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# WE ARE MANY IN THE FIGHT

joining forces against gender-based violence

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## TEACHINGS FROM AN ON-GOING PROCESS...




Edited by:



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# INTRODUCTION



## The starting point

Network Building<sup>1</sup> for the protection of women's rights and the elimination of gender-based violence is a part of a process initiated in 2010 by Mugarik Gabe, with the *We Fight Gender-Based Violence, Patriarkaturik Gabe denok Jabe*<sup>2</sup> Campaign, which aimed to combat all forms of gender-based violence, with special emphasis on its global nature and structural causes framed by the enduring patriarchal system. The commitment began by working on a more educational and awareness raising approach. The aim was to implement an advocacy strategy, together with other social movements and the feminist movement, in particular, to denounce the systematic violation of women's human rights worldwide. The latest and most visible activity in this effort was the *International Women's Human Rights Court, Basque Country 2013, Vienna+20*<sup>3</sup>, held in Bilbao in June 2013. Subsequently, both the Court and other advocacy actions emphasised the need to analyse and strengthen the strategies for denouncing the current situation of violence in the Spanish State, the Basque Country and other places in the world, and to review and redefine denunciation strategies and draft new proposals.

It is in this context that the opportunity of the Active Citizenship Programme's initiative emerged. A proposal was made to network with other State organisations that combat or want to combat gender-based violence in a similar manner, creating a greater impact by sharing the analyses, strategies and potential for joint work.



<sup>1</sup> [www.mugarikgabe.org/rederradicacionviolenciasmachistas](http://www.mugarikgabe.org/rederradicacionviolenciasmachistas)

<sup>2</sup> [www.mugarikgabe.org/blog/2012/12/01/enfrentamos-todas-las-violencias-machistas](http://www.mugarikgabe.org/blog/2012/12/01/enfrentamos-todas-las-violencias-machistas)

<sup>3</sup> <http://tribunalderechosmujeres2013.blogspot.com.es>



The Active Citizenship Programme supports civil society via several main target areas: democracy, human rights, non-discrimination, good governance and transparency; the fight against racism, xenophobia and social inequality, poverty and exclusion; and initiatives based on small NGOs, equality and gender-based violence. The programme is the outcome of collaboration between the Financial Mechanism of the European Economic Area (funding), the Spanish government (co-funding) and the NGO Platform for Social Action (operating system). Its main challenges are to contribute to participative democracy and promote human rights and social integration.

The proposed initiative, “Network building for the protection of women’s rights and the elimination of gender-based violence”, has two main objectives:

- To generate forums for an exchange and analysis of advocacy strategies to address gender-based violence with the aim of learning more and improving the strategies. The initiative took shape in four regional meetings (in Bilbao/Gasteiz, Barcelona, Madrid and Malaga) and one global (in Bilbao).
- To strengthen the coordination between groups by regions and/or at the level of the Spanish State to establish an advocacy agenda and joint actions. The meetings promoted an exchange and reinforcement of the alliance between the feminist movement, NGDO, networks, social intervention organisations, other social movements and political institutions, with variations, depending on the regions. The aim was to suggest certain consensuses and proposals for group discussion at the global meeting held in June to build a draft agenda (or similar) that includes actions for joint advocacy strategies to address gender-based violence.

In this context, we have worked with the Centre for Women’s Studies and Research<sup>4</sup> (Malaga), Cooperacció<sup>5</sup> (Barcelona) and Women in War Zones<sup>6</sup> (Madrid) to study this political and social problem and coordinate work at state level. Each organisation will coordinate the work in its region.

## Regional meetings

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We held four regional meetings between October 2104 and May 2015, in: the Basque Country (Bilbao and Gasteiz), Catalonia (Barcelona), Region of Madrid (Madrid) and Andalusia (Malaga), with the participation of social movements and feminist groups, experts from the institutions, professionals who work in the area of gender-based violence, social organisations and NGDO. At the meetings, the participants studied the situation of gender-based violence with the aim of sharing information and assessing the main difficulties regarding support and treatment, education and prevention, legal aspects, advocacy, denouncement and social mobilisation. The participants also suggested draft proposals of formulas for improvement and joint actions (criminal complaints, exchanges, coordination and so forth).

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<sup>4</sup> [www.ceim.eu](http://www.ceim.eu)

<sup>5</sup> [www.cooperaccio.org](http://www.cooperaccio.org)

<sup>6</sup> [www.mzc.es](http://www.mzc.es)



The meetings also sought to create a space for sharing the assessments made by the organisations and professionals involved in the fight against gender-based violence, as well as the shortcomings and difficulties in finding solutions to the issue. They studied proposals for changes based on the experience and day-to-day practice of the entities, complemented with the available quantitative studies.

In some cases, the meetings also became spaces for support, coordination and exchange between the professionals and organisations that do not have time for sharing knowledge and thoughts. This is particularly true in precarious contexts and political reluctance, where resources are scarce or lacking altogether.

The intention was not to arrive at definitive solutions (especially in view of the difficulties for participation posed by the diversity of the groups involved) but to contribute to the debate and the urgent need to become involved and continue to fight against gender-based violence at the global and local levels.

We carried out systematisations<sup>7</sup> of the meetings, at which we collected the assessments, ideas and proposals raised during the four meetings, with the aim of providing food for thought, exchanges, strengthening coordination and review the strategies for solutions.



## We are many in the fight. Joining forces against gender-based violence

After the four preliminary meetings, we held a final systematisation meeting<sup>8</sup> in June 2015, in Bilbao, to take the analyses that had been made on board, strengthen the strategies and assess the joint work to be developed in the future, with the participation of women from the various regions. The final meeting had two goals, which were:

- To go deeper into the analysis and diagnostic of the situation of gender-based violence in the State, in reference to the legislative and legal sphere, support, prevention and advocacy.

<sup>7</sup> [www.mugarikgabe.org/rederradicacionviolenciasmachistas/primeros-pasos](http://www.mugarikgabe.org/rederradicacionviolenciasmachistas/primeros-pasos)

<sup>8</sup> <https://vimeo.com/132209812>



- Exchange experiences on strategies to address violence from different areas and to go into some of the proposals in greater detail.
- Create opportunities to forge alliances for advocacy between the groups.

The meeting was divided into two parts. One was open to the public, with an invitation to the feminists and women's movement, social movements, public institutions, social workers, NGOs, students in master's courses and the media. The other part was to provide an area for the feminist movement, social movement and NGOs to work and share their internal reflections.

The layout of the document we present below is as follows:

- Chapter I: Knots and strategies of the regional meetings, with an exposition of the analysis extracted from the four regional meetings and the contributions of the final meeting to that analysis.
- Chapter II: We are many in the fight: joining forces against gender-based violence, which presents a summary of the final meeting, going further into a diagnosis and making progress in some of the strategies.
- Conclusions: Final statement, with the position we are in after the process undertaken.



# CHAPTER I: KNOTS AND STRATEGIES OF THE REGIONAL MEETINGS



As indicated above, this analysis is the result of the teamwork carried out in the various regions.

Four regional meetings were held over a period of eight months, with the participation of more than 200 women from 100 groups, most of which were feminist. Each meeting worked in a different way, adapting to local contexts. However, the strategies needed to be more specific, so the analyses from each region were divided into areas of work: support and treatment; education and prevention; the legal sphere and advocacy; and denouncement and social mobilisation.

Below we present the conclusions from the regional meetings, enriching them with some contributions that were made in the final meeting.

## KNOTS

### Denouncement and social mobilisation

#### Context

- Violence is a strategic topic<sup>9</sup> with a long history behind it, and also some progress.
- Widespread impotence due to the **impunity, failure to get involved and inadequate response of the public authorities**. Also due to preconceived ideas, stereotypes (e.g. false criminal complaints, the Parental Alienation Syndrome and joint custody) and the invisibility of gender-based violence as a **first-order political and social problem**. Also, the capturing of feminist discourses and concepts on gender, equality and so forth, to empty them of content.
- We fail to take a global view of violence, focusing instead on domestic violence and feminicides. Other forms of violence in the law and the wider community need to be included as well: sexual violence, prostitution and trafficking, Female Genital Mutilation, institutional violence, violence at work and so forth. We also need to take specific realities and the necessary cross-cutting aspects into account (e.g. migration, elderly women and Roma women).
- There is no denouncement of the **patriarchal system and sexist culture** as the structural causes of violence, or the widespread context of inequality that generates different forms and levels of violence against women as a group.

<sup>9</sup> The discussions and plenary sessions in the final systematisation meeting stressed the structural inequalities and the work in favour of equality that should also be the main topics, and which cannot be separated from the violence.





- There is no feminist and **Human Rights** approach to violence that views women as the holders of rights.
- There is no clear **assessment** of the status of violence and the response to it backed by a count of the services provided and their impact.
- There are few opportunities for **citizens and feminists to participate** with a strong and lasting commitment. To the contrary, many of the Municipal Councils for Women are orchestrated.

## Legislation

- Progress has been made in the passing state-wide, **regional and even local laws to address violence**. However:
  - o Their content focuses almost exclusively on violence within couples and former couples.
  - o In most cases, they are **statements** that are not followed up by rules or sufficient funds for implementation.
  - o The **shortcomings** in implementing the laws include a lack of trained personnel to put them into practice, as well as insufficient resources and services, and the lack of follow-ups and impact assessments.
  - o The implementation of the laws shows little respect for **women** who suffer violence and, moreover, the law and its mechanisms infantilise women.
  - o Violence in the schools and at work is hardly addressed, although the Law on full measures of protection against gender-based violence mentions the involvement of five ministries.
- These knots are linked to the lack of mechanisms and structures for **equality** in the various administrations.
  - o There is a lack of **communication and coordination** between the administrations of the autonomous regions and between departments (e.g. Education with Social Affairs). Moreover, the laws often contradict each other (e.g. the laws on minors, joint custody and violence).

## Feminist movements<sup>10</sup>

- The feminist movement or movements are diverse, with overloaded agendas, precarious resources and limited time.
- They lack an advocacy strategy that focuses on violence as the main theme, which could lead to alliances and consensus.

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<sup>10</sup> We refer to feminist movements in plural to make their diversity more visible.



- There is a need to go deeper into the discourse on violence within the movements and at the same time to reach out to the citizenship in a clear and widespread way, using new tools as well as the conventional tools.
- Feminist movements need to be better coordinated among themselves and with other social actors, as well as the media, institutions, companies and so forth.

## Prevention of violence

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### Lack of an adequate approach and political will

- Lack of **political will** in the administrations and educational institutions fight against gender-based violence with prevention instead of taking sporadic actions and considering the political benefits (budgets focus more on support than on prevention).
- Failure to realise the value of prevention and the wider community's lack of awareness of the **scope and complexity of the term gender-based violence**.
  - o **Lack of identification of types of violence**. We find it is difficult to work on this subject because no violence is deemed to exist in secondary schools and among young people (linked to an illusion of equality).
  - o **Invisibility of the scope of the term "gender-based violence"** (beyond physical violence and between couples). What is not named does not exist and therefore it is important to talk about different types of violence: *sexual violence, female genital mutilation, the violence of symbols, prostitution and so forth*. It is essential for all that to be recognised and to work on the prevention of all types of violence.
  - o The prevention discourse does not focus enough on the **causes** of violence.
  - o **Even the terminology places conditions** on the professionals who work in the field, making their work more difficult. Talking in terms of violence, sexist behaviour and empowerment causes rejection, because the government prefers an approach of working "with and for women" instead of working on process that would bring about a **transformation and a real change**. When prevention programmes are mentioned, they tend to be viewed as "social skills". In some schools they are beginning to call it "*non-sexist career guidance*", but the content is not feminist and it is watered-down equality.
  - o Break with the wider community's view of the women who face or suffer violence: "Victims". Avoid "*labelling*" women in that way (**revictimisation**).
- The government's **strategy for preventing gender-based violence is simplistic** and not comprehensive.
  - o Interventions are **short-term and not integrated enough**. Lack of mainstreaming and long-term, comprehensive projects. Lack of planning, strategies, assessments of outcomes. These are in the short term and cater to the administration's need to produce results. Programmes are not evaluated; there are no analyses or diag-



noses. “Mushroom” activities are carried out, which involve no long-term work. Processes are left open, with no continuity and no emotional support.

- o **Budgets are low**<sup>11</sup> and there is a **lack of interest**. More resources and prevention strategies are needed.
- o So far, the **focus on the educational system** has not been comprehensive because many areas are left out, such as the street, the media and the teachers. The problem cannot be stopped globally if people receive contradictory messages (if they attend a short course on prevention at school and then go home and watch a sexist advertisement on TV). Education needs to be global, permanent and for all citizens. Formal and informal education.
- o The government considers that youth are the **target population** for prevention, whereas we consider that the target population should be all ages (and not just minors).
- o Today, prevention is completely detached from support. However, it is important to realise that there is a **strong connection between support and prevention**. To construe support as prevention (not just palliative care) that can be used to raise awareness.
- o **Failure to adapt methodologies**. Developing a programme requires the detection of existing needs, an assessment of what is needed, a realistic assessment of needs to find out how to respond, and an adaptation of methodologies to group needs (e.g. new technologies).
  - Goal-based work (based on an assessment, methodologies adapted to groups, indicator-based assessment to see what works).
  - Lack of appropriate tools (for youth, in particular). It is important to take role models into account.
- Research on young people’s perception of gender-based violence and existing violence (that which actually takes place) shows that the rejection they verbalise **does not coincide with the violence in their attitudes and actions**. We need to discover what fails in the prevention programmes, what the programmes address and what their approach is.
- **A lack of adequate resources, adapted and accessible** to the diverse realities and existing needs (number of staff, qualification, budgets, time, guidelines, and so forth) **in support and prevention**, so the latter will not slow down or be useless. Some professionals (health professionals, for example) do not have time to attend to their patients. Although they have guidelines to detect cases of violence, they cannot do it under proper conditions, making the guidelines useless. Therefore, guidelines should be adapted to actual situations and needs.

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<sup>11</sup> The lack of resources is an issue that crops up repeatedly and in all the areas under study. It is not only a matter of more resources but also of adapting them and making them accessible for a range of contexts and existing needs.



- o Budgets are not increased to implement new approaches (working with men and/or young men on new models of masculinity). Spending on budget items for work done by women for women is reduced.
- **Professionals** in training and prevention:
  - o The labour sector is feminized and precarious.
  - o Some of the women are not specialised. The problem is even more acute in big companies and outsourcing, a situation that also promotes unfair competition.
  - o They are unrecognised and undervalued.
  - o No places are set aside for support.
  - o There is a need for coordination to promote networking.
- **Failure to give recognition to the professionals who work in prevention and the content** thereof. The professionals who work in prevention are always *questioned and disqualified* for being women and young (e.g. “the girl who gave a talk on violence”, “the girls who talk about abuse” or that the teachers walk out during a talk).
  - o Not enough importance is given to what is being done.
  - o They send out contradictory messages (teachers, health professionals, school boards and so forth).
  - o If the work has no continuity, there is no sense to it. It requires coordination with professionals who work in the centre permanently.

### Inadequate and insufficient strategies in formal education

- The elimination of co-education as a subject in schools. Religion in schools.
- In many cases, schools and the media only take action on **significant dates** (e.g. N25 and M8) and other specific actions.
- Prior work with the parents’ associations (**AMPAs**) is needed so they can implement courses on equality (in some cases the parents’ associations choose whether to give courses on the subject).
- Teachers are not sufficiently trained in the prevention of violence or equality, and they trust other organisations to take care of the issue, without getting the schools involved. In some cases, prevention and equality depend on “nice” teachers.

### Lack of prevention in informal education and other spheres

- There is a need to create **specific programmes** for the recognition of violence in **specific groups**, because many women do not recognise it. There is also a need for educational programmes for prevention within couples.



- In some cases, the administrations produce interesting material but do not plan how to **disseminate** it so it can be used and fail to train people to implement it.
- Occasionally the associations offer courses and no one is interested in attending them.
- Regression in violence prevention campaigns: incomprehensible content, failure to pinpoint the causes, and putting the blame on women.
- Cases of violence are not being detected in health care (primary care).
- Companies are difficult to approach and trade unions block attempts to work against violence. Resistance on the part of co-workers and employers.
- The media:
  - o The media have a glass ceiling. There are no women in management positions and there is segregation in the topics or media sections.
  - o Courses for media professionals so they will approach the information correctly are crucial.
  - o Difficulties to enter and have a presence.
  - o **Regression** in the treatment of violence: it is being invisibilised and stereotypes are appearing again; women are blamed or suspect; violence is justified or excused as pathology; women's word is questioned; and the media has a sensation-seeking attitude.
  - o The issue is distorted. Harmful treatment of violence. Other forms of violence are made invisible.
- Inequality within the **family** is not recognised and needs to be addressed.

## Support and treatment

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- The wider community is not aware of the resources and services available and how they work.
- It is difficult to obtain objective information.
- Lack of coordination between institutions and the available resources.
- Special reference was made to the difficulties faced by women with specific problems and realities: mental health, drug addiction, inmates, Roma women, immigrants without proper documentation, women in prostitution <sup>12</sup> and domestic wor-

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<sup>12</sup> The term used changes according to the organisations and political positioning (e.g. sex workers and prostituted women). In this paper, we refer to women in prostitution, while being aware of that is a matter of debate.



kers. Cross-cutting xenophobia, racism, poverty and so forth. The strategies for these issues are not unified.

- They seek to **adapt the women to the resources** rather than the other way round. They require them to be “textbook victims”, submissive and accepting of the system and the rules imposed.
- A danger of branding **women as victims**. Protect the rights, not the women.
- Deficits in **training**:
  - o Training for professionals is merely technical, with no policy-making content or criticism of the model. What training is given is designed as an intervention instrument, ignoring the hypothetical context, as well as gender and feminist theory.
  - o In primary care, training is limited to basic 10-hour courses on violence intended to detect the women who are the potential victims according to various symptoms and refer them to specialised resources. Only 1% of the professionals who attend the courses are men and they tend to boycott the training.
- Legislation is not implemented. Poor government control over compliance with the law.
- Lack of time, resources and premises. Precariousness. Saturated, under-staffed services. Insufficient resources. Limited meeting points. Lack of resources for minors.
- Overcrowded, precarious social services where material and human resources have been cut back with the resulting poor quality of care or none at all. The demand is growing and there is more **saturation**. *“We cannot provide good quality support if we are overwhelmed with work.”*
- The way in which work is done depends on the specialist in equality. It often appears to be a question of personal decisions rather than institutional policies.
- Differences between management bodies and government bodies in providing support. A focus on support: women’s services that are extended and lose their original meaning (from women they turn to minors, youth, the family, mothers and, finally, men). Specialised support is weakened as it is extended to encompass other groups; the focus on violence against women turns to violence in general.
- The resources and services that target women are dismantled, clearly according to political ideologies.
- A distinction must be made between initial support (which involves detection and identification) and subsequent support that requires a high degree of specialisation. Lack of staff that can serve as a filter and refer women to specialised intervention.



- Revictimisation, by placing the blame on women and making them responsible for domestic violence caused by minors and couples. Taking care not to reinforce mother-child relationships in which women receive the blame. Interventions carried out with children should always involve the mother and take into account the gender perspective.
- Professionals invisibilise sexual violence and do not identify it. Violence is not addressed in specific educational training and therefore the professionals do not identify it.
- There is "too great a concern" and interest in designing protocols that lead to stripping social issues of their political and ideological content.
- Impact of the economic situation of women when referring cases.
- Revictimisation of women by the **social intervention teams** in the *Meeting Points* has been detected (the mother's influence on her children is questioned). This can be attributed to inadequate specialisation and precarious resources. Moreover, protection orders are not always obeyed.
- **Health and legal teams** have been found to enforce legislation inadequately. Minors are recognised as victims and at the same time the custody rights of abusers are also recognised.
- Professionals in any field have been found to reproduce power relationships with the users, accusing them of taking advantage of their situation. Women immigrants have been **stigmatised** and the fact that the core issue are the aggressors and their violence has been ignored.
- **Intervention frameworks are closed** and do not integrate intercultural variables; experiences apart from violence; other types of violence undergone previously; and the case of women who suffer aggression when they travel to the country of origin, for example.
- The **intervention with aggressors** is fruitless and even counter-productive. This is because it is imposed and inflexible, focusing on the development of self-control, with no regard for the fact that their aggression is not due to a lack of control. With this approach, the aggressors only learn to use violence in more subtle and perverse ways.
- Defensive neo-sexist attitudes:
  - o Neo-sexist attitudes promote a defence of the "idea of the nuclear family" where the abuser can be a good father.
  - o Rearming the aggressors and the wider community's support: The use of PAS (Parental Alienation Syndrome) is becoming widespread and legitimized, despite lack of evidence. The aggressors resort to counter-claims against women.
- The women come to us with increasingly precarious basic needs, which are impos-



sed as a priority in the approach to their situation. Other fundamental aspects of the intervention are ignored.

- The number of Meeting Points has diminished and management has been allocated to entities with no experience or expertise. As a result, the actions are disastrous.
- Lack of specialised resources for minors.
- Even the professionals mistrust the social resources that have become precarious and fail to guarantee quality. They become reluctant to refer people to them.
- The period for solicitor's duty rota can become too long and women cannot make progress in their processes until a judgement is issued.
- A lack of resources makes women become dependent, with no possibility of planning for an independent life or economic and psychological empowerment.
- **Cutbacks**, particularly in psychological support for minors, mean that support has become precarious. No specialists are hired. The trend is to cut back on resources for violence and make the issue invisible.
- There are **revolving doors** in the support for women, where there should be a door to go in and out. Revolving doors are confusing.
- Before now, comprehensive and immediate support was the administration's obligation and associations supplemented the administration. In some autonomous regions, support is being outsourced to associations, professionals and services companies (with the resulting change in the point of view). The **outsourcing** is precarious, although in the public administration it tends to be precarious as well.
- Criminal complaints are being instrumented (support is conditional).
- **Identification of violence with physical violence.** Sexual violence is often ignored (the police do not mention it in the test). Some women do not consider it to be violence as such and fail to file criminal complaints. The question should be put to women explicitly.
- It is not sufficient or adequate to apply the risk assessment. If non-specialised employees do not realise that women are not going to tell the whole story, they tend to minimize the risk. Women do not want men to be imprisoned; they only want them to learn a lesson. And the assessment is essential because it is key information in court. It is an instrument that **needs to be revised completely.**
- Difficulties in having access to resources linked to laws and other instruments in which violence is understood.
- **Foreign women** also experience lack of support because they are unaware of the available resources, do not know where to go and do not speak Spanish.





### In general:

- There is a **lack of adequate laws and actual implementation** of existing ones, in a breach of the law passed in 2004. The current law does not include the diverse ways in which gender-based violence can be perpetrated.
- There is **no follow-up** of the work carried out by the institutions.
- Lack of **training** and preparation. The professional associations do not provide specialised training and much less training from a gender perspective. There is no training for legal operators (lawyers, judges, forensic scientists, and so forth), the police ... or politicians. Due to the lack of training, they fail to give women sufficient information or what they give is erroneous and harms their cause.
  - o The police: According to their guidelines, they should meet certain report requirements, so in some cases they say that an occurrence cannot be reported. There have been reports that certain Police Stations have recommended women not to report gender-based violence and file for a divorce, in line with the statistical needs of each police station.
- The training given by the **Bar Association** does not include the gender perspective.
  - o In the course of access to a criminal solicitor's duty rota (which is the "general" area to which alleged abusers may be assigned), they are given **counsel on filing counter-claims and how to undermine women's evidence**. *Some associations have uploaded counter-claim strategies onto their websites.*
  - o Shortcomings in training have been detected in **Courts that specialise** in violence and the **State Security Forces**.
- **Resources** are lacking (not only material resources but also personnel and services).
- Broad **expectations** of a manipulating justice system that revictimises and fails to provide an adequate response. Specifically, many expectations are raised to have women report violence: it is going to go well, it is quick, legal counsel is free, and so forth, by when the women actually do make a criminal complaint, they find that it is not the case.
- Misinformation and stigmatising **women** is characteristic throughout the process.
- **Revictimisation** by all the agents who intervene in the process. Anyone member of the services who does not have adequate training (clearly the meeting points, sometimes the social services also, and the courts revictimise women at the time of taking their statements, because the procedure is more like being interrogated, as though they were the aggressors instead of the victims, the PAS).



- **Stereotypes and preconceived ideas about gender-based violence** (myths of false reports, judgements and so forth).
- The fact that they have to make series of statements (at the Police Station, the Examining Magistrate's Court and the trial) is wearisome for women and makes their testimony seem "unlikely" or "contradictory".
- The impact of the economic crisis has increased impersonal support, with no gender perspective, professionals with little experience and poor working conditions (e.g. at the meeting points).
- Stereotyping and prejudice are evident throughout the entire process. People form an image of what women who have suffered violence must be like, and they cannot appear to be empowered or have strong personalities. Oddly enough, the advisers who work to empower women find that to do so can be detrimental, because they no longer fit the victim stereotype. On the other hand, when the lawyers prepare the statements, they accuse the women of having been "instructed".
  - o **Electronic devices** are not allocated.
  - o The system does not respond to **protection measures**.
- The myth of the accusations of filing false complaints when the percentage is minimal; the same occurs in other spheres but is not even published; most of the complaints are made to the insurance companies and are never mentioned. In contrast, there is no record of the women who filed a complaint and ended up being attacked again, or murdered.
- Men's rights associations give them information and provide them with the tools they need to counter-attack.
- The blame with which women burden themselves when they go to make a statement in civil and criminal cases: "*I don't want him to go to prison*"; what about the children; responsibility for the abusers of minors; "*what will they think of me*", and so forth.
- We have identified differences in judicial proceedings in cities and in rural areas.
- The legal system for filing complaints is agony for the women who report gender-based violence.
- They do not work on the gender perspective in the Meeting Points.

### Shortcomings in judicial proceedings:

- The police use a (dehumanised) computer programme to make a **risk assessment** based on questions that determine the risk. If not even criminologist is reliable, a computer programme is even less so! There have been complaints that the police underrate the risk assessments.



- **Criminal complaints** are the only instrument available to report a case of violence against women. It is a very small instrument. And it can boomerang. Criminal complaints are an instrument of protection and now women are starting to be suspect. That is why the first campaigns stressed the need to file criminal complaints and now more attention is paid to information rather than putting pressure on women to file criminal complaints.
- After filing a **criminal complaint**: lack of information for women on the workings of the judicial system; the police should provide information on the proceedings. The police even confuse the women by giving them incorrect information (e.g. they talk about fast track trials and they understand something else...).
- Accompaniment in **Court**: regression in the treatment received, in the discourse of the personnel and officers: e.g. "protection orders have been abused".
- In the beginning, the **specialised teams** in the courts were good but subsequently employees were rotated and there were cutbacks, precarious jobs and lack of specialisation.
- Lack of **information**. Lack of immediate legal counsel. Lack of services for the victims. Lack of accompaniment. Lack of information. Lack of coordination.
- There is no **free access to specific legal counsel** and women have no information on what is sanctionable and what is not, when and how they can file a complaint and so forth.
- Lack of immediate **legal counsel** to have access to minimal guidance with filing a criminal complaint that would be useful in during judicial proceedings.
- Shortcomings when women **appear in Court**:
  - o The actual courts are terrible (e.g. you have to ask permission to go to the toilet and you have to go through the area where the aggressors are).
  - o There is an important lack of resources
  - o There is a lack of victim support services.
  - o Lack of accompaniment for women.
  - o Lack of information on the rights women are entitled to. E.g. they should know that they have the right to not make a statement but that implies that the case will be closed.
  - o There is no information on aspects that would be relevant for the victims: reading their rights; assistance regarding the decision as to the procedure that should be followed; conformities; protection order indicators (e.g. when a woman says she is afraid, they say it is an emotion, instead of taking it to be evidence, but they do not provide information as to what constitutes evidence or when evidence should be presented).



- o The role of state prosecutor has serious shortcomings.
- o Widespread lack of sensitivity in the courts that creates a mental block in women.
- o Lack of counsel (or poor counsel) by lawyers (e.g. they make agreements without the women's consent, convincing them in a hurried manner).
- o In some courts, they found "agreed sentences" classified as isolated episodes of violence and other types, without consulting the victim or her lawyer.
- o Lack of specific coordination between doctors, psychologists and forensic scientists.
- Widespread slowness in the **investigation stage** (a year and a half to three years) with consequences for women (they lose interest in the proceedings)
- During the criminal **trial**:
  - o Psychological and emotional stress for the women. They are burdened with responsibility for the judgement (consents, counter-claims, attempts to arrive at agreements with the defendant, even by the state prosecutor and unhelpful state prosecutors).
  - o A local view of the judicial proceedings; international tools are not used.
  - o There is a great deal of resistance to the use of partitions or screens, although it is a right to them.
  - o Weighing the evidence is at the discretion of the judge, who may be a man or a woman. Sometimes not even an injury report is sufficient. Even evidence is not weighed sufficiently and the difficulty of obtaining evidence in the "private" sphere is not adequately weighed either.
- Enforcement of the **sentence**:
  - o Lack of information.
  - o Invisibilisation of the women.
  - o No action on the part of the state prosecutor and the private prosecution
  - o Regression, because previously the same court issued a judgement and enforced the sentence but now they are different.
  - o There are no indicators for measuring the priority of cases (in the enforcement of sentences).
  - o The sentences that are being imposed contemplate lighter measures and the measures for protection are for shorter periods. Both the General Council of the Judiciary and the Observatory on Violence against Women have published statistics



that show an increase in cases that have been closed. Fewer protection orders are granted and there is even “veiled” PAS reasoning. It is even stressed that it is extraordinary and highly unusual for civil measures to be taken with regard to minors, and parental visits or guardianship for abusers. (Even in verdicts of guilty, visits are only restricted in 7% of cases and parental custody is removed in 0.3% of cases).



## STRATEGIES

### Advocacy

#### Demands made to the Public Administration

- Demand for **specialisation** (not training) for professionals and government employees at every level (mainstreaming) and reporting when this is not carried out. Training should be given by qualified people, from a feminist viewpoint.
- Demand **mechanisms for equality**: ministries, councils and so forth, with permanent, consolidated offices.
- Demand the **development and implementation of existing regulatory frameworks** (Law 2004, as well as the mechanisms developed in the autonomous regions) in every area (not just the legal and support spheres).
- Demand compliance with binding international instruments, such as the **CEDAW** or the **Istanbul Convention**, which have broader approaches to gender-based violence and use strategies such as the CEDAW Shadow Report for dealing with breaches.
- Insist on the allocation of **budgets** and resources for the fight against violence (more resources and fewer speeches), without taking them out of the funds for equality (empowerment, new models of masculinity and so forth).
- Review the **concept of violence** in the laws because recognising violence and having access to resources and services depends on how it is defined. Make the term **extensive to other forms of gender-based violence** and take into account the specificities of the women (their functional diversity, ethnicity, migrants and so forth).
- Demand coherence between the regulatory frameworks with the aim of protecting women's rights (e.g. amendments to the **Juveniles Act** and the risk of joint custody).



## Improvements in the feminist movement and civil society

- Gender-based violence could be the **CENTRAL THEME**<sup>13</sup> of the feminist movement, linked to the fact that it is an **opportunity and something that society agrees upon**. Convene minimum commitments within violence, (knowing that there many positions one can take) and a definition of the lines of action that should be followed. Work with broader consensus to facilitate joint actions and alliances.
- To go into the **CONCEPT OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE FROM A FEMINIST POINT OF VIEW** and in greater detail and to watch out for **new forms of violence** from an inter-sector viewpoint. Specifically:
  - o Review and go into the concept of victim/survivor in greater depth, taking different points of view into consideration. Women survivors as the leaders of change. Women as the holders of rights and not as the users of services. It is important to take stock of the language we work with<sup>14</sup> and discuss whether we should call the women who have suffered gender-based violence “survivors” or the “targets of violence”.
  - o Women and their credibility are under attack. It is important to visibilise and reevaluate the discourse and concepts used by women, for women. Protect the rights of women, and not women as such, because it is their rights that are being violated.
  - o Shift the focus from blaming women to focusing on the aggressors and the State.
- Develop our own discourse, dismantling the patriarchal discourse (stop sending messages that only mention women as victims and start pointing to the perpetrators). Build new models based on feminism.
- Recognition of the leading role of the feminist movement as a political subject in the fight against all forms of violence (progress: a public and political issue).
- Demand reparation from the legal sphere and also symbolic reparation.

## Strengthen existing alliances and create new ones

- **Inter-feminist groups** (at different levels: e.g. the European WAVE network).
- With groups of **women from other spheres**: transnational and interdisciplinary alliances.

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13 A proposal was made during the process that violence should be the main theme or strategy because it is such a serious matter. At the same time, the focus should still be placed on the structural inequality that is the cause of the violence.

14 On the subject of “survivors” as opposed to “victims”, there is agreement on this point among activists and professionals who work in the field, not only in prevention but also in various areas of intervention. However, although the judicial sphere considers that the change of concept is an achievement for the feminists’ fight, lawyers still refer to them as “victims”. It is a matter of strategy, because it has meant progress in getting the State to protect women. Therefore, it is a *victory that requires a response from the State*.



- Women **survivors** as the leaders of change. Find out which associations of women victims of violence exist.
- Alliance with **other social movements**.
- Alliances with **associations, NGOs social agent organisations**. Seek third sector organisations with which to forge alliances, synergies and share resources.
- Alliances with groups of **men** who are working from the new models of masculinity and in the fight against violence.
- Promote networks and alliances among the various **associations by fields of action** on violence and hold meetings to share methodologies and knowledge by areas (e.g. prevention, support and legal) with them.
- Alliance with **professionals in the public institutions** (trust, recognition and alliance): making a distinction between technical and political personnel, and exploring the possibilities for differentiated alliances and strategies.

What for?

- To **know and recognise each other**, coordinate and share information, and exchange knowledge (i.e. tools, methods and knowledge).
- **Review our own resistance to change** within the feminist groups and other social movements, in our way of thinking and the way we implement change within our organisations (power management).
- Set up places where we can meet to hold discussions and build our **discourse** and define joint actions with a stronger **social and political impact**.
- **Make the best possible use** of the **places and time** available to the groups, taking care not to have overloaded agendas and watching how we manage diversity and differences.
- Make a clear **assessment** of the situation of violence and the existing services and resources. Draw up a map of the existing resources and networks and make a network between each other. Obtain useful information and data. There is a need for coordination between the different areas so we can have more information, colleagues who are points of reference and give each other training courses.

### Strengthen advocacy strategies

The current context is one of harshness and impunity but also of motivation and a willingness to take action against the increase in violence, encouraged by previous successes, as in the strategy against the amendment of the abortion law.

- Demand **recognition** of feminist groups as a key actor so their demands and proposals will be taken on board.



- A need for a clear feminist **strategy** against all forms of violence (positioning and strategy: who, what, for whom and when), that will take a process approach, be sustainable in time and far-reaching. We must measure our strength and take strategic decisions on **priorities and how to implement them**.
- We lack training in advocacy, at the level of oratory and on designing advocacy strategies. It is important to recruit empowered **spokespeople** who have strong personalities and backing.
- In view of the current shortcomings, public institutions should not be entrusted to carry out all the work on violence.

### A research, follow-up and assessment strategy for denouncing violence

- **Develop structures for surveillance and control** to report the important number of legal vacuums we are identifying. This would enable us to generate data that we could introduce into public and institutional debates and use to detect good practices. **It is important** to make an assessment of the impact of the law on violence. We have demanded this and it is not being done, for example. With good coordination, it could be done by **civil society** and *that would give us tools and discourse*.
- Create **action-observation-reporting-responding networks** to avoid impunity by collecting specific data and the humanised filing of complaints. These monitoring bodies would identify what fails, what works and what to do to bring about change.
- An **analysis of the economic impact** of everything that is implemented.
- It is **important to conduct studies on specific forms of violence**. Produce updated information that indicates the mutations and new forms of violence.
- Denounce violence against minors (boys and girls) and demand protection for children.
- Demand states to comply with the duty of Due Diligence to eradicate femicide/femicide and violence against women. The recommendations presented by social movements **for the EU-CELAC summit on violence against women and feminicides/femicides** are an example of a good practice that we should continue to follow up. The recommendations are the outcome of the joint work of the European and Latin American organisations and networks that participated in the 8th Conference on Femicide/Femicide in June 2015<sup>15</sup>.

### Mobilisation strategy

- The importance of **broad social mobilisation**. Review the usual forms of mobilisation and assess **new mobilisation tools and methods**, including art, performances and so forth.

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15 [www.cooperaccio.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/DeclaracionVIIConfFeminicidioRecomenCumbreUECELAC.pdf](http://www.cooperaccio.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/DeclaracionVIIConfFeminicidioRecomenCumbreUECELAC.pdf)





- Create guidelines and strategies to respond to the killing of women and the need for an immediate response to the killings. E.g. To make **protest meetings** every time a woman is murdered, with a set guideline (protocol).

## Education and prevention

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### Demands made to the Public Administration

- Make the **importance** of prevention visible in formal and informal education.
- Denounce **insufficient** resources and the failure to implement the Law.
- Make an **assessment** of what needs do exist and work from there.
- Do away with **stereotypes and resistance**. For example, feminists are renamed “feminazis” and they say that working with gender-based violence generates more violence. Some professionals use terms to reach out to the wider community (romantic love, equality, conflict management, considerate behaviour, micro-aggressions and so forth).
- To expand the prevention of violence **instead of focusing only on physical violence and violence within couples**.
- Initiatives should be proposed from a **feminist education** that addresses the **causes**, in connection with inequality, and question the patterns and behaviour that perpetrate patriarchy.
- Take up the role of women victims again: making them visible and political once more. Training **survivors** as agents of gender-based violence (promoters of prevention), who have first-hand experience and also as a method of empowerment.
- Work on **empowerment** (individuals and groups): youth, self-esteem, sexuality, without putting the spotlight on women only, but on men and boys as well.
- Search for and train **role models** in prevention (specific people with whom they can feel identified): E.g. train men/boys to work on models of masculinity; gypsy women to work with young girls of their same ethnicity, and so forth).
- Have more of an impact on **social networks** and the media (taking into account that the media often take the messages we launch and twist them around).
- Resume successful **symbolic and creative actions** to disseminate achievements.
- Resume up the role of **associations** as educators in the prevention of violence.
- Feminist **self-defence** as prevention.
- Consider that prevention and education should target people of **any age and from any sphere**, and not just schoolchildren.



## Formal education

- Resume the importance of **co-education**, breaking with the illusion of equality and sexist stereotypes in education as a way of preventing violence and demand the mainstreaming of gender violence in school curriculums.
- Demand **specific subjects** and make them obligatory: sexuality education and interpersonal relationships, education for citizens, the subject of equality (which is currently an optional subject). All these aspects should have continuity and be given at every stage of education.
- Consolidate **equality plans in schools** and integrate compulsory equality and **assessment** in school curricula. Review how the **prevention of violence** is integrated into school curricula.
- It is important to start in primary school, breaking with the taboo that the subject is “too heavy”, and at all **ages**, not just as a “youth topic”.
- Identify existing co-education **resources** and denounce violence and inequality in text books and other educational material and practices.
- Make victories and good practices **visible and disseminate** them.

## Non-formal education

- Recognise the prevention and training work carried out by feminist groups and other social organisations.
- The importance of breaking the illusion of equality and sexist stereotypes and the denouncement of gender-based violence in all areas with the aim of preventing violence:
  - o **The media:** demand adequate treatment of violence, focusing less on femicides alone and go into greater detail. Specifically, the media should not encourage stereotypes by highlighting false criminal complaints and violence against men. Instead, they should denounce sexist video content on TV and in advertising. Propose to the media that they should publish verdicts of guilty on a monthly basis.
  - o In **companies:** fight against violence in the sphere of employment.
  - o With **families**, make use of existing support programmes for families and to mainstream alternative models of masculinity.
  - o With the **political parties**, propose commitments against violence (e.g. in electoral campaigns).
  - o Importance of a **symbolic recognition** of feminism: N25 squares, sculptures of women and streets with the names of women. Also, policies for equality should be mainstreamed at every level (inclusive language).



- o **Document** the life stories of the women who have been killed to humanise them and to go into the analyses in greater detail.

## In the feminist movement and civil society

- It is highly important to **put an end to misogyny and viewing violence as normal**: some types of violence are rejected but not all, nor is discrimination. (E.g. The sexist chant in the Betis football stadium and the reaction of the Federation of Young Women, who denounced it).
- Sometimes we put invest a lot of energy into drafting **highly complex discourses** that many women do not understand. *Our language and messages need to be more accessible so they will reach* the wider community, particularly men. The media should be **educational** (e.g. campaigns against racist rumours), humanising and help to “translate” rights and legal proceedings. Messages should be clear, simple and request a specific result (measurable and evaluable).
- Design strategies for strong and effective **communication** in **several formats** (a combination of videos, tweets, text messaging and other methods). **Use the networks for activism** and other communication resources and tools that are more diverse and creative (e.g. performances, videos, creativity and actions that attract attention) to disseminate the actions and reach out to more people.
- **Identify allies** among artists (as occurred with the Academy Awards) who will be spokespeople for the subject of violence.
- Identify **allies among journalists and the media** so they will support our campaigns and be spokespeople for the subject of violence.

## Support and treatment

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### Demands made to the Public Administration

- The need for **inter-institutional coordination** (although progress has been made in specific guidelines) and the necessary link between equality and violence.
- The need for more **public resources and services of better quality**: shelters, 24-hour support and so forth, as opposed to the privatisation and underfunding of many services.
- Demand access to **information and data** on procedures and resources (those that are available and those that have been carried out).
- **Comprehensive support is a right** that should be covered by the government. Support should be unconditional, long-term and comprehensive: information, access to resources, protection and legal counsel, recovery and a return to normality.
- Comprehensive support should include proper, unconditional psychological support for women and minors, and a better understanding of **other aspects of sup-**



**port:** employment, recovery, resources, housing and psychological care. The failure to address any one of these aspects causes women to drop out of the process because they need to work.

- Reinforce support, via **accompaniment**, when the women how face gender-based violence are **particularly vulnerable**: when they file a criminal complaint in a police station; when specialised professionals evaluate their level of risk; and accompaniment in court.
- Change the focus when providing support: it is the **women** who matter, not the violence they have suffered. The women are the **holders of rights** and not just “users”. Eliminate the approach that blames women and makes them responsible for the violence.
- Emphasis on the **aggressors**
  - o Focus police control on the aggressors and not on the women
  - o Work with men and stop associating therapies and courses with reductions of sentences that are not bringing about a deep transformation.
  - o Make convictions for violence visible to put an end to perceived impunity. Publish monthly statistics on verdicts of guilty.
  - o Above all, make education against violence compulsory (the Istanbul Convention).
- Require them to be **specialised professionals**, to intervene correctly and for the Comprehensive Law on Gender Violence to be enforced.
- The **training** for those who give support needs to ensure an understanding of the violence by going back to the theory that underlies the support model, so it will have the power to transform. It is a matter of maintaining the link between policies and intervention. Foundations with a feminist approach are needed to build and apply technical instruments.
- **Promote the care of professional women**, because the few who do have a job work at the cost of their own health and are overloaded.

### From the feminist movement and civil society

- Feminist **self-defence** as a collective strategy; as prevention and response but not the only response. It needs to be complemented with other strategies.
- **Coordinate with professionals to share information** and good and bad practices. **Coordinate** among ourselves to exchange “good, updated” information.
- **Increase the advocacy of professionals** in the field via lobbying at institutional meetings (promote guidelines, draft complaints), denounce significant cases and find criteria for actions in common.



- **Make poor practices visible and denounce them** along with those who are responsible for them.
- Have a safe space and care for those who **defend** and care for us in different areas. Thus, to **create spaces for general care**.
- Learn about the processes used by the associations that work with **women survivors as agents for change**: accompaniment, exchanges and so forth.

## Legal sphere

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### Demands made to the Public Administration

- Demand compliance with the Comprehensive Law on Gender Violence and the rules for its implementation.
- **Broaden the legal concept of gender-based violence.** Gender-based violence such as trafficking, sexual violence, female genital mutilation and so forth is recognised in the Istanbul Convention.
- In **legal counselling**:
  - o Legal counsel should be aware that **violence is a process** that affects every aspect of a human being (psychological, social and educational). Therefore, it is important to give advice on the post-complaint economic options (labour rights, resources, possibility of financial assistance).
  - o Take into account “**specificities**” such as the type of violence received (taking less visible forms of violence into consideration), the woman’s cultural level, the people who provide accompaniment, and so forth.
- **Demand compliance with their functions** and **specialisation** for personnel at every level, as well as the necessary funds. Demand mainstreamed training among lawyers, judges and the police. Evaluate the training they receive (content, number of hours and the teachers).
- **Risk must be assessed by specialised professionals and associations** (not the police, as in the case of victims of trafficking). Moreover, the testimony of the women involved must be recognised. Evaluate the full magnitude of violence: not just physical violence but also sexual and psychological violence.
- Evaluate the impact of the economic crisis and know its impact on protection and legal proceedings.
- The judicial process:
  - o Denounce the fact that a **protection order** is needed to have access to other resources and/or services.



- o The importance of recognising violence to women and the **testimony of women** as the holders of rights.
- o Help to translate women's rights and the legal processes to make them more **educational**.
- **Counselling women** on the integral process of violence and provide adequate information on what filing a criminal complaint entails: what happens, how to go about it and what they need.

### From the feminist movement and civil society

- **Coordination with other professionals to share information.** Create a register of actions and decisions. Visibilise the decisions of the various courts so see which have good practices and which have bad practices. **Coordinate** an exchange of "good, updated information" on judicial practices and outcomes; learn about new resources and watch out for new neo-sexist strategies.
- Choose **strategic litigation** (e.g. in the Ángela González case, the husband killed her daughter and the CEDAW sentenced the government to compensate the mother). There has not been sufficient follow-up. Apparently, the minister of Justice holds responsibility for this case. He sent a list of the relevant legislation in an attempt to make excuses, but that is not what the CEDAW requests. It could call for advocacy action.
- Use tools such as the **Istanbul Protocol against Torture** and the **Victims Statute**, and demand the right to reparation in extreme cases and other forms of violence.
- Make a **follow-up of bad sentences** (like the Federation of Progressive Women) and with the Meeting Points.
- **Disseminate** the **achievements** of sentences so they can be used **collectively**.



## CHAPTER II:

# WE ARE MANY IN THE FIGHT. JOINING FORCES AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE



This chapter gives an overview of the content addressed in the Meeting *We are many in the fight. Joining forces against gender-based violence – Indarrak batuz indarkeria matxisten kontra. Emakume ugari borrokalari*<sup>16</sup>, held on 4-5 June 2015, in Bilbao.

As mentioned in the introduction to this Meeting, more than 70 people from different spheres are working to:

- Make a better analysis of the approach to gender-based violence from many spheres.
- Enlarge upon the strategies put in place to fight against gender-based violence and other forms of violence that we need to start addressing.

The first meeting was open to the public. It started with a review of the previous meetings to give the audience an idea of the situation of the process at the time.



The first speech analysed the main conclusions drawn from previous meetings on the situation of gender-based violence from the viewpoint of the professionals and feminist groups who work on gender-based violence every day. Firstly, we should mention that more than 200 women and 100 groups took part in the project. The conclusions mark the potential lines of action in the fight to eliminate gender-based violence.

The full content of the first speech is available in the first chapter of this publication *Assessment: Knots and Strategies Against Gender-Based Violence*.

The rest of the morning was taken up with speeches by experts in four essential lines of action in the fight against gender-based violence: the legislative, legal, educational and

<sup>16</sup> [www.mugarikgabe.org/blog/2015/05/22/jornadas-en-la-lucha-somos-muchas-sumando-fuerzas-contras-las-violencias-machistas](http://www.mugarikgabe.org/blog/2015/05/22/jornadas-en-la-lucha-somos-muchas-sumando-fuerzas-contras-las-violencias-machistas)



support lines. The aim was to fine-tune the details of the assessment mentioned in Chapter I of this publication.



## GOING FURTHER INTO AN ASSESSMENT

**Critical analysis of the shortcomings of the regulatory framework and the public administration's implementation of the instruments in the legislative, legal, support and educational spheres<sup>17</sup>**

### Legislative and Legal Sphere

The first speaker, María Naredo<sup>18</sup>, participated in the Meeting in a video that was screened on the first day. She highlighted the importance of putting the discussion on gender-based violence back on the feminist agenda. Should we put discussion aside now that the Comprehensive Law on Gender Violence has been passed? Have we, the feminist groups, been paying attention to the discussions regarding the Law? And on its implementation? Naredo analysed the deficiencies in current legislation and spoke of the importance of legislating against other types of gender-based violence that have not been envisaged. She also explained the impact of the cutbacks on the prevention of violence. "These [budgets] started off badly and have become even worse," she asserted.

Naredo expounded on the evaluation made of Organic Law 1/2004 of 28 December on Measures for Full Protection against Gender Violence, ten years after it was passed.

<sup>17</sup> The full audio is available at <https://soundcloud.com/mugarikgabe/primera-mesa-emakumeborrokalari>

<sup>18</sup> Video of María Naredo available at <https://vimeo.com/130958651>





The Law was born as a good practice and was considered pioneering in Europe. It is still an exception but, from a global viewpoint, other laws in Latin America (in Mexico, Venezuela, Colombia and El Salvador) are more progressive.

One of the main shortcomings is that the law only addresses a part of the different types of violence.

The feminist groups were in the fight to pass the Law. Implementing it was not a priority in the first few years but, fortunately, it is being implemented now. The feminist groups are tired of seeing laws, plans and programmes implemented, only to be breached or underfunded.

The Law still faces many difficulties 10 years after it was passed. It is a law on paper but not in reality, because its implementation is not having an impact on rights in women's lives. The Law faces many barriers and impediments to its implementation.

No budget has ever been allocated to it for everything it was supposed to put in place, compared to the funds allocated to other items (campaigns to recruit troops for the army and road safety, for example). Sufficient funds were never provided, which indicates how low it is on the list of government priorities. It is worth mentioning that a breach of the Law is not a breach of institutional responsibilities.

The Law has not been implemented with regard to prevention or comprehensive assistance for women. Some Autonomous Regions have made more progress than others, but implementation has not been uniform or complete.

Some autonomous regions have implemented the part of comprehensive support for women that refers to psychological support, legal counsel, access to housing and other types of support for employment but there have been no minimal standards. Implementation of the Law depends on the regional ministries and their level of awareness. Minimum resources should be guaranteed and available in all cases.

Moreover, requirements have been informed from the point of view of support and women have been expected to adapt to them, instead of adapting the requirements to the women.

With regard to the justice system, gender-based violence is complex and needs to be known and understood, and yet the justice system keeps on adding up the cases and does not have a complete picture of the violence. Poor practices are constant: crossed criminal complaints, as though it were a matter of violence between equals; and the custody of the children, who are not appendices to the relationship. It cannot be ignored that patriarchy runs through the relationship). New models of masculinity are coming to the fore in the justice system, which was once the champion of the Comprehensive Law on Gender Violence.

The promise of courts specialising in attending women is a proposition that has not been complied with, because the barriers that existed before the Comprehensive Law on Gender Violence are still in place.

In reference to the topic of quality to evaluate the Law, the question is, what do we expect from the resources? We have seen that everyone from religious orders to building com-



panies have managed the resources, which has prevented a guarantee that the Law will be implemented.

There is no assessment of the impact of government policies and the Comprehensive Law on Gender Violence is no exception. The assessment made three years ago was only a catalogue of measures. Implementation was not analysed, and its impact even less so. In 2009, a parliamentary subcommittee studied a series of assessment, while making it very clear that the results were not binding on the government. An assessment should be made with the participation of the women who pass through the services, because it is their rights that are being judged.

Budget allocation has been opaque. It is difficult to trace the budgets of the Autonomous Regions and the central government but there have been cutbacks. Some figures, such as budget item 232C, are specific, and it has been decreased significantly.

The budget was a key aspect in the implementation of the Law and it was insufficient from the beginning. The biggest hole was in the area of prevention, which has not been given priority at all. There were cutbacks in comprehensive assistance in 2007, when the budget was lowered. After that, each Autonomous Region and municipality was left to organise the services as best they could. There was no guarantee of a minimum budget, the quality of the resources or the conditions in which our companions were working when providing assistance.

To conclude, mention can be made of a series of urgent measures after making an assessment 10 years after the Comprehensive Law on Gender Violence was passed:

- 1) The Law must envisage other types of gender-based violence (sexual violence at work, among students, in the public sphere, girls sexually abused by family members, and so forth). Such forms of violence are demanding attention, information and specialisation, as opposed to the restrictive view of the Comprehensive Law of 2004, which focuses on couples and former couples).
- 2) The viewpoint must be heterogeneous and multiple. There has been legal discrimination in the implementation of the Law. A multiple viewpoint is needed to guarantee a life free of the violence experienced by so many women who are migrants or have no proper documentation; by the victims of trafficking, asylum seekers, and women who are functionally diverse. Women who do not fit the profile of a victim who has access to the resources.
- 3) Provide a response to existing demands. What we mean when we talk about local resources. What kind of resources, and how many? What guarantee of quality do they have? Are the women happy with them? These questions require answers, as do the demands that are being made.
- 4) We must put an end to the institutional violence experienced by women in the courts. Complaints are occasionally filed, but the media makes the issue completely invisible. The law and all the Conventions that have to do with Human Rights, access to justice, protection and no impunity for gender-based violence are being breached.
- 5) A guarantee of the right to reparation in all five aspects thereof: compensation, guarantees of no repetition, complete recovery, satisfaction and dissemination of



the truth. Reparation in the context of gender-based violence is being forgotten, whereas it is present in other violations of Human Rights.

From a legislative point of view, Isabel Quintana<sup>19</sup>, a solicitor and member of Argitan<sup>20</sup> and Brujas Diversas<sup>21</sup>, drew attention to the barriers and legal impediments faced by those who work in the courts. The people who accompany the victims of gender-based violence are not given adequate information and therefore they lack professionalization. Fast-track trials, for example, force the women to come to court without the emotional and legal preparation they need to face long and often highly painful proceedings. Taking legal action is not easy and the women often feel alone and unprotected. Quintana also stressed the importance of recognising that the women are the holders of rights, without questioning their decisions.

Ten years after the Law was passed, the outlook is devastating. We naturalise the deaths every year, which come to more than 800 women killed in the past decade.

The number of criminal complaints decreases because women do not view complaints as an option. An increasing number of women decide against continuing the legal process. Why do they think it is not worth the effort?

There are several aspects to consider, such as the false expectations women given, for example, when they are told that the trials are quick, when in fact they lengthy and wearying. If they had been given proper information from the beginning, perhaps they would not have filed a complaint at all.

However, no study is made of the reasons women have for withdrawing from the process, so the legal operators make their own subjective analysis, questioning the women for their actions.

Counter-claims add to the view of a succession of cases in which the perspective is lost and gender-based violence is forgotten. Instead, it becomes a sum and counter-sum of cases.

Moreover, the myth of false complaints is contributing to the view of women as the beneficiaries of resources rather than the holders of rights. Therefore, their motives are always suspect. In addition, when there is a stay in the proceedings, it gives the idea that false criminal complaints have been filed.

Training is needed for state prosecutors, lawyers, members of the judiciary, health professionals, information centres and the police. Very little training is provided on gender-based violence specifically, and even less on diversity and gender inequality. A study carried out in the Basque Country asked about the courses taken on gender-based violence and the answers received indicated that 65% of the participants would like to see an increase in training, 60% mentioned the quality of the training, 73% wanted specific training in order to understand the women, and more than half requested for personal tools for

19 An interview with Liz Quintana is available at <https://vimeo.com/130958587>

20 <http://argitan-barakaldo.kzcomunidades.net/es/html>

21 <https://www.facebook.com/Brujas-y-Diversas-Sorgin-eta-Anitzak-528993970572413/timeline>



providing support. Temporary positions in the courts for violence are very high, and not everyone who passes through them is specialised.

Women are treated poorly in the courts and place very little value on them. The state prosecution office is rated as particularly poor. Moreover, women's opinions are mistrusted. Even less trust is placed in women migrants, who face even stronger preconceived ideas and stereotypes. In many cases, the women are viewed as the beneficiaries of resources and not as the holders of rights.

Moreover, we find that many women have no information on the process and procedure. They face complex terminology and are required to make quick decisions.

Justice is generally believed to be free, but not all proceedings are free. Women are misinformed in this regard. The information provided gives a widespread impression that women will not encounter financial difficulties if they file a criminal complaint, but in fact the criteria for having access to resources are very specific. Many women have no access or the administration requires a series of formalities that are unrealistic or may even put the life of women at risk. For example, if a woman is a co-owner of her home, abandons it with her children and wants to acquire another place to live, the public services require her to obtain financial gains from her former home (where her aggressor lives). A legal separation by a court is required to claim alimony, even if the woman is trying to hide from her aggressor so he cannot find her.

Violence is even more invisible for dependent women who need care, because the violence is so subtle. It can consist in not attending her needs for care, not feeding her or giving her water, and so forth.

Finally, there is the worrying fact that gender-based violence continues among the younger generations and, moreover, they do not perceive it. There is a contradiction between their discourse, which rejects gender-based violence, and the actual control and harassment via the new technologies, for instance. It is difficult to make the violence visible and for young women to recognise it. Moreover, when violence is mentioned, it is perceived as the violence mentioned in the law (which only refers to violence within couples). This makes it difficult to make other types of violence visible and for young people to feel identified with it.



## Support and treatment

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Natividad Veraguas<sup>22</sup>, from the Dones amb Empenta<sup>23</sup> group, explained how the cutbacks and lack of political will have affected support for the victims, how referrals fail and the resources citizens open to citizens who intervene in a situation of violence. What is the best advice? To show respect for the victim.

When the State Law was passed, there was talk of comprehensive support that would unify the issue and recognise rights, although it made other types of gender-based violence outside of couples less visible.

A Generalitat of Catalonia passed the Llei del dret de les dones a erradicar la violència masclista of 24 April 2008, which reinterpreted the ideological framework and overcame the term gender-based violence. It mentioned other types of gender-based violence, within couples, in families, the workplace and the community, feminine genital mutilation, arranged marriages, sexual trafficking, sexual assaults by strangers and sexual abuse of girls). However, although the autonomous regions are competent in matters pertaining to support, the Catalan law is superseded by the state law, so it has no influence in penal terms.

Resources were set up in Catalonia to implement a public network of support: SIADS (centres of information and support for women) and SIEs (for support and recovery). However, the services were outsourced. Third sector companies and even building companies tendered for the government contracts.

This being the case, we could ask the following: If the support resources are not managed by feminist groups, who decide the model of support?

We believe that a model of support by feminist groups exists. There is a way to understand violence and a way to interact with the women who are in a situation of violence, and that is the model that should be implemented.

In Catalonia, the Generalitat sets out the model for support. Currently, guidelines and instruments for assessment and systematisation are being implemented but instead of serving as guidelines, they end in an endless number of levels that can be followed thoughtlessly.

One obvious difficulty stands out: There is an ideological opposition to the two laws (the Catalan law and the state law) that has been justified by the economic crisis. The support services have blended into family support, losing sight of the focus and ideological content of the laws.

The response provided by the support services is to project women from institutional violence. Therefore, we should start to talk about the professionals being feminists, as a measure to guarantee support.

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<sup>22</sup> An interview with Natividad Veraguas is available at <https://vimeo.com/131071414>

<sup>23</sup> [www.dae.cat](http://www.dae.cat)



It is important to agree upon a framework that views women as the holders of rights, as survivors who can overcome their problems and come out ahead. Thinking about the process as support for recovery is a political exercise and advocacy. You are making a policy because the way you are relating to others is a policy. It is a framework for support that provides an alternative to the *models of guidelines* that lead you to believe that you can intervene without thinking.

The relationship between two people is instrument used by professional givers of support. It is about taking a position and how women start to take positions and how far they can go. Currently it is the fashion to evaluate the recovery and the recovery is decided by the women, who say how far they want to go. It is not for the professionals to decide. It is the women who must set out the aims of the work.

There appear to be studies from a gender perspective but in fact there are none. There appears to be specialised training but it does not exist. The training for professionals encounters a lot of opposition. Knowledge of the theoretical and conceptual framework is not required. The demand is for intervention instruments, without realising that the conceptual framework is the appropriate instrument.

A model that believes that interventions in violence can work like a pressure cooker, when in fact violence heats up like a slow-cooking broth. Non-violence is also a matter of time, with different ways of relating to others.

It would be an interesting joint project to build scientific terminology for this different way of relating to each other. We could think about what happens at our own level with the aim of defending that this is the correct model and not the one that makes women go through multiple levels and endless intervention guidelines.

## Educational sphere

María del Mar Zamora<sup>24</sup>, from the Association in Defence of Women's Public Image<sup>25</sup>, analysed the importance of education to combat gender-based violence with educational reforms. The LOGSE (the former Spanish GCSE equivalent) was the first law to integrate gender equality. According to the Comprehensive Law on Gender Violence, every school in Spain should have staff trained in gender issues. Should, should, should.

There is a clear intention to combat gender-based violence in education and public schools.

Since 1970, the Spanish State has undergone many changes in education, as evidenced by the seven laws on education that have been passed in since then. However, it is true that three of the laws have coordinated education on the prevention of violence in Spain (in addition to the laws on equality and against violence that have specific sections regarding education):

<sup>24</sup> An interview with M<sup>a</sup> del Mar Zamora is available at <https://vimeo.com/130958624>

<sup>25</sup> <https://es-es.facebook.com/adipmujer>



- The General Education Law of 1970, which made school compulsory until age 14;
- The Act on the General Organisation of the Education System (the abbreviation in Spanish is LOGSE) of 1990, which set out the bases for co-education;
- and the Organic Law on Education of 2006, which included a subject on Education for Citizenship and Human Rights;

The Organic Law 8/2013 of 9 December (LOMCE) seeks to improve the quality of education. Its aim is to prevent the implementation of the two last laws because they did not meet the State's educational goals. It eliminates the subject on Citizenship and promotes a segregation of the sexes.

Analysing the budgets for education from 2012 to 2015, there has been a regression in the investment in Education in all the Autonomous Regions except in the Balearic Islands, Basque Country and Extremadura, according to the *A las elecciones con tacones y maquillaje*<sup>26</sup> (Voting in High Heels and Makeup) Report. The sharpest decreases have been in Aragon and Madrid, followed by Asturias and Valencia. Education is decisive in the aim for equality between men and women and the diminished budgets have a negative impact on that goal.

The Autonomous Government of Andalusia has a budget with a gender perspective since 2014. The regional ministry set up the First Plan for Equality between Men and Women in Education as an important and necessary instrument for reducing gender inequality and mainstreaming gender in the budgeting for education. The Plan establishes two levels:

- 1) Resources that seek to reconcile work and family life, consisting of two budgetary programmes for education: a Family Support Service and Education for Early Childhood.
- 2) The resources aim to have an impact on deep-seated stereotypes and values and to be mainstreamed in the cultural and educational spheres.

An assessment carried out by the Andalusian Agency for the Assessment of Education highlights the women's participation in the school management boards and the teachers' involvement in the plans, projects and programmes carried out from a gender perspective.

The barriers to implementing the prevention of violence in education are mainly the following:

- The LOMCE eliminates the subject Education for Citizenship and Human Rights and Ethical-Civic Education and modifies the course on Philosophy and Citizenship, omitting the second part that addressed the issue of gender equality.
- There have been cutbacks in the budgets.

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26 [www.fsc.ccoo.es/comunes/recursos/99922/doc222262\\_Presupuestos\\_del\\_Estado\\_para\\_2015\\_\\_a\\_las\\_elecciones\\_con\\_tacones\\_y\\_maquillaje.pdf](http://www.fsc.ccoo.es/comunes/recursos/99922/doc222262_Presupuestos_del_Estado_para_2015__a_las_elecciones_con_tacones_y_maquillaje.pdf)



- Religious and segregated schools: there are more than 60 schools for differentiated education in Spain, 24 of which are linked to the Opus Dei. The subject of religion is a huge problem, particularly in Andalusia where it is widespread.

Faced with this reality, the following proposals are made:

- A Feminist State-wide Pact to prevent the pillars of education to be changed every time there is a change of government.
- Elimination of the Concordat between the Holy See and the State.
- Repeal of the LOMCE, a regressive regulation that eliminated the content on equality between men and women and the prevention of gender-based violence.
- Promote introductory and permanent training plans for professionals on equality and against violence, given by women from active feminist groups (not by those who hold master's degrees and are not feminist).
- Draw up school materials and curricular content that are not sexist and do not use discriminatory language.
- Presence on the School Board of a specialist in implementing educational measures.
- Dissemination and awareness campaigns in the areas of education, advertising, the media and new information technologies, targeting childhood, youth and young people in particular.

At the end of the second discussion panel on the first day of meetings, the audience went to the square in front of Santiago Cathedral to **perform the happening against gender-based violence: WOMEN IN BLACK**. The action, promoted by the Mujeres Imperfectas<sup>27</sup> group, is being replicated in other cities across Spain. It responds to a recurrent need discussed in the meetings: we must rethink social mobilisation and create new ways to advocate. The idea of the action is simple and yet highly effective: a group of women, dressed all in black, lied dead still in the street. Their silhouettes are outlined in chalk and then they stand in front of the outline of their bodies in the street for a minute of silence. To what purpose? To evidence the seriousness of the gender-based violence issue, which appears to go unnoticed by the wider community.

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<sup>27</sup> <http://mujeresimperfectas.blogspot.com.es>







## LEARNING STRATEGIES AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

The ZAPATOS ROJOS (Red Shoes) installation by Ecuador Etxea<sup>28</sup> was exhibited during the entire meeting, with the aim of keeping in mind different ways of denouncing violence. Zapatos Rojos is a Public Art Installation and the work of Mexican visual artist Elina Chavet, who denounces gender-based violence in all its forms. Each shoe represents the testimony of a disappearance. The work is also a public denouncement of the violation of women's human rights and a call to society to show solidarity and demand justice for the killing of women, young women and girls.



28 [http://ecuadoretxea.blogspot.com.es/p/blog-page\\_5.html](http://ecuadoretxea.blogspot.com.es/p/blog-page_5.html)



## Strategies for social and legal intervention.

### Analysis of the initiatives

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In the first discussion panel on the second day, titled *Strategies for social and legal intervention*. An analysis of initiatives, we learned more about current initiatives against gender-based violence in Spain.

On the basis of the experience of the Cuenta Conmigo project, Lola Fernández<sup>29</sup>, from Incide<sup>30</sup>, addressed the importance of placing women who have survived gender-based violence in charge of collaborating in the recovery of other women.

Laura Baños the Network of Resistance and Response to Gender-based Violence<sup>31</sup>, of which she is a member. She explained how the network was set up, how it works and what it teaches, as well as the weakness they have detected.

Laia Serra, a Catalan lawyer from the Dones Juristes<sup>32</sup> group, delivered a speech titled *Empowerment via judicial channels*. Her speech stressed the importance of creating alliances between the feminist movement and members of the judiciary.

The ideas launched by each speaker are presented below.

### Survivor women as active subjects in the fight against violence

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The initiative presented is a part of the proposed *Count on Me* project, which arose from the need for a tool for the women who came to the resources seeking employment but who also showed evident signs of a background of gender-based violence within the couple. Two needs were detected: A need for training on the detection of gender-based violence for counsellors and employment Counsellors; and a need for a specific place where the demand could be met. The programme emerged as a response to those needs.

A search was made for a resource that would strengthen the capacities of women who were the victims of violence, for it was essential for them to know how to interpret their situation. It is not an easy path but it is the key to change and therefore that is how we work with the women. It is fundamental to start with their life experience, to respect them and the time they need, as well as their decisions. The programme is based on accompaniment (of varying intensity) and giving each woman a personalised itinerary adapted to her needs.

The methodology is based on “citizen’s rights”, starting with giving importance to women say and their citizen’s rights in their decision-making. The women are in the process of overcoming their experience, in an advanced stage of the long process and the aim is for them to become a model of reference for other women.

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29 An interview with Lola Fernández is available at <https://vimeo.com/130958652>

30 [www.incide.org](http://www.incide.org)

31 <https://es-es.facebook.com/red.resistenciarespuesta>

32 [www.donesjuristes.cat](http://www.donesjuristes.cat)



Personal interviews are conducted with each woman to make a selection, because it is important to know the point they have reached and the skills they have to work with. The intervention is completed with other resources within the project on the subject of employment, childhood and so forth.

The project is disseminated via the social networks, website and support from the Andalusian Institute for Women and the City Council's Department for Equality.

The programme has several stages:

- The training process: The theoretical content works with raising gender awareness, violence within couples and the development of accompaniment skills.
- The support process focuses on identifying needs and objectives (on the subject of employment, resources against violence and active income for integration). It also focuses on a network of women who are linked to the administration or their own resources, and accompaniment (for social formalities and accompaniment in police stations and the courts).
- Other activities: individual sessions, group sessions, recreational meetings (e.g. to present books, go shopping, and visits to museums and gardens); tutoring for women; continuity tutoring, all of which are essential in treating the situation.

The programme has been successful in training 21 women in three years (an average of six women per year) and providing support for more than 80 women. A total of 103 women victims of gender-based violence have received comprehensive support. Initially, the training group had 8 members but later they were 25. In the second stage, the women who received training provide support for other women and accompany them in their personal process of getting out of a situation of gender-based violence.

This year the programme included children, who were helped to recognise the situation instead of idealising it. The programme also set up a network of *Count on Me* volunteers.

The experience of the entity is middling, but the following elements are judged to be strengths:

- The involvement of the women and the climate of trust and respect, as well as the individualised pace.
- Placing women as the essential agents of change. The programme could not have been implemented without that approach.
- Coordination with other entities.

The needs detected in the programme are the following:

- Continuity in the funding and expansion of the programme.
- To increase the number of professionals specialised in gender-based violence.



- The commitment and willingness of the public administrations to find solutions for the problems detected.

## Network of Resistance and Response to Gender-based Violence (NRR)

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The Network was set up in Madrid in February 2013, promoted by the committee of Feminismos Sol and on the basis of the reality and needs observed in the Law of 2004. The NRR considers that the Law is not always implemented and it fails to cover all the needs. Moreover, there is a need for more effective coordination.

Thus, the idea emerged to form a diverse group of women with different political careers (professionals who work in the field), who are willing to provide a comprehensive political response to the complex world of the fight against gender-based violence. The system fails and patriarchy is maintained or makes headway. Cutbacks in resources seriously damage the rights of women and fail to provide protection to those who are potentially affected. New models of patriarchy and neo-sexist discourse are emerging. The members of Feminismos Sol know how hard it is to get out of the situation and how the State machinery is implemented throughout the process.

They know the capacity of the fight organised by women, which has been in place for decades, and the self-organisation that has made a stronger effort with the response and resistance of the feminist groups. Thus, the first step was to draw up a set of steps and agree upon a definition of violence for the NRR:

*“Acts and discourse of domination, harassment, control, abuse, isolation, despise, seclusion, and physical, psychological and sexual aggression against women and people whose sexual identity and gender do not predominate in the patriarchy. We defend a non-reductionist concept that occurs outside of the context of heterosexual couples, in other areas and outside of the bonds of affection, such as symbolic and economic violence, violence against transsexuals, the children of transsexuals and the victims of trafficking.”*

The NRR seeks political advocacy and denounces gender-based violence as a serious structural issue that the State has not resolved. They consider that it is important to visualise the violence of the State and make it accountable.

The Comprehensive Law on Gender Violence did not attain its aims and has dulled the perception of the causes and dimension of gender-based violence, as well as the fight to eradicate it. Therefore, the NRR seeks to make the poor, ineffectual practices of the State visible and points to the discourse that allows the legal and political privileges of abusers to continue. The NRR also disseminates the impact of the economic crisis on the institutions' treatment of gender-based violence, which has shifted the spotlight away from protection to more extreme forms of physical violence, cutting back on rights and resources.

Moreover, the NRR seeks to oppose neo-sexist values that plays down women, blames the victims and considers that violence is a residual issue. In addition, the NRR seeks a response to gender-based violence and situations that increases the lack of protection for children and family members.



To those ends, the NRR forms seven work groups:

1. Communication: in charge of dissemination, relations with regional and transborder networks in similar fights, the construction of language and internal communication.
2. Self-help and mutual support: in charge of accompaniment for women, self-defence, sexual rights, training in self-help (and in how to have fun), violence and racism, advocacy, learning from other networks and drawing up guidelines.
3. Economic: in charge of the resistance cashbox and seeking funds.
4. Legal: in charge of systematizing information on cases, guidelines for trials, poor practices, the enemy's strategies and follow-ups of similar cases.
5. "NRR commando" actions: in charge of disseminating crimes; conducting campaigns to file criminal complaints against abusers the State and misleading advertising; and street actions for public denouncement.
6. Information-Systematization: in charge of identify potential violence and strategies, collecting women's stories and developing computer tools.
7. Logistics and resources: in charge of alliances with friendly entities, groups of men with similar ideas and other groups; and managing "vital holidays" and safe spaces.

The NRR provides accompaniment for women in some courts and/or provincial Courts, and street actions such as denouncement campaigns in clothes shops during bargain sales in the city centre. Political awareness is highly important, as well as showing the invisible fight carried out by many women. However, the experience was exhausting because many meetings were needed in the beginning to arrive at agreements, draw up minimum requirements, ensure proper coordination and so forth. The result was that many women withdrew.

There was opposition to the process as well, including:

- Opposition by many groups and women when mentioning the underground (i.e. "vital holidays" for women who had suffered violence) because the system does not envisage it.
- Seek safe methods of communication against the State and organised groups of aggressors, such as the anonymous server Tor or Kune (a very safe beta tool). This took many hours of training and made it difficult for some colleagues to participate. Organisation consumed many hours.
- Autonomy versus the institutions: how to participate in "legal" spaces. These aspects changed the original idea and pointed to other paths.

An assessment of the NRR considers that the experience was very powerful and started with the participants' intention to include a diversity of women with broad experience.



They are in several feminist spaces in the Autonomous Region of Madrid and taught an enormous amount to many women, enabling them to have a voice and draw closer to other social movements, such as the Mortgage-Affected Citizens Platform (with mutual support through joint actions).

One of the main lessons learned was the weariness of providing support. There was no way of measuring resources and strength. Emergencies requiring quick response kept cropping up and the pace made it difficult for women to participate. Other issues the women faced were “super militancy”, participation in too many spaces and making their lives precarious. There was also a lack of communication strategies.

They consider that “Feminist Ethics” are the response to the patriarchal covenant. The NRR seeks a broader view and respect for everyone, trying to be as inclusive as possible. To promote mutual support and care; build bridges to coordinate with other networks; to build on what we have in common; and respect the time each woman needs.

## Empowerment in the judicial process

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After all these years, we are gaining knowledge, converging and detecting shortcomings and room for improvement. In this intervention, there have been proposals for strategies and communication in the legal and academic spheres.

### Overall strategy:

There is a lot of knowledge that is not being used by feminist groups but is being used by other social sectors, such as the repressive sphere. It is important to learn from the network that was recently created by the family members of the victims of a reprisal.

With regard to tools, there is legal knowledge and basic knowledge that should be transferred to women’s groups because they are underused at the local and international level (e.g. CEDAW).

Feminist groups are a first-order actor for formal communication with the legal institutions such as the associations of doctors and forensic scientists, judges for democracy, European institutions, and international institutions. Currently, such communications have shortcomings; the legal actors are very clear; and those responsible for the shortcomings are not being pointed out. Sometimes we have resources that are not being used and there are measures and people with whom we could work. There is a need for more teamwork because there is a disconnection between legal groups and lawyers.

### Communications sphere:

- Several proposals have been made in the sphere of communications that should be taken into account:
- Legal counsel (which currently does not exist within the feminist movement) on the limits of freedom of expression is essential. There are trained lawyers who could provide support in that area.



- It is important to make legal victories and messages visible, which the repressive sphere is already doing. The image of women should not be all negative and full of bad news. It is important to disseminate the victories because they are an opportunity to celebrate. There is also a need to agree on a discourse with the media.
- The new technologies (ICTs) and the communication lobby provide many opportunities to question the actors in the judiciary and state prosecution office. We should also take the opportunity to place the feminist discourse in unusual and/or strategic spaces. For example, does anyone know about the statute for victims? Tools of that sort are not disseminated.
- We need to search in our imagination for campaigns such, as, for example, the Campaña pel Tancament dels CIE or the Anti-Rumours Network. Such tools can counteract the discourse that targets immigrants, for instance.
- New “virgin” crimes are emerging and we need to learn about them, because trends are marked from the beginning and after that inertia sets in.
- There are very interesting communication projects underway, such as the PROXI project for monitoring digital media that is having an impact on immigrants and the Roma).

### On the academic practical level:

- Advocacy is required to receive more training for women doctors, forensic scientists, judges and state prosecutors.
- It is important to implement the training set out in the Istanbul Convention and for the concept of violence, the dynamics of violence and victimology to become well-known.
- We should consider tools such as the psychology of testimony, the evidence brought by women and post-trauma effects. Victimology does not understand violence and personal processes. Such spheres need to be used because the reports serve to “undermine” women’s credibility.
- It is important to develop tools, such as handbooks for filing criminal complaints.

### On the legal level:

There are many aspects to work on in the legal sphere. A few of them are indicated below. Firstly, we need to arrive at agreements within the feminist groups and decide where we are headed. To this end, we need to create a legal strategy with clear, agreed upon aims. Currently there are no practical alliances between academics, lawyers and judges, although it would be beneficial to have them. Many lawyers and judges spend time reinterpreting the law to broaden it. All the work carried out to reinterpret the law is anecdotal (e.g. as in the case of the Antipodas group).

The issue of “legitimate defence” would make a good starting point. It is not something that is used because it is very masculine. We should find a way to appropriate it.



Several proposals were made for tools for intervention. One fundamental tool that we should use is “feminist litigation strategies” which are already being used by LGTB groups, ecologists and the repressive sphere. There are symbolic and pioneering cases that are going to bring about an expansion of rights. Local laws are also planned, in which the administration would file as the private prosecution, as well as private accusations with support. We can count on these.

Finally, we stress the importance of coordinating and teaming with lawyers, communication professionals and so forth. The case of “too few die” and the “woman who was kicked on the Diagonal Avenue” are good examples of this need.

Specifically, general objectives and specific aims in the legal sphere are proposed:

### **Broad objectives:**

- To make the concept of violence at every level known and to broaden our outlook (an overview of gender-based violence rather than a specific, narrow view). Judges and state prosecutors do not understand what we mean when we talk about violence.
- It is important to speak about institutional violence. Judicial teaching should be mainstreamed, putting the focus on the State as ultimately responsible for gender-based violence.

### **Specific objectives using specific tools:**

- To integrate femicide as a concept (some countries have specific laws, such as the Latin American research guideline).
- To use legitimate defence as a tool (as mentioned earlier).
- To learn about other fields from which to work, such as article 510 (incitement to hatred) in the new Penal Code and the aggravating circumstance set out in article 22.4 (there are no cases in the Spanish State and it is being tried out in the case of the woman kicked on Diagonal Avenue).
- To use new rights such as the Istanbul Convention and the CEDAW.
- For some time there have been claims for crimes such as stalking in the street and in the ICTs. Some progress is being made.
- To work with the new statute for victims (Directive 2012). It is the first time that a catalogue for victims is established, in reference to the autonomy of women and protection measures.





## Gaining a better understanding of the Istanbul Convention<sup>33</sup> as a tool for advocacy.

The workshop given by Nines Fidalgo<sup>34</sup> from the Fórum de Política Feminista<sup>35</sup> we learned more about the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, known as the Istanbul Convention. The Convention is the first European treaty on violence against women. It entered into force in 2014 and is binding upon the Spanish State.

The workshop also explained what the Convention regulates and assessed the opportunities it provides and the demands that could be made to the government for implementing it.

Next, a proposal was made to create a platform for the assessment of violence and draft a report for the GREVIO to denounce the current situation.



## Strategies for advocacy and prevention. Analysis of the initiatives

In the last discussion panel, we listened to three colleagues, who spoke of advocacy strategies. June Fernández<sup>36</sup>, from Pikara Magazine<sup>37</sup>, spoke of the importance of finding allies in the media, because they are an essential element for transforming society. Jo-

33 Document to learn more about the Istanbul Convention [www.mugarikgabe.org/rederradicacionviolenciasmachistas/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2015/06/Convenio-Estambul-Nines-Fidalgo-2015.pdf](http://www.mugarikgabe.org/rederradicacionviolenciasmachistas/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2015/06/Convenio-Estambul-Nines-Fidalgo-2015.pdf)

34 An interview with Nines Fidalgo is available at <https://vimeo.com/130958624>

35 [www.forumpoliticafeminista.org](http://www.forumpoliticafeminista.org)

36 An interview with June Fernández is available at <https://vimeo.com/130958626>

37 [www.pikaramagazine.com](http://www.pikaramagazine.com)



sebe Iturrioz, from Global March of Women – Emakumeen Mundu Martxa<sup>38</sup>, explained in detail how the movement had managed to join forces with several women's groups. Noelia Landete<sup>39</sup> from the Aspacia Foundation<sup>40</sup> focused her participation on explaining how a meeting place was being carried out in Madrid with the aim of mobilising a state-wide response against gender-based violence.

These are the main ideas given by each speaker.

## **Implementation of guidelines for the treatment of violence in the media.**

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The media transmit sexist stereotypes but they can also play a role in transforming them. However, the media are only showing the tip of the iceberg, of the issue, and do not explain what is happening or the causes of it. Gender violence is still equated with domestic violence and mentioned in the section on incidents.

In the late 1990s, the murder of Ana Orantes brought about a change in the media, because she had appeared in the media denouncing her situation.

A debate that often appears on the media is whether explaining violence encourages further killings and gives aggressors ideas. Carmen Vives says that it is true that when the treatment is sensationalist it tends to generate an imitation effect, but when the treatment is an explanation, the rate of killings drops. It could be considered dissuasive.

In 2000, the media decided to agree to a uniform treatment of violence. Some of the recommendations in the set of steps drawn up by Público<sup>41</sup> were to not seek justifications for a killing; taking care when interviewing the neighbours; and seek expert opinions on the subject. Other media have Style Guides: TVE, for example, integrates it in sensitive issues. There are a plethora of tools. The difficult issue is how to implement them in the media.

One existing issue is the lack of specialisation and training for journalists. Ideally, the entire staff would have a Human Rights and gender perspective because these are cross-cutting issues. It would be useful for every section, such as sports, for example, if they were treated from a gender perspective and not just in the section on society.

The entire media staff has covered positive experiences. In the Basque Country, the personnel of several media were got involved in drawing up guidelines at the request of Eusko Jaurlaritza (the Basque government).

Rules of professional conduct on sexist violence were drawn up, led by Emakunde. It has been an interesting process but participation was low. Specific cases are analysed

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38 [www.emakumeenmundumartxa.eus](http://www.emakumeenmundumartxa.eus)

39 An interview with Noelia Landete is available at <https://vimeo.com/130958628>

40 [www.fundacion-aspacia.org](http://www.fundacion-aspacia.org)

41 [www.mujeresenred.net/spip.php?article1290](http://www.mujeresenred.net/spip.php?article1290)



in the local newspapers. Others, such as El Correo, have not wish to change and do not heed the call made by Emakunde. EITB has a director for equality and is making progress but it is an isolated case of seeing how to work with images and so forth. Journalists need to work with sexist stereotypes to really understand them. Some women journalists have become involved and the work is interesting when this happens. Liberating them from work so they can focus on their training has been very helpful.

Nonetheless, this is a good period. We have allies in the media that can be counted upon.

Moreover, new projects have scope in the context of the economic crisis, such as Diario.es, a blog on micro-aggressions that offers the opportunity to denounce sexist actions. Some achievements have been attained (such as the removal of sexist advertising in the Corte Inglés). Alternative media are expanding increasingly.

Some specific proposals being launched are:

- To make other types of violence visible, because the news focuses on the violence within couples and former couples set forth in the law.
- To have press offices work with the police, because they provide the data used by the press in a non-critical manner.
- Include lesbophobia in the list of gender-based violence.
- Create a press database: Bilgune Feminista and Emakunde have one.

Pikara Magazine encourages the media to place the news in context, by explaining why things happen. The media needs to explain everyday violence to understand structural violence; recover the memory, as in the processes of recovering memory and reparation; and to give the victims a name and mention their goals in life, so they will not be depersonalised.

## **Mobilisation: A march against violence**

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Our colleagues in Valencia proposed a *March against violence*<sup>42</sup>. On 28 February, the coordinator of women's groups in Valencia made a state-wide call to feminist groups to see if they would like to join a march in Madrid to express their indignation and willingness to denounce. The proposal went ahead and a date and slogan were decided: 7 November, "Against violence". There was also a proposal to carry out a march in each autonomous region after the march on 7N.

The march, called by the feminist groups, seeks the political parties' commitment to fight against gender-based violence. It was agreed to prevent the political parties from taking over the initiative.

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42 [www.facebook.com/Marcha-contra-las-violencias-machistas-774273082679619/timeline](http://www.facebook.com/Marcha-contra-las-violencias-machistas-774273082679619/timeline)



The march is still in the planning stage. It takes place at the end of the year and has the following positive aspects and weaknesses:

Positive aspects:

- This is the first state-wide demonstration: it launches a message to the political parties and the wider community that violence must not be tolerated.
- It provides a space for exchanges and a global debate.
- It is intended as a fight against violence, a global fight by society. It is an important aspect of prevention and protection.
- It intends to learn about what is happening in each autonomous region and made an analysis.
- There is a process for activating international networks as support for the initiative. There is a general impression of the need for a public rejection of violence.
- It promotes state-wide networks.
- The discourse for the march as such is under construction.

Risks and weak points:

- Lack of involvement in the work; organisation at this level is expensive.
- Low participation in the march is a risk, but it does not seem likely to happen.
- The march may be misunderstood by the political classes, who may construe that we are asking current legislation to be implemented. The intended message is that focus must be placed on all types of violence.
- There may not be sufficient content, in which case the march would only serve to see and be seen. There needs to be content, even if we do not agree to everything.
- Dual militancy: people are wary of “dual agendas” and “hidden agendas”.

The groups that are organising the march request alliances for the discourse, participation in the march, care and respect among the organisations, and dissemination of the march so more people will join it and for it to have an impact.

## **The Global March of Women as a global network and guidelines for action in the specific case of the Basque Country**

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The global march is extremely trans, because it is transnational, they are a diversity of women from all over the globe who intend to generate global strategies of resistance against patriarchy.



In 1995, 15000 people took part in the Bread and Roses march. Many marches have been held since then. The Basque Country has taken part in the global marches since 2000. It does not go through Spain, but only through Galicia, the Basque Country and Catalonia have also taken part. Now we are working on a manifesto to involve other Spanish regions, so the women in Madrid can also participate in the initiative.

In 2015, the march is called the “feminist caravan”. It began on 6 March in Kurdistan and will end in December, in Portugal. The march is followed along the entire route. It is welcomed in some countries, where it is well organised, and in others, less so. It has had a huge impact in the Basque Country. One of the aims is to create a feminist network in the various towns. A van will go to the towns that welcome the march, because we want to go to them and also to generate further actions.

Moreover, there are guidelines in the Basque Country for working against gender-based violence, generated in the Euskal Herriko Emakumeen Mundu Martxa. A tool is provided for organising actions in the summer and holiday seasons, for example.

This year the Martxa has also organised a symbolic planting of demands for self-management of their bodies, food sovereignty and so forth. The idea is that there is an itinerary that goes through Basque Country towns and people start joining the march. A video explains the planting initiative: how concepts are planted, demanding more than tangible things.

The march is lesbianised in the countries where there is aggression against them and lesbians are visibilised. The outlook of gender-based violence needs to be broader: every time a trans or a homosexual colleague is killed, it is gender-based violence. We must eliminate the hetero-patriarchal definition. We need to talk about racism, aduItism, transphobia, lesbophobia, colonialism, westernisms. We are talking about inter-sector relationships and crossed discrimination. There are discussions within many feminist groups as to whether or not trans should be included. We should talk about these topics from a political, not an essentialist perspective.

The march is working on how to manage alliances: it is not immigrants organising themselves, or trans, but a diversity of women. There is no other space as diverse as the global march.

Currently, all the actions for September are being prepared. The Feminist Caravan will be held in the Basque Country on 28 September and 4 October.

## **Use of social networks as a tool for denouncing and advocacy**

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June Fernández of Pikara Magazine gave a workshop in which there was an exchange of experience and knowledge on the potential of social networks for mobilising society against gender-based violence, in view of their potential for documenting feminist actions and lobbying. The workshop shared good practices and provided the keys for designing coherent digital campaigns.





## Maps of feminicides<sup>43</sup> as a tool civil society can use to follow up and monitor public institutions.

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This topic was worked on in a workshop given by Graciela Atencio<sup>44</sup> from *Otro Tiempo*<sup>45</sup>, the organisation that manages *femicidio.net*<sup>46</sup>. The workshop consisted in disseminating the term “femicidio” from a global perspective, learning the types of femicide and studying the maps of feminicides in Spain, documented by civil society.

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43 Document to learn more about the femicide concept [www.cooperaccio.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/DeclaracionVIIConfFemicidioRecomenCumbreUECELAC.pdf](http://www.cooperaccio.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/DeclaracionVIIConfFemicidioRecomenCumbreUECELAC.pdf)

44 <https://vimeo.com/130958627>

45 [www.otrotiempo.org](http://www.otrotiempo.org)

46 [www.femicidio.net](http://www.femicidio.net)



## CHAPTER III: WE CONTINUE TO MAKE PROGRESS



The entire process, which represents more than one year of work, has two aims: to continue the analysis and assessment of the situation of gender-based violence in the Spanish state, on the one hand, and to continue the strategies to respond to violence in other spheres, on the other. We also seek to create spaces for forging alliances with other groups to promote advocacy.

As can be seen throughout this publication, over these months we have conducted analysis a participative assessment of gender-based violence, collecting experiences from various regions. More than 100 groups statewide, of which many were feminist groups, have taken part in the survey. In the spaces created, we have met each other, exchanged information and shared points of view. All that is essential for working in alliance with others. As a result, we have built and disseminated knowledge and experiences, shared debates, videos, workshops, discussion panels and documents. Feminist proposals were made visible on social networks, in the media and art, and on the street.

The process does not end here. This publication will be followed up in the spaces where we have proposed initiatives and made proposals. Some of these already existed, and others have been created. They are all spaces for participation, dissemination and continued work. In addition to the dissemination of materials, such as tools for making the feminist groups' proposals visible and continue the debates, there was also the challenge of strengthening alliances. The latter are essential for a continuation of discussions and materialising many of the strategies proposed in the various areas (demonstrations, strategic litigation, follow up of the Istanbul Convention, proposals for changes in legislation, electoral pacts, reparation and so forth).

With the aim of making further progress, many of the organisations and people involved seek to make the **We are Many in the Fight Declaration** known. The Declaration intends to take up the main denouncements and demands we made to public and social agents, as well as the wider community in general.

The declaration, enclosed below, will be presented to the public and delivered specifically to some relevant institutions in the fight against gender-based violence, to demand their compliance with the right to a life that is free of gender-based violence.

The process continues with the proposals raised here, which are added to the huge task of denouncing, advocating and fighting that thousands of women and also some men carry out from the global to the local level, in private and public spheres, to demand the right to live a life that is free of violence.

We continue... Because we are many in the fight!!



# WE ARE MANY IN THE FIGHT

September 2015

We, women and groups from the legal, educational, health, internationalist, legislative, direct support spheres, and feminist groups, women's associations and mixed groups who strive every day to eliminate gender-based violence, on the basis of our experience as professionals and activists, hereby **DECLARE** that

## IN VIEW OF

The **invisibility of male violence** as a highly important political and social issue;

The failure to signal out the **patriarchal system and sexist culture** as the structural causes of violence and widespread inequality;

The **continuous and unpunished repetition** of preconceived ideas and stereotypes (false denouncements, Parental Alienation Syndrome, non-consented joint custody and so forth) in political, social and cultural arenas and the media;

The **stigmatising of the women** who face violence (blaming, stereotypes and so forth);

The **absence of a global analysis of violence**, with studies limited to the violence of partners and former partners. The scarce attention paid to other types of violence (sexual, labour-related, institutional, trafficking, female genital mutilation and so forth). The failure to consider the specific realities and inter-sector discrimination due to functional diversity, origin, class, sexual orientation, age and so forth;

**Impunity**, the non-existence of adequate laws and failure to enforce existing ones due to lack of involvement and adequate response on the part of public authorities. Inadequate policy and budget implementation, and evaluation and monitoring of laws;

Uncoordinated **support and legal resources**, lacking in specialised trained personnel and continuous training. Bureaucratically allocated resources, which ignore women as the holders of rights and target protocols and frameworks for intervention with no feminist focus, revictimising women and even leading to institutional violence;

A **justice system** that reproduces the preconceived ideas about women, revictimising instead of guaranteeing women's rights in a convincing manner;

Feminized **support services**, with a poor, overcrowded and increasingly outsourced situation;

The lack of **prevention** of violence linked to the huge deficit of equality in education at all levels and in the media. And given the short-term and poorly integrated strategies, whose methods are not adapted to the diversity of groups and fail to make the complexity of the cycle of violence visible;



## WE DEMAND

A **political commitment** on the part of the public authorities and social agents to create a response to male violence as a highly important political and social issue;

A review of the **definition** of violence from a feminist viewpoint and human rights that includes all types and forms of violence and recognises the diversity of the groups that oppose violence;

The end of **impunity**, by focusing on the aggressors who violate the rights of women and commit violence, and not only on the women who are the victims of that violence;

A **review** of the Organic Law on Measures for Full Protection against Gender Violence and **regulations for implementation** of the Law. Regional and international laws (such as the CEDAW and the Istanbul Convention) at every level (not just the legal and support levels); and more bodies for equality, specific resources and adequate budgets;

**Educational laws** based on equality and the basic principle of prevention, with sufficient funds to create a regulatory framework to implement the laws;

A guarantee of the **right to reparation** in all five aspects thereof: compensation, guarantees of no repetition, complete recovery, satisfaction and dissemination of the truth;

**Specialisation and training** with a feminist focus for all the professionals involved; As well as accompaniment and a requirement to comply with their responsibilities, and **recognition** of their work and the importance of their support;

**Good quality public resources and services** that offer all women integral support and empowerment. The recognition of women as the holders of rights who can lead change as opposed to being users of services;

**Accountancy and transparency** in the implementation of laws and policies, and in the development and use of the services involved. Studies of impact from a feminist viewpoint, with the participation, at least, of feminist organisations and the women affected.

The **media** cease to broadcast male stereotypes and start showing the entire issue of violence and its causes. We invite the media to take the opportunity to fight violence and become the motor for egalitarian models;

**Prevention** should become a political priority, providing a response to the complexity of male violence by addressing all forms of violence and the underlying causes. The reality of violence as currently manifested at every level requires urgent action and a demand requiring public authorities to eradicate all forms of violence.



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