campaigns we need to use a different approach that is able to deconstruct everyday violence and show how behaviors that we normalize can cause harm to others.

Stopping gender-based violence is about changing the culture underlying constructions of masculinity and femininity and to do this we need to expose cultural aspects that make violence acceptable.

See this campaign for example:

<https://video.repubblica.it/mondo/india-violenza-sulle-donne-lo-sguardo-degli-uomini-e-un-arma/151945/150450>



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4) What measures, if any, have proven truly successful in decreasing violence against women? How do your members work to address the overall culture of toxic masculinity?

Deconstructing normalized forms of common behaviors in relationships (for examples forms of controlling behavior or psychological abuse) that may escalate into physical violence (see previous comment and video).

5) Do you have any specific advice to give to the friends or families of survivors to better assist them in leaving a violent partner?

Is somebody you know and care about experiencing abuse? Do you have an uneasy feeling about a friend's or family member's partner and the way he is treating her? It is valuable that your friend/family member has someone in their life that cares about them and wants them to be safe. However, remember:

- You are not responsible for your friend's/family member's actions and you cannot control what she chooses to do.
- Trying to make her leave her abusive partner against her will might make her feel anxious, under pressure, like she is disappointing you by staying with him and could lead to you being excluded from her life.
- You must stay safe to ensure other's safety. Do not intervene in dangerous situations. Instead, call the police or other relevant authorities.
- If you are from a community that experiences discrimination from police or state authorities and don't want to call them, you could also try contacting somebody who you know has the respect/power to resolve the situation without causing more harm and will not automatically take the perpetrator's side.

About WWP

EN is the European Network for the Work with Perpetrators of Domestic Violence, founded in 2014 and currently it has over 60 active members throughout 32 European countries. WWP members include perpetrators programmes, researchers, as well as victim support services. As an umbrella organisation, WWP EN supports its members in offering responsible, victim-focused perpetrator work. The Network is involved in several European projects and is very active in enhancing practice, research, and dissemination. Moreover, the Network has developed models and tools, especially for the evaluation of Perpetrators Programmes, for the cooperation of PP, VSS and local government and for training professionals working with perpetrators.

Find out more:

<https://www.work-with-perpetrators.eu/>



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