



WOMEN'S ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE, A WAY OUT OF VIOLENCE:

Policies and practices to promote
women's economic empowerment
to be able to leave violent relationships

Author: Rossana Scaricabarozzi

Contributors (in alphabetical order): Yevgeniya Averhed, Stephen Barnett, Daria Broglio, Marta Bruschi, Josie Christodoulou, Beatrice Costa, Chiara Fattori, Cristina García Comas, Diana Georgieva, Stanimira Hadjimitova, Vittoria Antonia Inuso, Athanasia Ioannidou, Konstantinia Karageorgou, Karolina Lods kär, Daniela Loi, Eleonora Lozzi, Michela Lugiai, Milena Mihailova, Orietta Paciucci, Susana Pavlou, Cinzia Penati, Flavia Pesce, Ana Gil Rituerto, Laura Sales Gutiérrez, Rositsa Stoycheva, Apostolina Tsaltampasi, Aikaterini Velessiotou, Mariangela Zanni

Supervision: Luca De Fraia

Editing and proofreading: Marta Bruschi

Design and layout: Tazio Malvezzi

We would like to thank the external experts and practitioners who contributed to the development of project's knowledge through their participation in our mutual learning events (in alphabetical order):

Patricia Cinza - *SUARA*

Cristina Hurson - *SONAS*

Urszula Nowakowska - *WAVE, Women Against Violence Europe/ Fundacja Centrum Praw Kobiet*

Daniela Santarpia - *D.i.Re, Donne in Rete contro la violenza/Cooperativa Sociale E.V.A.*

Julia Uviña - *Barcelona Municipality*

Mayca Velasco - *Barcelona Municipality.*

November 2017

This publication has been produced with the financial support of the Rights, Equality and Citizenship (REC) Programme of the European Union. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of ActionAid Italy and project partners and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Commission.

WE GO! Women Economic-independence & Growth Opportunity- JUST/2014/RDAP/AG/VICT/7365

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION: THE WE GO! PROJECT AND THE PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT	04
1 - SETTING THE PROBLEM	06
1.1 - Why to focus on women's economic empowerment and independence in the context of IPV	06
1.2 - Terms and definition	07
1.2.a - Definitions of the main terms used within the WE GO! project	08
1.2.b - Towards a definition of economic support services for IPV survivors	09
2 - THE WE GO! RESPONSE	11
2.1 - The importance of data	11
2.2 - The mutual learning experience: shaping the response	12
2.3 - The WE GO! impact: successes, challenges and lessons learnt	14
3 - THE WAY FORWARD	17
3.1 - Concluding observations	17
3.2 - Recommendations	18

THE WE GO! PROJECT AND THE PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a widespread problem in the European Union: according to the European Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) almost **one in four women** (22%) experience physical and/or sexual violence in a relationship with a man¹.

Anti-violence centres (AVCs) are key actors in providing women with the support they need in order to leave a relationship of intimate partner violence. Their interventions cover a variety of activities, including emergency protection measures, legal and psychological support, guidance to build a life free from violence.

AVCs throughout Europe have for many years pointed out that one of the major difficulties that women face when trying to leave a violent relationship is the lack of economic independence and hence of immediate and long-term solutions to their financial needs. Their situation is even more complicated when women have children.

WE GO! (Women Economic-independence & Growth Opportunity)² is a two-year project co-financed by the European Union focusing on this specific issue affecting women survivors of intimate partner violence: the lack of economic independence which prevents them from leaving a violent partner and ensuring sustainable alternatives for themselves and their children. The project has been implemented by 15 partners based in 7 EU countries (Italy, Spain, Greece, Bulgaria, Cyprus, United Kingdom and Sweden).

The **overall objective** of WE GO! is to

¹ European Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), *Violence against women: an EU-wide survey*, 2014

² More details about the WE GO! project available at: www.wegoproject.eu

strengthen support services for women undergoing IPV and in particular the activities run by anti-violence centres aiming at empowering women. The project builds on the experiences and practices developed by **AVCs** in the European Union in order to identify and promote promising practices to help women exit IPV through the attainment of economic independence. The project starts from the belief that **AVCs have developed meaningful experience in this field that needs to be valued, exchanged and systematised in order to spread knowledge and strengthen services available in Europe**. IPV survivors' economic empowerment and independence is in fact an issue largely recognised by AVCs, but not adequately explored in policies and interventions to prevent and combat IPV.

The main project activities consisted of:

- » capacity building of practitioners and AVCs operators through **mutual learning** activities and **exchange of experiences and practices** among operators and experts from various European countries;
- » production of one **training toolkit** targeting practitioners and AVCs to enhance their capacity to respond to survivors' needs;
- » **training of trainers (TOT)** regarding the content and tools of the training toolkit targeting social workers and practitioners of the AVCs involved, as well as external practitioners;
- » **implementation of training paths (training of women - TOW)** for women supported by AVCs involved in the project for promoting their personal and economic empowerment and fostering their capacities and possibilities to attain economic independence. **Mentorship activities**

were also implemented to provide guidance to women in building future projects and economic opportunities.

Key preliminary outputs informed the implementation of the project activities, namely:

- » a **literature review**³ focused on an analysis of the content of relevant international Conventions, EU directives and other official documents;
- » the **identification of promising practices**⁴ in the EU for promoting survivors' economic empowerment and independence.

In addition, **data was collected** by the AVCs involved in the project to produce relevant statistics related to the profile of women assisted during the project implementation⁵. Common tools for the partners - in particular a questionnaire and a database - were developed for this purpose.

A Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) framework was defined at the beginning of the project to monitor its implementation and to assess the results achieved. In particular focus groups were organised at the end of each training of trainers (TOT) and of each training of women (TOW) with trainees and women involved. Focus groups were aimed at measuring how the competences of social workers and practitioners increased and how women's

perception of their personal and economic empowerment changed thanks to the trainings. Additionally an external evaluator was involved in the assessment of project activities.

The main output of the WE GO! project is the **training toolkit for anti-violence centres operators**, aiming at strengthening practitioners' knowledge and methodologies and at providing them with concrete tools to reflect on their existing practising and to support women in developing their personal and economic empowerment. The toolkit is the result of exchanges between practitioners of partner organisations - including the 7 anti-violence centres partners in the project - and external experts. It will be widely disseminated to anti-violence centres across the EU and to institutions at all levels, with the aim of promoting knowledge and spreading effective practices on the issue of women's economic dependence.

The present report presents the **main results of the WE GO! project activities**, as well as the challenges and lesson learnt. Recommendations are addressed **to institutions at all levels** to strengthen the response to survivors' economic needs in the EU, based on WE GO! results.

³ IRS (Istituto per la Ricerca Sociale) and MIGS (Mediterranean Institute for Gender Studies), *Women's economic independence, a way out of violence. Theory and practice in the EU*, 2016: www.wegoproject.eu/documents

⁴ An interactive presentation of the promising practices identified is available on the WE GO! opendata platform *Women that count* at the link: <http://womenthatcount.org/blog/way-out-violence-promising-practices-europe-empower-women-economically#.WfsF9VvWyM8>

⁵ The main results of the data collection are presented in Part 2 of this report

TABLE 1 - KEY ACTIVITIES OF THE WE GO! PROJECT

Research and analysis	Strengthening practitioners' knowledge and anti-violence centres' support services	Promoting women's economic empowerment and independence	Assessment of results
Literature review and identification of good practices	3 Mutual learning events with practitioners and external experts	Individual and collective training paths involving women survivors (training of women - TOW)	Focus group to evaluate the training of trainers (TOT)
Preliminary collection of information on services provided by AVCs and their data collection systems	Production of the training toolkit	Mentorship	Focus group with women survivors of IPV involved in the project to assess the results of the TOWs
Common data collection on the socio-economic profile of women survivors involved in the project	Training of trainers (TOT)		External project evaluation
	Testing of project methodologies and tools		

Elaboration by ActionAid, November 2017



1 - SETTING THE PROBLEM

1.1 - Why to focus on women's economic empowerment and independence in the context of IPV

The international attention to the dimension, causes and consequences of gender-based violence is relatively recent. Only since the adoption of the **United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)**⁶ in 1979 - and in particular of General Recommendations 12 and 19 in 1989 and 1992 respectively⁷ - international institutions started setting commitments and introducing legislative measures to address the problem at a global level.

Since then various efforts have followed, such as the **UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women**⁸, which defines violence against women as a violation of human rights, the **Beijing Platform for Action**⁹ in 1995, which defines priority areas to be addressed by governments worldwide, including violence against women and, more recently, the **Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence**¹⁰ (Istanbul Convention), the first international binding

⁶ United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Violence against Women (CEDAW), 1979: www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CEDAW.aspx

⁷ General recommendations n° 12 and 19 made by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women: www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CEDAW/Pages/Recommendations.aspx. In 2017 the Committee adopted General Recommendation 35, updating General Recommendation 19.

⁸ United Nations General Assembly, *Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women*, 1993: www.un.org/documents/ga/res/48/a48r104.htm

⁹ United Nation, *Beijing Platform for Action*, 1995: www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/

¹⁰ Council of Europe, *Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence*, 2011: www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/treaty/210?coeconventions_WAR_coeconventionsportlet_languageId=en_GB

instrument to prevent and combat all forms of violence against women. The Convention was adopted in 2011 and entered into force in 2014.

Efforts to **estimate the global dimension of violence against women**, in particular intimate partner violence, were made by the World Health Organisation (WHO) in 2013 with the release of the first global study on the prevalence of two forms of violence against women: violence by an intimate partner (intimate partner violence) and sexual violence by someone other than a partner (non-partner sexual violence)¹¹.

At EU level, there is **no binding legal instrument**¹² on violence against women in general¹³. However, some directives - such as the Victim's Rights Directive¹⁴ - address aspects of violence against women and assistance/protection to survivors of gender-based violence. The first **estimate of the prevalence of violence against women in the EU** was published in 2014 by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights¹⁵.

Practices developed by anti-violence centres

¹¹ World Health Organisation, *Global and regional estimates of violence against women. Prevalence and health effects of intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence*, 2013: www.who.int/reproductivehealth/publications/violence/9789241564625/en/

¹² The term European legal instruments refers to the instruments available to the European institutions to carry out their tasks. The instruments listed in Article 288 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) are: directives, regulations, decisions (binding instruments) and recommendations and opinions (non-binding, declaratory instruments). For more information: http://eur-lex.europa.eu/summary/glossary/community_legal_instruments.html

¹³ European Parliament, Directorate-General for Internal Policies, *The issue of violence against women in the European Union*, Policy Department Citizens' rights and constitutional affairs, 2016: [www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2016/556931/IPOL_STU\(2016\)556931_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2016/556931/IPOL_STU(2016)556931_EN.pdf)

¹⁴ Directive 2012/29/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2001/220/JHA: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32012L0029>

¹⁵ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), *Violence*

have preceded and informed the institutional engagement in the fight against gender-based violence and contributed to develop the knowledge available today on violence prevention and survivors' support. This experience needs to be valued in order to build effective strategies to prevent and combat violence against women. For this reason the starting point of the WE GO! project was the acknowledgement of **the important role of anti-violence centres and the necessity to learn from and build upon their experience.**

In particular the project was based on the assumption suggested by anti-violence centres' practice that **often women cannot come out violent domestic contexts because they economically depend on their partners.** This difficulty has also been pointed out by various studies stating that women seeking to leave abusive partners often report economic concerns as a major barrier¹⁶. The CoE Istanbul Convention explicitly states that parties to the Convention have to guarantee measures "aimed at the empowerment and economic independence of women victims of violence"¹⁷.

IPV survivors can be subjected to different forms of violence, including attempts by the perpetrator to undermine their economic independence. According to the FRA survey **5% of women have experienced economic violence in their current relationship, and 13% of women have experienced some form of economic violence in past relationships.**

against women: an EU-wide survey, 2014: <http://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2014/violence-against-women-euwide-survey>

¹⁶ Among others: Cynthia K. Sanders, and Meg Schnabel, *Organizing for economic empowerment of battered women: women's savings accounts*, 2004. Other relevant bibliographic references can be found in the report drafted by IRS (Istituto per la Ricerca Sociale) and MIGS (Mediterranean Institute for Gender Studies) partners in the WE GO! titled *Women's economic independence, a way out of violence. Theory and practice in the EU*, 2016, available at the link: www.wegoproject.eu/documents

¹⁷ Article 18 of the Convention

This includes the partner preventing her from making independent decisions on family finances, or forbidding her to work outside the home¹⁸. Moreover, the FRA survey states that "women who have left a previous partner who was violent also indicate financial strain; this reflects the economic vulnerability of many women who decide to leave a violent relationship. For example, **39% of women who experienced violence in a previous relationship say that they find it difficult to cope with their current household income**, whereas among women who have not experienced physical or sexual violence by a previous partner 26% find it difficult to manage with their current household income"¹⁹.

The literature available on the link between economic empowerment/independence and gender-based violence is still poor. However according to a recent study by the European Commission²⁰ women's economic independence can influence the surge or decrease of IPV.

Dealing with survivors' need of economic independence cannot overlook the **structural barriers impeding the achievement of gender justice in the economic sphere.** Women are in fact more likely to be unemployed than men or to be hired in low-paid and/or precarious jobs. The gender-division of labour and the gender pay gap are also relevant issues across the EU. According to Eurostat, in 2015

¹⁸ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), *Violence against women: an EU-wide survey*, 2014: <http://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2014/violence-against-women-euwide-survey>

¹⁹ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), *Violence against women: an EU-wide survey*, 2014: <http://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2014/violence-against-women-euwide-survey>

²⁰ Francesca Bettio and Elisa Ticci, *Violence Against Women and Economic Independence*, European Commission, Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers, Unit D2 'Equality between men and women', 2017: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/equal_economic_independence/2017_report_econ-ind_violence.pdf

in the European Union the proportion of men of working age in employment exceeded that of women by 11.6%²¹ and women's gross hourly earnings were on average 16.3% below those of men²².

The unfair division of unpaid domestic and care work between women and men and the poor provision of care services are relevant barriers to gender equality. It is particularly worrying that the latest update of the gender equality index released by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) shows **not only persisting inequalities in the domain of time in the EU, but also increased gender inequality compared to the past**²³: the index assigns in fact scores for the domain analysed between 1 for total inequality and 100 for full equality. The domain of time - which refers to the engagement of men and women in domestic and care work and in social activities - shows a **68.9% score for 2012 and a 65.7% score in 2015**.

Eurostat 2015 data show that **30.3% of children aged less than 3 years in the EU28 are in formal childcare**²⁴, i.e. below the **target of 33%** set by the European Union in 2002. Childcare services are key to free parents' time to engage in income generating activities and this is particularly true for women, due to the uneven burden of care they carry. It is therefore easy to understand that this has an impact on IPV survivors' economic independence, as childcare services are important for freeing their time in order to build their personal and professional development.

Given this scenario, one assumption behind the WE GO! project is that gender inequalities can impact survivors of IPV and other women in vulnerable conditions disproportionately,

and that properly supporting survivors requires also **challenging the broader picture of gender inequalities and gender-based discriminations** that affect women and girls.

1.2 - Terms and definitions

The first part of this section provides the definitions of the main terms used throughout the report and is mainly based on the results of the literature review made by IRS and MIGS, the WE GO! project partners responsible for the research activities and the data collection and analysis foreseen by the project²⁵. The second part deals with the absence of a universal definition of economic support services for women survivors of IPV and puts forward some key elements that according to WE GO! project partners should be taken into account in an auspicious definition to be adopted by policy makers.

1.2.a - Definitions of the main terms used within the WE GO! project

Gender-based violence (GBV) and violence against women (VAW)

Gender-based violence against women is violence directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately. Violence against women is a violation of human rights and a form of discrimination against women and shall mean all acts of gender-based violence that result in, or are likely to result in, physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life²⁶.

Intimate partner violence

In many countries the term "intimate partner violence" is included under "domestic violence",

²¹ Eurostat, *Gender statistics*: http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Gender_statistics

²² Eurostat, *Gender pay gap statistics*: http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Gender_pay_gap_statistics

²³ European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), *Gender equality index*, 2017 (data refer to 2015): <http://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index/2015/domain/time/2>

²⁴ Eurostat, *Children aged less than 3 years in formal childcare*: http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/graph.do?tab=graph&plugin=1&language=en&pcode=tepsr_sp210

²⁵ For more information: IRS (Istituto per la Ricerca Sociale) and MIGS (Mediterranean Institute for Gender Studies), *Women's economic independence, a way out of violence. Theory and practice in the EU*, 2016: www.wegoproject.eu/documents

²⁶ Council of Europe, *Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence*, 2011

a more general term, since it refers to partner violence, but can also encompass child or elder abuse, or abuse by any member of a household. The WEGO! project specifically focuses on interventions to support victims of IPV considering that IPV is a form of violence that affects women disproportionately²⁷. IPV is defined by the WHO as follows:

“Intimate partner violence is one of the most common forms of violence against women and includes physical, sexual, and emotional abuse and controlling behaviours by an intimate partner. IPV occurs in all settings and among all socio-economic, religious and cultural groups. The overwhelming global burden of IPV is borne by women”²⁸.

According to WHO, IPV refers to any behaviour within an intimate relationship that causes physical, psychological or sexual harm to those in the relationship, including: **acts of physical violence**, such as slapping, hitting, kicking and beating; **sexual violence**, including forced sexual intercourse and other forms of sexual coercion; **emotional (psychological) abuse**, such as insults, belittling, constant humiliation, intimidation (e.g. destroying things), threats of harm, threats to take away children; **controlling behaviours**, including isolating a person from family and friends, monitoring their movements and restricting access to financial resources, employment, education or medical care²⁹.

Economic independence

Economic independence is widely recognised as a prerequisite for enabling both women and men to exercise control over their lives and to make genuine choices³⁰. Paragraph 26 of the Beijing

Declaration and Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women (1995) mentions a clear commitment of states to:

“promote women’s economic independence, including employment, and eradicate the persistent and increasing burden of poverty on women by addressing the structural causes of poverty through changes in economic structures, ensuring equal access for all women, including those in rural areas, as vital development agents, to productive resources, opportunities and public services”³¹.

Generally, **employment is recognised as the main way to be economically independent** and to avoid poverty. This is even more true in the case of women’s economic independence, which is therefore strictly connected with the recognition and valorisation of women’s work. This means, in particular, that the **quality of employment and employment conditions** are especially relevant: poor working conditions (related to, for instance, low pay, precarious work, short working hours, interrupted employment careers, labour market segmentation) and the difficulty of remaining and progressing in employment can, in fact, result in low and discontinuous earnings, low training opportunities and, in many countries, no access to social protection and thus reduced pension entitlements in old age, eventually increasing the poverty risk.

When considering economic independence in general, and women’s economic independence in particular, it is also important to consider **economic security**, referring to the ability to plan for future needs and risks and that basic needs will be met. Building security could include gaining financial knowledge or new employment skills, having insurance against loss or adversity and being able to save in various ways for retirement or for a child’s education.

²⁷ IRS (Istituto per la Ricerca Sociale) and MIGS (Mediterranean Institute for Gender Studies), *Women’s economic independence, a way out of violence. Theory and practice in the EU*, 2016: www.wegoproject.eu/documents

²⁸ World Health Organisation, *Understanding and addressing violence against women. Intimate partner violence*, 2012: http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/77432/1/WHO_RHR_12.36_eng.pdf

²⁹ World Health Organisation, *Understanding and addressing violence against women. Intimate partner violence*, 2012: http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/77432/1/WHO_RHR_12.36_eng.pdf

³⁰ IRS (Istituto per la Ricerca Sociale) and MIGS (Mediterranean Institute for Gender Studies), *Women’s economic independence,*

a way out of violence. Theory and practice in the EU, 2016: <http://www.wegoproject.eu/documents>

³¹ United Nation, *Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing Declaration*, 1995: www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/declar.htm

Primary, secondary and tertiary prevention

- » **Primary prevention** includes actions before violence has occurred. It targets the general population and involves awareness raising and education activities, strategies and policies.
- » **Secondary Prevention** includes the response right after an incident of violence occurs and it takes the form of protection rather than prevention. It involves short terms intervention and immediate response and its actions include sheltering, counselling, legal and medical advocacy and arrest of the perpetrators.
- » **Tertiary prevention** involves the long terms and ongoing support to victims and ongoing accountability to abusers.

1.2.b - Towards a definition of economic support services for IPV survivors

One of the main findings of the research and literature review carried out within the WE GO! project is that **there is no universal definition for the economic support for women survivors of violence**³². The report of the Council of Europe *Combating violence against women: minimum standards for support services*³³

identifies the following types of services around Europe:

- » refuge/shelters
- » counselling and psychological services
- » health care/medical services, including sexual assault centres
- » hotlines/helplines
- » legal and other forms of advice
- » limited rape crisis centres
- » self-defence, training and education
- » perpetrator programmes
- » intervention projects
- » outreach.

The same report underlines that “*some services provide integrated responses, offering a combination of types of support (shelter, outreach, advocacy and counselling, for example) and/or work across forms of violence*”.

It can be noted that **economic support is not included in a category “per se”**. When it is provided, economic support is often not standing alone but it is usually integrated within other categories (in particular training and education).

According to the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)³⁴ there is increasing attention to prevention measures and support services, while reintegration programmes specifically targeted to the needs of women victims of violence are less widespread. These programmes should include the social inclusion and economic relief of victim.

In order to contribute to a desired introduction of a universal definition of economic support for survivors of IPV, the WE GO! project partners have identified some key elements to be taken

³² IRS (Istituto per la Ricerca Sociale) and MIGS (Mediterranean Institute for Gender Studies), *Women’s economic independence, a way out of violence. Theory and practice in the EU*, 2016: www.wegoproject.eu/documents

³³ Council of Europe, *Combating violence against women: minimum standards for support services*, 2007

³⁴ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, *Violence against women and the Role of gender equality, social inclusion and health strategies*, 2010

into account by European and international institutions and policy makers:

Women's needs:

- » Violence against women, including IPV, is a problem affecting women belonging of all cultural, social, religious and economic backgrounds. **Interventions should be designed in order to take into account the specific needs of specific groups** (i.e.: illiterate women, women undergoing multiple discrimination, etc.) as catch all measures may not fit to all women.
- » **Specific difficulties of survivors:** among women experiencing IPV and willing to leave a violent partner those having limited financial means and no housing alternatives have specific additional difficulties that need to be addressed in an explicit way.
- » **Personal empowerment and self-esteem** are prerequisites for gaining economic independence: this is particularly true for survivors of IPV. Economic support interventions should therefore foresee preliminary actions aimed at building and /or strengthening survivors' self-esteem, personal and social capacities and confidence.

Short-term and long-term strategies:

- » **Meeting women survivors' short-term economic needs as well as support their long-term financial stability** are equally important: immediate solutions should be found to allow them to deal with their immediate needs, but long-term strategies should also be cultivated. Getting a job doesn't forcibly ensure a way out of financial instability and access to decent work opportunities is essential to increase women's ability to leave and stay away from an abuser.
- » **Structural gender inequalities** at all levels, including in the labour market (pay gap, vertical/horizontal segregation, lack of high quality affordable child care services, ...) can impact some groups of women disproportionately, including survivors of IPV. Both general interventions to promote

gender equality and women's rights along with specific measures targeting survivors of IPV are therefore needed. Any strategy aimed at achieving gender equality in order to bring sustainable results should not be limited to responding to women's **practical needs** (i.e.: employment, childcare services), but also to their **strategic needs** (measures to eliminate the structural causes of gender inequality). Therefore strategies to respond to IPV survivors' economic needs should be embedded in broader, long-term strategies aiming at eliminating the root causes of inequalities and violence (i.e.: challenging gender roles, redistributing unpaid care work, etc).

Multidimensional and multi-agency approach:

- » Addressing survivors' economic needs requires **different interventions at different stages:** for example welfare measures and access to services are necessary to sustain women's choices to leave a violent partner at the initial stage, whereas job placement could be more relevant at a later stage.
- » **Survivors' economic needs are multidimensional** and can't be reduced solely to access to job opportunities, but include other aspects, such as **safe housing** and **childcare services**.
- » **A multi-agency approach is needed** to ensure the effectiveness of interventions. AVCs contribution in building women's personal and economic empowerment should be combined with interventions by other public and private actors with complementary skills. The AVC should be put at the centre of multi-agency interventions and a gender sensitive approach should be ensured by all actors involved.



2 - THE WE GO! RESPONSE

2.1 - The importance of data

One of the main activities of the WE GO! project was a large data collection involving the anti-violence centres partners in the project and 5 other centres based in Greece³⁵. The centres are based in four EU countries: 1 in Bulgaria, 6 in Greece, 3 in Italy and 2 in Spain. The purpose of the data collection was to contribute to building knowledge on the specific issue of the economic needs of IPV survivors, focusing specifically on their socio-economic characteristics.

A **preliminary questionnaire** was sent to AVCs aimed at collecting information on their systems in place for data collection on the profile of women they support and on the economic empowerment services they provide³⁶.

This first gathering of information paved the way for the design of two common tools used by AVCs throughout the duration of the project and aiming at collecting data on the main socio-economic characteristics of the women assisted through a set of variables.

A total of **552 profiles of women** assisted by AVCs were included in the project database. The privacy of the women assisted by AVCs was ensured and no sensitive/personal information was circulated to other partners by the AVCs, nor included in the database. Some of the most relevant results of the data collection and analysis are presented below³⁷.

Age, education level and country of origin

³⁵ Women's Counseling Centre in Thessaloniki, Guest House for women victims of violence of the Municipality of Thessaloniki, National Centre for social solidarity, Municipal shelter of Larissa, Counseling centre of Trikala

³⁶ A complete analysis of this first data collection is available at: IRS (Istituto per la Ricerca Sociale) and MIGS (Mediterranean Institute for Gender Studies), *Women's economic independence, a way out of violence. Theory and practice in the EU*, 2016: www.wegoproject.eu/documents

³⁷ For a detailed analysis please visit: www.wegoproject.eu/documents

The majority of the women assisted by AVCs are aged **between 30 and 39 years old** (32.5%) and **between 40 and 49** (29.2%). 21.8% are aged between 18 and 29 and 16.5% are 50 years old or more.

The majority of women are well educated: 38.8% of the women have a upper secondary education and 22.7% have tertiary education. 29.6% have primary or lower secondary education and only 9% don't have primary education.

Most of the women come from the same country where the centres are based (73.5%). 18.8% come from a country outside the EU28 and only 7.2% are from another EU28 country.

Experience of violence

Most of the women have undergone **multiple forms of violence** (88.4%). In the **majority of cases the perpetrator is the husband/partner** (41.7%) **or the ex husband/ex partner** (48.7%).

The **experience of violence is long**: half of the women have experienced violence for a period between 5 to 10 years (23.7%) or more than 10 years (26.5%).

When the perpetrators are the partners/husbands, the length of violence is longer (27% for a period between 5 to 10 years and 32.7% for more than 10 years); when the perpetrators are other than the partners/husband and/or ex partners/ex husbands, the length of the violence is usually shorter (67.3% up to 5 years).

Economic status

40.9% of the women are **employed** and 59.1% are **not employed**.

73.7% of the women **have dependant children**

and most of these have children aged up to 13 years old.

The majority of women **don't own the house they live in** (65.5%). Only 13.3% of the women live in house that they exclusively own and 14.8% share the property with her husband or partner. **82.5% of the women have low level of economic independence** vs. 17.5% who have a high level of economic independence.

There was information regarding economic violence on 461 women out of the 552. Of these 53% were subjected to one or more forms of economic abuse by a partner/ husband or former partner/husband. In detail, 22.6% declare they don't have access to the household income. 19.1% cannot use their own money independently. 17.6% declare that their expenditures are monitored and 16.9% don't know the household income. 10.8% of the women are not allowed to work/find a job.

The results of data collection suggest that having a high degree of education or a job **does not imply more economic independence from a violent partner**. Economic abuse can in fact impede women from controlling their or their household income and therefore find an easier way out of violence. Moreover, as violence has many effects on women's lives, including on their **psychological well being and self-esteem**, it is easy to understand how the connection between having a job and an income and being able to control one's life is far from being linear. The **length of the experience of violence** is another element that can justify this apparent paradox and the difficulties in getting economic independence and exit IPV.

2.2 - The Mutual learning experience: shaping the response

The WE GO! project envisaged **three mutual learning events (MLE)** aimed on the one hand at exchanging knowledge and experiences among the partners and with external experts, and on the other at allowing partners to carry out mid-term and final evaluation of the trainings implemented involving practitioners (TOTs) and women survivors of IPV (TOWs).

The **first MLE** took place in Thessaloniki and involved **52 practitioners**, including one external expert. The main aim of this event was to facilitate the exchange of knowledge among practitioners and to define the contents of the training toolkit to be used by AVCs during the implementation of the training paths involving survivors of IPV.

The first part of the MLE was dedicated to the presentation of the **results of the literature review** and of the **preliminary questionnaire** aiming at understanding how AVCs collect data on the socio-economic characteristics of the survivors they support and which services they provide for promoting women's economic empowerment. The **promising practices** identified and included in the literature review were also presented.

Other two preliminary sessions were envisaged to define common approaches to the implementation of project activities.

One was dedicated to a presentation on **feminist economics** and on how to include its principles within the training toolkit and the training activities targeting both practitioners and women survivors of IPV. A specific focus was dedicated to the importance of the reduction of the uneven burden of **unpaid care work (UCW)** on women and the necessity to redistribute this burden more equally between families and institutions through the provision of public services and between men and women. Participatory methodologies and tools to make women survivors reflect on the importance

of unpaid care work as an integral part of the economy that needs institutional attention on the same grounds as paid economic activities were presented³⁸.

The other session consisted in a presentation of **Liberal Adult Education (LAE)**, a methodological approach to adult learning based on the principle of the life-long right of all people to freely seek knowledge on a free and voluntary basis. Games and tools to learn about human rights and women's rights were experimented to train participants on how to adopt such an approach with survivors of IPV³⁹.

The second part of the MLE was dedicated to working groups aimed on the one hand at exchanging views and practices among partners and external experts and on the other at reflecting on how to take inspiration and adapt external experiences, tools and methodologies to the specific partners' contexts.

A first draft of the **training toolkit** was produced by partners after the first MLE, which

³⁸ The participatory tools presented re based on the Reflection-Action methodology used by ActionAid worldwide in empowerment activities involving women. The tools are included in the report: ActionAid, IDS, Oxfam, *Redistributing care work for gender equality and justice - a training curriculum*, 2015: www.actionaid.org/sites/files/actionaid/redistributing_care_work_final_0.pdf

³⁹ This session was based on the knowledge and experience of Folkuniversitetet, partner of the WE GO! project, on LAE. For more information: www.folkuniversitetet.se/In-English/About-Folkuniversitetet/what-is-folkbildning/

was the basis for the training of trainers and the training of women survivors of IPV.

The **second MLE** took place in Barcelona after the implementation of the trainings of trainers and was aimed at assessing the effectiveness of the training toolkit on the basis of the trainees' feedback provided through the focus groups discussions (see following section of the report).

Apart from assessing the effectiveness of the toolkit, the second MLE was aimed at providing input to improve and finalise the toolkit in order to disseminate it to other practitioners and anti-violence operators active in Europe at the end of the project.

A total of **42** experts and practitioners took part in the event, including representatives of three external organisations. In particular two of them were invited at the purpose of presenting their experience and practices on housing and childcare respectively.

The main outcome of the second MLE was the definition of the final structure and contents of **the project training toolkit**. This is one of the main outputs of WE GO! and is intended to provide AVCs operators and practitioners across Europe both with theoretical guidance and with

TABLE 2 - KEY TOPICS IDENTIFIED BY ANTI-VIOLENCE CENTRES AS ESSENTIAL FOR PROMOTING SURVIVORS' ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT AND INDEPENDENCE

Strengthening anti-violence centres' response

- Feminist Economics principles
- Liberal adult education approach
- Building networks
- Housing and childcare

Building women's skills and empowerment

- Personal activation and motivation
- Assessing skills, knowledge and resources
- Job placement
- Entrepreneurship and self-employment
- ICT skills and safe use of the internet

practical tools to build survivors' personal and economic empowerment⁴⁰.

The toolkit is divided in 2 main parts: **part A** aims at strengthening operators' capacity and skills through a **theoretical framework covering key concepts** - such as gender-based violence, empowerment, feminist economics - **and methodological approaches** based on the one hand on principles of participatory methodologies - such as liberal adult education and Reflection-Action - and on the other hand on how to develop specific skills to support survivors - such as building relationships and trust, listening, developing intuition, etc. This part includes exercises to foster operators' reflection on their own approach and skills and tips to improve them.

Part B includes practical tools that operators can use to promote survivors' personal and economic empowerment. The tools cover different areas of intervention, such as developing personal competences and supporting networks, job techniques, self-employment/entrepreneurship and ICT skills. Tools can be selected and adapted to the specific needs of each woman involved in the

empowerment path and include both group and individual activities.

The **third MLE's** main objective was to allow the partners to carry out a final evaluation of the learning path developed throughout the project, define dissemination strategies of the toolkit and reflect on possible future individual activities after the conclusion of the project⁴¹.

The main result of the MLEs consisted in facilitating the exchange of **knowledge and practices** among experts and practitioners and the **identification of key topics and tools** to be developed by project partners and included in the training toolkit.

In particular the following key learnings were identified during the MLEs:

- » Participants agreed on the fundamental need to build **women survivors' personal empowerment and self-esteem** as a prerequisite for empowering them economically through their engagement in income generating activities. Because of the violence they went through, survivors of IPV in fact often have a low self-esteem and are not aware of their value, potential and skills. This is why often they don't believe in the possibility to get a job and are hopeless in relation to

⁴⁰ The toolkit is available at: www.wegoproject.eu/toolkit

⁴¹ The third MLE is due to take place in concomitance with the project final conference which is organised after the finalisation of the present report.

TABLE 3 - WE GO! TRAINING TOOLKIT CONTENTS: BUILDING PRACTITIONERS' CAPACITY

Theoretical and methodological framework

Gender-based violence

Empowerment

Feminist economics

Job counselling in anti-violence centres

Training methodologies: how to support IPV survivors to achieve their economic empowerment?

Tools for operators' capacity building

Building relationships

Different levels of listening

Using intuition

Asking questions

future projects and to building an independent life. For this purpose **activities and tools to identify formal and informal skills and to build women's motivation and trust in themselves** were prioritised.

- » **Childcare and housing** were considered by partners essential parts of any strategy aimed at promoting women's economic empowerment. The provision of safe and adequate housing of childcare solutions are needs AVCs often have to deal with. Often anti-violence centres don't have shelters and even when they do they represent only temporary solutions to a long-term problem.
- » The importance of **building networks** with other public and private institutions was considered by anti-violence centres essential in order to properly support survivors of IPV. Partnering with entities that can provide complementary services to those of anti-violence centres (i.e.: employment offices, training centres, childcare providers, etc.) was in fact recognised as fundamental to strengthen the capacity of practitioners and operators to respond to women's needs.
- » The development of ICT skills was considered useful for the target group, but most importantly it was considered essential to ensure they could **surf safely on the internet** in order to ensure their personal safety and integrity and in order to avoid false job offers.

2.3 - WE GO! results: successes, challenges and lessons learnt

This section of the report is aimed at presenting the results achieved by the WE GO! project in reaching the two following two main project objectives:

1. **strengthening the capacity of anti-violence centres** to respond to survivors' need to be economic independent;
2. **promote the economic empowerment of the women survivors of IPV** involved in the project.

As explained at the beginning of the report, the main tools used for assessing the results of the project under these two objectives were **focus group sessions** involving the targets of two project activities: the **trainings of trainers (TOTs)** and the **training of women (TOWs)**.

The focus group sessions were carried out by partners at the end of each TOT and TOW using a common assessment form. A consolidated analysis of all these documents has allowed to assess how far WE GO! could go in contributing to achieve its two main project goals and what should be done in future interventions. As for the training of trainers, apart from the final focus group discussion each TOT was also assessed through two other tools: a self-assessment form to be filled in by operators before and after the training to measure the improved skills and knowledge and a training evaluation form. The section below presents a consolidated analysis of the results of all the assessment tools used in the framework of the WE GO! project.

TOTs assessment: strengthening the capacity of anti-violence operators

A total of **19 trainings of trainers** were implemented in the four countries involved in the activity for a total of **139 operators trained**. The contents and format of the trainings were based on available modules included in the training toolkit. The TOTs were organised by the anti-violence centres partners of the WE GO!

project according to their needs and interests. The training involved the operators of each AVC and in some cases foresaw the involvement of the external experts. Some of the TOTs were organised in other AVCs based in Bulgaria and Greece that are not partner in the project.

The extent to which the WE GO! project was effective in strengthening the capacity of AVC operators involved in the TOTs to respond to survivors' economic needs was assessed taking into account 3 dimensions: the **relevance** of the contents proposed within the existing AVCs work and practices, the **improved capacity and knowledge** of operators and the **replicability and transferability** of the training toolkit.

The WE GO! project was in fact aimed not only at improving practitioners' skills, but also in providing them with tools and methodologies to be embedded in existing practices. AVCs in fact often suffer from financial strain and limited time and human resources to run core activities; the WE GO! project was therefore intended to provide tools that don't forcibly imply an additional burden for AVCs, but **opportunities to enhance the effectiveness of their existing practices**. In this sense the transferability of the tools included in the training

toolkit was considered important in order to ensure a multiplier effect of the project.

In terms of the relevance of the contents proposed, the focus groups' discussions were aimed at understanding how far the AVCs operators were able to integrate the WE GO! methodology in their daily activities. In particular if the tools and activities were complementary to their existing practices and if they considered it difficult to find adequate resources (time, human, space) to run the activities.

«The big "tank" of tools allows operators to choose and organise the action plan for each woman»

AVC operator from Women's centre of Karditsa, Greece

«I think that the training and the toolkit will permit us to increase our expertise in supporting women's survivors of IPV to find their economic independence and and above all their economic empowerment»

AVC operator from Centro Veneto Progetti Donna, Padova, Italy

A general **consensus on the**

TABLE 4 - WE GO! TRAINING TOOLKIT CONTENTS: BUILDING SURVIVORS' CAPACITY

Methodological introduction: how to implement the WE GO! training of IPV survivors

Initial interview

From resources to competences, from dreams to goals and plans

Developing key competences

Gender awareness

Networks and collective empowerment

Job search techniques

ICT skills

Entrepreneurship

Elaboration by ActionAid, November 2017

complementarity of the activities and tools

was registered and operators appreciated the possibility the TOT gave them to test and adopt new tools. In general operators didn't raise issues in terms of internal capacities (time in particular). Nonetheless, operators agreed on the **need to have dedicated support and resources to develop specific and adequate support for promoting women's economic empowerment.**

Moreover, **time was considered an issue for women survivors** as in general they have limited time availability to engage in training activities.

Another concern was raised on the possibility to involve women in training group sessions: **individual support is in fact particularly needed by survivors of IPV** although group activities were considered to be empowering as they allow women with similar issues to share experiences.

The TOTs in general were a good occasion for less experienced operators to get to know methods and tools to promote women's personal and economic empowerment and for more experienced practitioners to reflect on their own existing practices by getting to know other AVC's experiences and tools.

TOWs assessment: empowering women survivors economically

A total of **250 women took part in the WE GO! trainings of women**⁴². The contents and format of the trainings were based on available modules contained in the training toolkit. The TOWs included both group activities and individual activities, according to the specific needs of the women supported by the AVCs. This decision was taken according to the emotional status of the women: some of them wanted to be involved in group activities and share their experience, others preferred take part only in individual empowerment paths.

The extent to which the WE GO! project was

⁴² This number includes women who took part at least in one session of a TOW. The final number of women involved will be updated after all TOWs are finalised.

effective in empowering women survivors of IPV was assessed along 4 dimensions: the **development of new skills** to access the job market; the **improved perception of themselves and of their potential**; the **perception of unpaid care work** as an important contribution to the economic system and the necessity to reduce the burden on women; the perception of **economic independence as a means to exit IPV.**

TOWs' main positive achievements were in **developing women's self-esteem and confidence.** For many women it was the first time they could reflect on themselves and in particular on their potential and competences. They were able to identify personal competences they had never thought of before.

Many of them declared that they feel more confident about their personal skills and are interested in improving their professional skills.

Some women declare they are now able to recognise their value. Some have a more detached feeling around their former partners' opinion of them. Others think that their personal characteristics could be helpful also in professional contexts.

The activities allowed them to concentrate more on themselves and on their well-being rather than only focusing on their family members. Most importantly, they were able to do this without feeling selfish.

«I can do it. I'm the master of my life»

Woman survivor involved in the WE GO! project

«Do not judge people for the decisions they take when you do not know the choices they have»

Woman survivor involved in the WE GO! project

In some case women were able to develop better contacts with social services and felt they had increased capacity to look for jobs. Some

declare they now know how to surf safely on the internet when they are looking for job offers.

Among the **challenges** women raised, the negative perception of the labour market and of the concrete possibilities of getting a job is the main one. Moreover, despite the increased self-esteem for many women the possibility to find a job is often seen as a long-term possibility although their need is immediate. Many still think they need formal professional trainings in order to be able to access job opportunities.

As far as **unpaid care work** is concerned, women recognised its social benefits for society and raised a point around the impossibility to totally replace women's engagement in UCW by institutions. Some of them find it difficult to think of themselves in other roles as care responsibilities take up a large part of their life.

Some women brought personal experiences of having to resign or lose their job because of the difficulties in balancing work and care burdens.

Many raised the necessity of flexible working conditions in order to access job opportunities. Some highlighted the necessity to break the stereotypes around gender roles and in particular around women's role as main care givers.

Some women have changed their opinion on gender roles and on who should engage in care activities and give more value to the unpaid work done by housewives.

Although WE GO! didn't envisaged job placements as a concrete objective of the project, around 40 women who took part in TOWs found a job or improved their working conditions⁴³.

The view of practitioners who implemented the TOWs is important to understand what could be done in the future to strengthen empowerment activities for survivors of IPV.

Some practitioners highlighted the necessity to have more **time to work more on building women's support network**, as well as

combining AVCs support programme with external trainings, including on-the-job-training to continue develop women's potential.

Time dedicated to the activities was in general considered not sufficient. Apart from the professional trainings more time would be needed to internalise and strengthen the learnings and to have follow-up meetings with the women in the long-term.

Some practitioners think it would be important to set up a **permanent network of women after the end of the WE GO! project for mutual support** (both emotional and practical).

Working in groups for some operators was positive as it allowed survivors to get in contact with other women with similar needs and experiences. Moreover they allowed them to create relationships for possible support. For other practitioners it was difficult for women to open themselves in groups and consider it is necessary to combine individual sessions with group work.

The overall assessment of TOWs was considered positive, both by the women involved and the operators. The challenges raised are useful as they inform future interventions: in particular the necessity for long-term empowerment programmes, including personal empowerment, in order to consolidate more women's self-esteem and perception of their potential. Another important aspect is the need to combine the activities implemented by the AVCs with external support actions, such as professional trainings in order for women to obtain formal certificates to improve their employability.

⁴³ The exact number will be updated at the end of all TOWs



3 - THE WAY FORWARD

3.1 - Concluding remarks

The WE GO! project allowed to systematise and produce relevant knowledge and results on the issue of promoting the economic independence of women survivors of IPV that can be summarised under the following areas:

Anti-violence centres' response

AVCs have **different levels of expertise and knowledge**. Often due to lack of funding some AVCs find themselves in the position of not being able to implement stable and effective strategies or even to set up and manage key collaborations with institutions providing essential services for building survivors' economic independence. WE GO!, through the mutual learning events, has highlighted how the exchange of experiences among practitioners should be encouraged and promoted in order to reinforce the quality of the services provided as well as to scale-up the knowledge available within the European context.

AVCs are key actors in the provision of support services to IPV survivors and are at the forefront of knowledge development in this field. As such, they should be valued and put at the centre of structured interventions involving different institutional and private actors with complementary skills and capacities. A **multi-agency approach** is in fact considered by project partners as essential to respond to the different needs of survivors. AVC network building is therefore an essential part of strategies aimed at strengthening economic support services in Europe.

Women survivors' needs to attain economic independence

Survivors' needs are **multidimensional** and cannot be reduced to the the need of accessing income generating activities. **Safe housing**

and **childcare services** are examples of other essential needs to be taken into account when structuring effective responses. **Personal empowerment and self-esteem** are other crucial needs that cannot be overlooked as they are a precondition for women's economic empowerment.

Moreover, **short-term and long-term solutions** are equally important to address women's economic needs. Immediate responses can in fact provide women with rapid alternatives that allow them to leave a violent partner. At the same time, it is important to elaborate and implement sustainable solutions to effectively support women in building true economic independence and reduce the risk of being forced to go back to violent domestic contexts because of lack of alternatives.

In order to respond to survivors' economic needs, **different measures should be envisaged at different times** and include, for instance, welfare and access to quality and affordable services, training programmes, job placement.

Interventions should be embedded in broader strategies to fight gender inequalities and promoting women's rights: structural gender inequalities and gender-based discriminations can in fact have a disproportionate negative impact on IPV survivors, making it more difficult for them to gain economic dependence. The gender-division of labour, gender pay gaps and lack of decent work opportunities are among the areas where interventions are required to support the building of an economic and social context able to provide IPV survivors with real alternatives.

Knowledge gaps in the EU

An important gap identified by the WE GO! project is the **absence of a universal**

definition of economic support services at the institutional level. This gap has a negative impact on AVCs' abilities in providing adequate services across Europe. On the contrary, specific and dedicated attention to bridging this gap would very positively impact on the quality of services provided by AVCs and would significantly strengthen responses to IPV.

In this sense, **tertiary prevention should be more valued** as it is often neglected compared to secondary prevention even though it is essential to build response to the long-term needs of IPV survivors. WE GO!

has highlighted how women's personal and economic empowerment requires time and long-term interventions. Valuing tertiary prevention interventions would certainly contribute to building knowledge in the EU on effective strategies to respond to survivors' needs.

Data is also a key aspect of knowledge development. Hence, the systematic collection of socio-economic data on women undergoing IPV should be promoted at EU level to contribute to understanding the complexity of IPV. The WE GO! data collection and its results could in this sense be taken as an example.

3.2 - Recommendations

On the basis of the WE GO! project's results and learnings, we address the following recommendations aiming at strengthening the response to the economic needs of women survivors of IPV in the EU:

To the European Union:

- » **Ratifying the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence.** The signature of the Convention was a positive step that needs to be followed-up by a rapid process leading to its ratification.
- » **Establishing a EU coordination office against violence against women,** responsible for improving coordination and coherence among EU institutions, EU agencies and Member States and for developing EU policies to address gender-based violence.
- » Promoting **data collection on the socio-economic profile** of women undergoing violence, including IPV, in order to develop knowledge on specific aspects of violence against women.
- » Providing, in collaboration with the Council of Europe and with the involvement of the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), an **agreed definition of economic empowerment support services,** ensuring the **inclusion of these services in minimum standards** of provision of services for survivors of gender-based violence, including IPV. Consultation with anti-violence centres and relevant civil society organisations should be ensured in this process.
- » Ensuring that European programmes and structural and investment funds **value the implementation of tertiary prevention interventions** on the same ground as primary and secondary prevention in interventions focusing on combating violence against women, in

order to develop knowledge and promising practices on the three types of violence prevention. Adequate EU funding for transnational projects combating violence against women should be secured in the framework of the current debate on the post-2020 Multiannual Financial Framework.

To National governments:

- » Ensuring periodic surveys to estimate the magnitude of all forms of violence against women and including in national statistics **data collection and analysis on the socio-economic profile of women** undergoing gender-based violence, including IPV.
- » Providing anti-violence centres with **adequate funding** in order to ensure that they can implement sustainable programmes and provide adequate services. Funding should allow AVCs to plan activities at least on a three-year basis.
- » Ensuring that IPV survivors have access to both **shelters** and **long-term temporary safe housing solutions** and provide AVCs with adequate funding to offer such services. This will ensure survivors can count on safe housing and on adequate time to build their independence.
- » Ensuring that at the local level **children of IPV survivors can access quality and affordable childcare services** so that their mothers can engage in their personal and professional development by providing AVCs with adequate funding for developing these services.
- » Including in action plans and policies to fight violence against women measures for promoting the **building of networks** at the local level aiming at strengthening anti-violence centres' abilities to respond to women' economic needs. AVCs should be at the centres of such networks to ensure

a gender-sensitive and woman-centred approach to the problem.

- » Introducing **temporary income support measures** to ensure women survivors of IPV can count on a minimum wage for at least 2 years when they decide to come out of violent relationships.
- » Integrating in **programmes for social and economic inclusion**, including those supported by the European Social Fund, **a dedicated intervention stream to support IPV survivors** in accessing training and job opportunities in order to build their economic independence.

To Regional and Local institutions

- » Implementing positive discrimination measures to ensure IPV survivors are given priority in professional education programmes and job placements, by ensuring public employment offices and professional training institutes have **specific programmes and places reserved** for IPV survivors.
- » Ensuring that strategies to prevent and combat IPV include interventions to **strengthen regional and local networks** aimed at reinforcing anti-violence centres' response to survivors' needs, including their economic ones. Within these interventions, training on gender-sensitive and woman-centred approaches should be foreseen for all actors involved.
- » Introducing measures aiming at ensuring IPV survivors can access **shelters as**

well as long-term temporary housing

to provide them with adequate time to build their economic independence. Public housing could be used to respond to the long-term housing needs of women.

- » Ensuring that children of IPV survivors can access **quality childcare services** so that their mothers can engage in income generating activities and have time to dedicate to their personal and professional development. These services should be provided for free or at affordable prices.
- » Including in **programmes for social and economic inclusion**, including those supported by the European Social Fund, **a dedicated intervention stream to support IPV survivors** in accessing training and job opportunities in order to build their economic independence.

To companies, foundations and other public and private sector actors:

- » Introducing and implementing policies to prevent and combat violence against women in the workplace and to ensure both women and men workers have the same opportunities and rights.
- » Introducing and implementing programmes in partnership with anti-violence centres to provide IPV survivors with opportunities to access professional trainings and job placements that can contribute to building their economic independence.

TABLE 5 - WE GO!, KEY NUMBERS:

Number of anti-violence centres involved: 17

Number of experts involved in exchanges of knowledge and practices: 78

Number of practitioners and operators trained: 139

Women survivors involved in the WE GO! empowerment trainings: 250^A

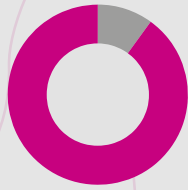
^A This number includes women who took part at least in one session of a TOW. As some TOWs are still being implemented, the final number of women involved will be updated after all TOWs are finalised.

WEGO!



FORMS OF VIOLENCE

more than
90%
by **partner/
ex partner**



50%
for more
than **5 years**



AGE

62%
30-49
years old



WOMEN ASSISTED BY ANTI-VIOLENCE CENTRES

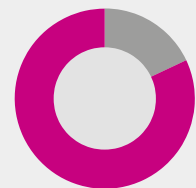
EDUCATION

61%
High school/
university
degree



ECONOMIC STATUS

82,5%
low level of
indipendence



data: **552 women** from Bulgaria, Greece, Italy and Spain



WE GO!

Co-funded by the Rights,
Equality and Citizenship (REC)
Programme of the European Union



Produced with the financial support of the Rights, Equality and Citizenship (REC) Programme of the European Union. The contents are the sole responsibility of ActionAid International Italia Onlus and the project partners and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Commission.

Contacts:

ActionAid Italia Onlus

Via Alserio n. 22 - 20159 Milan

tel: +39 02 742001 | EUProjects.ita@actionaid.org



wegoproject.eu

The WE GO! final report
is available at this link:
www.wegoproject.eu/documents
or scan the QR code
to access the report

