

The feminism welcoming women with disability in Women's Shelters and the first Italian Observatory on Multiple Discrimination



DIFFERENZA
DONNA^{ONG}
WOMEN AND GIRLS AGAINST VIOLENCE

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Why a Women's Shelter on multiple discrimination is born?



Lack of knowledge about women with disabilities topic

Gap in feminist, human rights, people with disabilities movements

Italian National Institute of Statistics 2014:

72% women with disabilities are victims of GBV

The risk of rape or attempted rape is double (10% vs. 4.7%) in disabled women than non-disabled ones

More widespread to women with disabilities

It is perpetuated in different ways than women who do not have disabilities.

On women with disabilities, violence is more intense and more frequent



Moreover...



20% of the world female population lives with a disability and almost 200 million are aged between 10 and 24 years. However, they are often invisible in government statistics. Girls and boys with disabilities are largely excluded from education and health services, discriminated and trapped in a cycle of poverty and violence. All over the world, girls bear the brunt of these violations. A global UNFPA study reveals that girls and young women with disabilities face GBV up to 10 times more than those without disabilities. Girls with intellectual disabilities are particularly vulnerable to sexual violence. Here are five more things you need to know about disability, gender and discrimination:

1. Gender discriminations start early

2. Girls and young women with disabilities are more at risk of sexual violence.

3. Violence against girls with disabilities can take many forms.

4. Young women with disabilities are denied the right to make decisions about their reproductive and sexual health.

5. The myths and stigma contribute to the vulnerability of young women with disabilities.



Focus groups

Differenza Donna NGO's methodology to combat violence against women with disabilities consists in the "Gender Transformative Approach": it improves access to resources for women and helps society to understand and "make the leap" towards cultural and social change to combat violence against women.

Starting with me

Groups of women with and without disabilities in Women's Shelter have exchanged views on their own condition: convergences and differences

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From this path an innovative methodology was born

- Itinerant helpdesk
- Welcoming all women with different disabilities
- Focus Groups
- Observatory

Give a new meaning to "Accessibility"
and not accessibility = discrimination

Methodology: Focus Groups with women with different disabilities

• Criticalities found

- Women with disabilities are not aware of their own rights
- Women with disabilities do not have access to education, especially on emotional relationships and sexuality
- Women with disabilities do not have the means to acknowledge the violence
- Women with disabilities do not even know that Antiviolence Centers and Women's Shelters exist

• Actions

- Awareness-raising meetings on gender-based violence on women with disabilities
- Focus Groups on the topic

• Outputs

- Women with disabilities have become more aware of their rights and their bodies
- 97% of women with disabilities who participated in the Groups reported that they had been victims of sexual assaults in their lifetime
- Counsellors of Women's Shelters improved their knowledge of the phenomenon

Methodology: Itinerant helpdesk

• Criticality found

- Women had no access to Women's Shelters

• Actions

- Awareness raising of Social Services and Adults with disabilities Department
- Awareness raising of people with disabilities organizations and family members with disabilities organizations
- Training of counsellors expert in GBV in the organizations of people with disabilities
- Itinerant helpdesk at comfortable places

• Outputs

- Women with disabilities access to Women's Shelters and Antiviolence Centers has been improved
- Counsellors of Women's Shelters improved their knowledge of the phenomenon
- Emergence of the phenomenon; since June 2014, 125 women have been welcomed in Women's Shelters managed by Differenza Donna NGO

Methodology: Observatory on violence against women with disabilities

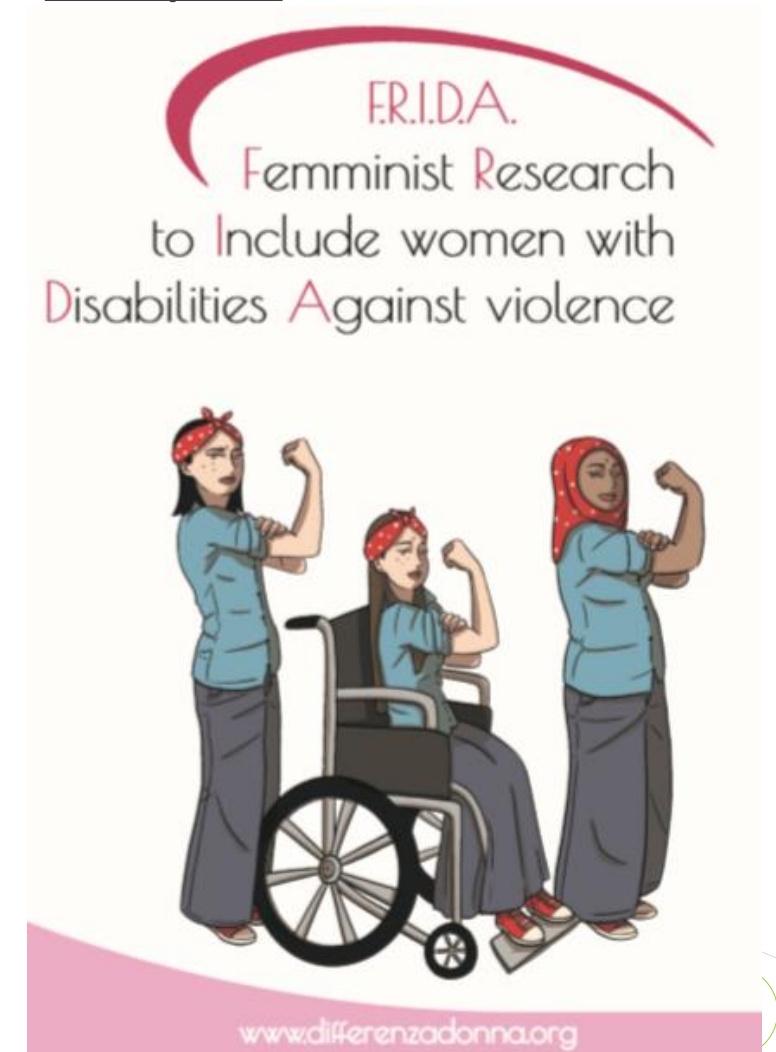
- Goals

- Collection and processing of data on the phenomenon of gender-based violence on women with disabilities, each year on November. This will make it possible to learn more about the mechanisms of violence and to implement effective tools to fight it.
- To interview the "privileged witnesses" to understand which cultural barriers, stereotypes and prejudices they encounter when reporting the violence suffered. This will bring out the cultural, social and political obstacles to the emergence of gender-based violence on women with disabilities

- Action

- Development of a tool for Italian stakeholders to understand the extent of the phenomenon

- Output



Types of disabilities encountered in our work...

- Physical
 - Sensory
 - Invisible
 - Intellectual/Cognitive
 - Psychiatric
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- Caused by/previous to the violence suffered
 - Certified/Uncertified

Barriers

Women with disabilities may not ask for assistance because they are not aware of the services available to them

- Information on Antiviolence Centers and Women's Shelters could be denied by the perpetrators of the violence or may not be available in the proper format (Easy to read, Augmentative and Alternative Communication, Braille, etc.)

Women with disabilities are often not believed



- Inadequate education can also cause women with disabilities to be unaware of their rights - education for women with disabilities is important

Often services are not accessible due to architectural and communication barriers

What kind of violence do they suffer?

- **physical violence** against women with disabilities may include, for example: rough handling during a move, being put to rest for a prolonged period or being withheld;
- **sexual** assaults can lead to requests for sexual activity in return for offering help and support, to be left naked or exposed. Furthermore, **forced sterilization** and **coercive abortion** to which disabled women can be subjected, are a serious violation of human rights
- **psychological violence** can be include the threats of abandonment, being diminished or denigrated in reference to one's own disability, being accused of saying lies;
- **economic violence** may result in negligence by domiciliary care workers, theft of money or personal belongings, improper use of money or credit cards.
- particular forms of violence specifically related to one's disability and the supports needed to cope with it, for example:
 - ✓ Pharmacological abuse, including abuso farmacologico, including get more or less medication or deny access to essential drugs;
 - ✓ denial of essential care, which can not only create discomfort but also be dangerous for a woman's physical health.

Given the severity of existing abuses,

- it is essential to introduce effective measures to combat violence against girls and women with disabilities.
- Potential victims of violence must be trained not to accept it, to defend themselves and assert their rights in the event of violence

Staff and guidelines

- staff must be properly trained and monitored to take care of women with disabilities
- Guidelines for staff working with people with disabilities should be developed to allow the management of situations and cases of violence and abuse against women with disabilities

Abuses must be severely punished

- Security and surveillance in facilities must be mandatory and strictly applied. In case of abuse in a facility, the woman must obtain immediately support, with access - where necessary- to appropriate assistance, psychological support or health services.



Women's Shelters must be accessible to women with disabilities

- Specific research on violence against women with disabilities is essential to learn more about its causes and to identify more effectively measures to combat it.


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Thank you!

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