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**MUNICIPAL PLAN AGAINST VIOLENCE  
TOWARDS WOMEN 2007-2009**

## **CONSELL EDITORIAL DE L'AJUNTAMENT DE BARCELONA**

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## **PLA MUNICIPAL CONTRA LA VIOLÈNCIA VERS LES DONES 2007-2009**

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# MUNICIPAL PLAN AGAINST VIOLENCE TOWARDS WOMEN 2007-2009



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## MUNICIPAL PLAN AGAINST VIOLENCE TOWARDS WOMEN 2007-2009

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

This Municipal Plan Against Violence Towards Women brings together the contributions made by many Barcelonans who, from their respective areas of intervention, have participated in its elaboration. This has been a very enriching process that, at the same time, has clearly shown the ambition and desire all women have to confront this problem in our city.

Over the last ten years the city of Barcelona has held a firm position in the approach to the fight against violence towards women, basing its work on these three axes: prevention, care and coordination. This work would not have been possible without the cooperation, experience and hard work of the women's movement, which has always demanded that the fight against violence towards women be converted into a political priority for the City Council.

For that reason, this is the best environment which to thank all women, and also all men, who have taken part in the elaboration of the text that you have before you. With their involvement, they have enabled us to share first hand their experiences, knowledge and opinions, and have broadened the knowledge and understanding we have regarding this phenomenon in the city of Barcelona with their contributions.

From the start, the demands of the women's movement contributed to both making this social phenomenon visible and to pushing for strategies to advance in its eradication. During the 1990s, thanks to the work carried out principally by women's organisations and associations, the fight against vio-

lence towards women was incorporated into the mainstream political agenda.

Today, after years of shared experience, the women's movement continues paving the way that should allow us to advance towards a society in which the freedom of women is something unquestionable. In this sense it is important to take into account and recognise all the efforts and contributions that have been made, and are continuing to be made, from trade unions, different organisations and civil society, in order to reach this common objective.

It is for this reason that the importance of the conceptual dimension in the approach to the fight against violence towards women should not be forgotten. "The world of ideas" conditions the perception of reality and of social phenomena and as such the process of conceptualisation has an impact as much on the comprehension of as on the approach to the fight against violence towards women. Thus, the development of a shared definition of the problem is imperative in order to successfully confront it, as is the ability to structure the means for its eradication.

It is essential to transform the fight against the social problem of violence towards women into a political priority, which should acquire the social relevance and budget allocation that its social seriousness requires. The study of the nature and causes of violence towards women should be taken into account in order to prioritise the interventions to be developed. For this reason, it is imperative to define the

nature of the phenomenon and its manifestations and, in particular, to identify its causes. For this will allow the design of effective actions to continue advancing in the improvement of prevention strategies and in the implantation of the care models which will be the most sensitive to the needs of the women who require them.

Thus it is necessary to share a universal vision of the problem of violence towards women in the city, which means to make a multifaceted view possible, one that allows for the consideration of the different dimensions of the problem and sets out cross-dimensional policies. The many causes of the phenomenon of violence against women make it essential to confront the problem in a cross-dimensional and interdisciplinary manner that promotes the work different services, institutions and professional people are committed to, and guarantees the enrichment of the conceptual frameworks through the contributions from different disciplines.

Finally, in order to tackle the fight against violence towards women in the most efficient way, the consolidation of a specific structure is needed, with the aim of guaranteeing the continuity of this work. Adequate human resources, budget allocation and autonomy are also fundamental to guarantee its ability to function correctly.

However, in this introduction it is essential to highlight an important point: this is a plan in transition that, among other matters, foresees becoming the appropriate instrument to be able to make the necessary move between the legal framework and current regional jurisdiction, and that which will come into force once the Catalan Parliament has passed the law for the rights of women for the eradication of male violence. For this reason, the Plan will most probably have to continue adapting itself to new realities that, in short, modify current municipal jurisdiction.





## 2. THE PARTICIPATION PROCESS

The Operating Plan Against Violence Towards Women 2006-2009 responds to the philosophy that has been shaped by all the propositions and recommendations made within the framework of all the workshops, courses and training sessions that have taken place in the last few years, the proposals of the Municipal Office of Women's Affairs and Civil Rights, Barcelona Women's Council, the women's movement and the network of civil associations.

In the same way, this Plan forms a part of the important work done up to now, and amply recognises the contributions of City Council specialists who carry out their work in this area. Their experience has made it possible to make an important qualitative leap in the strategies set out up until now, and incorporate perspectives of integration, proximity, universality, multidimensionality and effectiveness into municipal services and resources, as well as coordination and cooperation amongst the different areas involved.

Working from the Municipal Office of Women's Affairs and Civil Rights, we have developed The Second Working Plan against Violence towards Women (2006-2009), basing ourselves on participation and the knowledge of the Barcelona Women's Council; the professional experience of the women from the Women's Group of Barcelona Social Welfare Council, the technical knowledge and proximity of the professionals who work in local government, the collaboration and contributions of all the people who participated in the workshops organised in November 2005 under the title "Interactive Workshops: Operating Plan Against Violence Towards Women", and the accumulated experience, perceptions and observations of the whole team of people that constitute the Barcelona Circuit Against Violence Towards Women and the local circuits against violence towards women in all the districts of the city.

### **Violence towards women: violence prevention, the challenges of education**

On 27 January 2005, the session "Violence towards women: violence prevention, the challenges of education" was held within the framework of the Interactive Workshops of Barcelona Women's Council. This workshop was centred on the topic of gender

violence, as is clear from the title, and examined in depth the causes of violence, strategies for prevention and the challenges that are involved in education, the media and the association network.

Eighty women from Barcelona participated in the workshop and the working methodology and dynamisation of the session was achieved by the organisation of four work groups: “Violence prevention and formal education”; “Analysis of the causes of violence”; “Detection and analysis of sexism in the

mass media”; and “Violence prevention from co-responsibility and the association network”. The recommendations made by these groups, as well as their reflections and other contributions, have been incorporated into the text of the Plan that is presented here.

## Interactive workshops: Operating Plan against Violence towards Women

From 2-4 November 2005, the Municipal Office of Women’s Affairs and Civil Rights organised several Interactive Workshops entitled “Operating Plan against Violence towards Women”, with the objective of incorporating the recommendations and initiatives that the participants explained into their Working Plan, as well as the contributions made by people working in a wide range of fields who have contact with the phenomenon of gender violence on a daily basis.

The interactive dynamic of the workshops was organised through different debate and reflection groups that were lead by a chairperson, with suggestions recorded by the person assigned as the spokesperson for the group. Each one of the six workgroups focused on how to deal with a concrete question: workgroup on prevention; workgroup on specific care; workgroup on general care; workgroup on the approach to the fight against violence towards women at a political level; workgroup on research; and workgroup on coordination.

### Working Meetings: January to December 2006

- Women’s Leadership and Civil Rights.
- Women’s Assistance Team.
- Women’s Refuge Centre Team.

- Technical Women’s Managers of the 10 Districts of Barcelona.
- Managers of the Women’s Information and Assistance Points.
- The permanent representative of the Municipal Women’s Council of Barcelona.
- The Catalan Institute for Women’s Issues.

### Validation and return of the document: January 2007

- Friday, 12 January: Management of the Municipal Office of Women’s Affairs and Civil Rights, Women’s Assistance Team, Women’s Refuge Centre Team.
- Wednesday, 17 January: The permanent representative of the Barcelona Women’s Council.
- Friday, 19 January: Managers of the Municipal Office of Women’s Affairs and Civil Rights in the 10 Districts of Barcelona.
- Friday, 19 January: The Barcelona Social Welfare Council.
- Wednesday, 24 January: Meeting with all people who participated in the “Interactive Workshops: Operating Plan against Violence towards Women”, which took place from 2-4 November 2005.

23 February: Full Council





### 3. REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

The United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) of 1979 and its Optional Protocol of 1999 expressly recognise the need to change the attitudes of men and women through education, so that all people accept the equality of rights and overcome the practices and prejudices based on stereotyped roles. The Protocol establishes the right of women to ask for compensation for the violation of their rights.

The 1993 World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna proclaimed that the human rights of women and girls are an integral part of universal human rights and underlines the importance of the tasks ahead to eliminate violence against women in public and private life.

The 1995 Beijing Declaration, which was a product of the Fourth World Conference on Women, is the most complete document ever produced by a United Nations Conference in relation to women's rights because it incorporates the results reached in the previous conferences and treaties, the CEDAW and the Vienna Declaration. The Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, which recognises for the first time that the causes of violence are structural, includes a definition of gender violence (Article 113): "Violent expression against women means any act of violence based on gender that results or is probable that it will result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering for women, including the threat of said acts, the coercion or the deprivation of freedom, in both public and private life." In the Revision of the Beijing Action

Platform outlined in New York in June 2000, a new thrust was given to the commitments agreed to in order to achieve the empowerment of women's roles and strengthening of gender equality.

The 1997 Resolution of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights condemns all violent acts against women, demands that sexist violence in the family and community be eliminated and urges the government to act in order to prevent, investigate and punish acts of violence, and provide women with fair compensation and specialised assistance.

Resolution 2001/49 of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights condemns all acts of sexist violence against women, especially violence against women in situations of armed conflict.

In the European sphere it is necessary to cite, amongst others, the European Parliament Resolution of September 1997, known as "Zero Tolerance Against Violence Towards Women" and developed in 1999, and the March 2001 European Council Decision Framework regarding the Victim Statute in the penal system, that signals the importance of avoiding processes of secondary victimisation and the necessity for specialised services and organisations of victim support.

Directive 2002/73 of the European Parliament and Council of 23 September 2002, which "modifies Council Directive 76/207/EEC relative to the application of the principle of equal treatment between men and women in access to work, training and profes-

sional promotion and work conditions”, stresses the relevance of adopting specific measures in favour of women designed to eliminate, prevent or compensate for the disadvantages that affect them in the working environment and, especially, to grant sufficient protection to cases of harassment or sexual harassment in the workplace.

Over the last few years in Spain, there have been legislative advances regarding the fight against sexist violence. These include Organic Law 11/2003 of 29 September, providing concrete measures regarding civic security, domestic violence and social integration of foreigners; Organic Law 15/2003 of 25 November, which modifies Organic Law 10/1995 of 23 November of the Penal Code; or Law 27/2003 of

31 July, governing the protection order for victims of domestic violence. The latter law cited has involved a new goal in the measures adopted by the authorities to regulate special precautionary measures that are unprecedented in the Spanish legal system. Recently Organic Law 1/2004 of 28 December, providing integrated protective measures against gender violence, constitutes the first integrated European law that recognises a global response to violence towards women in relationships with partners, with the inclusion of preventive, educational, social, care, health and penal aspects. In addition, it is worth noting the laws approved by various autonomous communities to intervene within their regional jurisdiction in the area of violence against women.





## 4. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Throughout history, violence towards women has always existed and, despite the advances that have been made along the road toward equal opportunities, it continues to be exerted under the parameters of a society structured under an imbalance of power relations and due to the socialisation of men and women in a patriarchal system. The distribution of roles based on gender and the lack of social recognition of the activities traditionally assigned to women puts them in a vulnerable position that marks them as possible victims of aggression, which is generally carried out by men.

No country is free of gender violence and because it is a universal phenomenon stemming from the patriarchal system, it is present in all cultures and at all social and economic levels. According to the report produced by the United Nations in September 2000 on the state of the world population, women of all ages and social conditions throughout the world suffer gender violence.

Barcelona is a diverse and cosmopolitan city, a fact that represents a challenge when addressing the local, cultural, religious and economic aspects of all women who suffer from gender violence and who are looking for help and answers from the local authorities.

### Definition

According to the terminology agreed on by the United Nations in 1995, when we use the expression *gender violence* we understand that gender, as a key concept, is the sum total of beliefs, per-

sonal characteristics, attitudes, feelings, values, behaviour and activities that differentiate men and women through a process of social construction. The gender system not only establishes differences

Thus the problem of violence against women is not one of exceptional criminal acts, but rather one that responds to a situation of discrimination against women in general, in all societies. The United Nations recognises that violence against women becomes a huge obstacle when trying to achieve equal opportunities and the advancement of women, and as a result, the advancement and development of different countries and societies.

- In 1972 Brussels held the International Tribunal on Crimes Against Women, with an attendance of more than 2,000 women from more than 40 countries.
- In Mexico City, the year 1975 was proclaimed to be International Women's Year, an act which emphasised the necessity to stop violence against women and girls.
- In 1980, a group of United Nations experts recognised that violence towards women was the most frequently covered up crime in the world.
- In 1986, the European Parliament dealt with the serious problem that is domestic violence for the first time, by means of Resolution A-44/86 on aggressions towards women.

sonal characteristics, attitudes, feelings, values, behaviour and activities that differentiate men and women through a process of social construction. The gender system not only establishes differences

but also builds symbolic and material inequalities. For a hierarchy of unequal gender roles and identities to exist, which places a higher worth on the masculine, unequal power relationships are created that determine that women are placed in a subordinate position in relation to men.

The Catalan Government draft bill regarding women's rights in the eradication of sexist violence establishes that:

Acts of violence against women have been assigned different terms: sexist, patriarchal, male or gender violence, amongst others. In all cases the terminology indicates that it is dealing with a phenomenon with different characteristics from other kinds of violence. This is a kind of violence that women suffer from due to the mere fact of being women, in a framework of unequal power relationships between men and women.

The expression *chauvinist violence* shows that male chauvinism is a concept that generally defines a social system that justifies and empowers dominant and abusive behaviour over women by men from positions of power, and that, at the same time, has imposed a masculine model that, despite being reductionist, is still valued as socially superior. Within this system, masculine superiority has been naturalised and, as such, justified through a series of cultural and social guidelines, which are deeply rooted in dominant structures of society. Violence against women is the most serious and devastating act in our culture that not only destroys lives, but also impedes the development of the rights, equal opportunities and freedom of women.

Gender violence makes victims of women and girls in hostile conflicts; girls who suffer from genital mutilation, women in the labour market, and children of the people involved (victim and aggressor) in violent situations that are played out within the family environment.

The World Health Organisation believes that gender violence is a serious public health problem that causes serious harm to the people affected. Also, depending on the magnitude of the aggression, there can be illness associated to suffering, as well as considerable difficulties in recovering from the trauma (mistreated woman syndrome) and, in the worst cases, death of the victim.

From this perspective we will speak about gender violence under the following parameters:

- **Psychological Violence.** Abusive acts or behaviour that can cause self-devaluation of the person who suffers or cause diminishing or loss of self-confidence, and which have serious repercussions that complicate to a considerable extent the treatment and recovery of the victim. In the framework of the definition of psychological violence, mistreatment includes emotionally, economically, socially, environmentally and verbally abusive relationships: humiliation, insults, shouting, disrespect and indifference, taunts, accusations, deprivation of freedom, and neglect amongst other things.
- **Physical Violence.** Any intentional act of force that causes or could cause bodily harm to the woman who is assaulted: striking, injuries, burns, fractures and beatings, amongst other things.
- **Sexual Violence.** This is understood to be the obligation to maintain any kind of sexual relationship against a woman's will. Rape, other sexual assaults such as harassment and abuse of minors are also included. Victims of sexual violence suffer from all the rest of the abuses listed above.
- **Domestic or Family Violence.** Domestic violence is the most common manifestation of gender violence; it occurs mainly within the family sphere where, despite the cultural beliefs of the family environment (respect, protection, growth), the differences that favour and provoke aggressive behaviour are stressed. It also occurs frequently in the public sphere, especially with regard to cases of attacks by partners or ex-partners during the stages of a separation. This kind of violence includes physical, psychological, emotional and very often sexual violence. Mistreatment of infants and the elderly are also considered to be part of domestic or family violence; vulnerable groups also suffer the consequences of a deteriorated intra-familial relationship with the habit of resolving conflictive situations by force or without any kind of dialogue.

These forms and acts of violence can be found in various contexts, whether public or private, in the family, the community, the labour market, armed conflicts, traditions and the media.





## 5. VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN THE CITY OF BARCELONA

The Municipal Action Plan (2003-2007), the Operating Plan Against Violence Towards Women 2001-2004, the experience of the professionals who work in municipal care services for women who suffer from violence, the intervention and collaborative projects from the diverse bodies comprising the various associations with the City Council, and the suggestions and recommendations from the differ-

ent women's participatory bodies in the city, such as Barcelona Women's Council, the Women's Group of Barcelona Social Welfare Council, Barcelona Immigration Council and the First Women's Congress of Barcelona, constitute key elements that define the reference framework that is necessary when considering how to approach the fight against gender violence by Barcelona City Council.

### The Municipal Action Plan (PAM) 2003-2007

Within the series of municipal objectives, the PAM 2003-2007 signals from a broader scope the specific and strategic objectives to eliminate gender violence in our city. Among those that stand out are:

- To improve and diversify existing resources that are directed towards the care of women who suffer gender violence.
- To increase the cooperation amongst institutions, organisations and associations in the city that allocate some kind of specific service to women who suffer gender violence.
- To intensify campaigns and preventative action in order to work at changing current social values towards violence in our city, which is necessary for achieving zero tolerance and constructing a city without violence, a city of free women.
- To advance in coordination strategies, consolidating the implementation of the Barcelona Circuit Against Violence and Local Circuits in every suburb and neighbourhood.
- To promote, within the framework of the Operating Plan Against Violence, coordination with different educational fields in order to motivate and support the initiatives put forward by education professionals who work with education models based on the values of dialogue, equality and respect through coeducational principles.
- To promote psychosocial care projects through continuous training programmes aimed at women who find themselves in a situation where they are being mistreated, and at the different professionals who attend this group, as well as the incorporation of psychology clinics in all service care centres.

- To continue promoting the Civil Agreement for a Barcelona Free of Violence Towards Women as a further step in the joint collaboration between Barcelona City Council and the network of civil associations in the city in the fight against violence towards women.
- To guarantee readily available care for women in all areas of the city through care and information points, and specialised care through the Women's Assistance Team and the Women's Refuge Centre, as well as the coordination of all the care networks at work in Barcelona.
- To continue advancing in and promoting an integrated care model in situations of gender violence, paying special attention to the deployment of support services and resources for women after leaving the shelter, and to establish collaborative projects in order to obtain avenues of support and strategies for access to housing and specific employment training programmes.
- To link emergency shelter services for women with Emergency Social Services and provide them with the proper status that allows them to carry out interventions that are tailored to the characteristics of the problems facing women.
- To improve emergency shelter, creating a refuge centre that is able to give the highest quality response to the needs of women and their children in a crisis situation, foreseeing the increase in needs in the city in relation to new strategies of detection and prevention.
- To insist upon the recognition of and paying special attention to elderly women who are being mistreated.

## Proposals of the Women's Group of the Barcelona Social Welfare Council

The Barcelona Social Welfare Council (CMBS) is one of the advisory bodies established by the City Council to incorporate the different sectors of the city in defining municipal policy. After analysis and debate regarding the current reality in the city, the Women's Group of the CMBS, coordinated by Neus Roca Cortés, developed the *2006 Proposal Document* containing a combination of recommendations and proposals, the details of which are the following:

The social granting and blind authority of men for the mere fact of being male and the image of women as caretakers of men jeopardises the detection of *violent* situations and those of coercive control that some young women are in. [...] It has even been proved that young women who have advanced in their careers are halted because of labour structures and legislation that are especially discriminatory when a woman has young children.

Violence in couples is naturalised among young people due to ideas of romantic love, love fusion and passion, which is widespread in youth culture and in general, and considers that the weight of suffering belongs exclusively to women. These women interpret male violence as strength and authority, and act cautiously, hoping that the threatening or directly violent—whether it be verbally or physically—young man will change.

Sexual harassment in the workplace is a very frequent occurrence that courageous young women currently seek advice for and denounce, looking for a solution that does not put them in direct danger of losing their jobs. Companies do not do anything about the problem, despite being aware of it and verbally condemning it. Women end up being penalised for their actions by being moved or dismissed, while those who do the harassing do not lose status or job positions.

We must pay special and specific attention, without glossing over or leaving out anything, to these essential elements for young women to avoid the repetition, now silent and subtle, of discrimination and violence that without a doubt still affect women. At the same time we must give social value to women's activities and to their knowledge and understanding of nurturing of life, which has been undervalued until now.

In conclusion, we propose to insist on addressing those elements that the analysis and discussions carried out have made us come to see as being fundamental in the lives of young women.

### Young women and violence

- Given the increase in young women who encounter violence, it is necessary to guarantee that they will be attended to by specialised social services

used to dealing with people in stable relationships, because it is a very effective way to help make a city free of violence against women.

- We propose the creation of individual psychological orientation units that work with the construction of subjectivity that address demands for solutions to relationship and/or violence related problems and which always guarantee a gender perspective.
- It is necessary to do more hours of violence prevention workshops in spaces other than the Women's Information and Assistance Points (PIAD), such as in youth associations and Youth Information Points, for example.

- It is necessary to implement violence detection programmes directed towards women and young men.

- Priority should be given to projects that analyse harassment and violence in schools along gender lines, as well as in the Municipal Institute of Education and in the Municipal Institute for People with Disabilities. This perspective analyses deep-rooted social values and ensures these studies and interventions have a much greater impact on the private and social lives of young people, counteracting examples of patriarchal, hierarchical and authoritarian family models.

Because of this, we should celebrate the appearance of specialised care services for children in violent circumstances, which will continue to increase in numbers.

## The first Barcelona Women's Congress

Held by the Barcelona Municipal Women's Council, this congress involved a process of participation and joint work between the City Council and the Barcelona network of women's associations. The principal objective of the congress was to define a city model that answered the needs and wants of the diverse collective of women in Barcelona. The specific proposals worked out in the area of violence towards women were the following:

### **Social awareness-raising for the prevention of violence and sexual abuses**

- To diversify informative material regarding current resources related to violence, sexual abuse and harassment.
- To study the kind of mistreatment women with disabilities suffer: physical (abuses) and mobility (unable to leave the house) and psychological.
- To develop informative pamphlets regarding rights and services.
- To determine means by which immigrant women who have arrived through family separation and relocation can fight for their rights against mistreatment without the danger of expulsion.
- To promote a citizens network that develops a manifesto for violence and cohabitation in Barcelona, both in the private and public sphere.

### **Assistance and support for women who are physically and psychologically abused**

- The creation of specific assistance services with permanent care, staffed by specialised personnel, which reinforce already existing support groups that work from a gender perspective.
- The allocation of experts in sign language for deaf people.
- The creation of a freephone 900 number, also staffed by professionals with specific training.
- The consideration of another aspect of domestic violence: the children affected.
- **Increase the number of places in refuge centres and improve rehabilitation resources**
- Refuge centres with easy access and without architectural barriers, so that both able-bodied people and those with physical disabilities, such as the blind, can enter easily. It is necessary to distinguish those centres that can offer emergency shelter and those centres for treatment and rehabilitation.
- Bear in mind the European framework that recommends one place for every 10,000 inhabitants.



## 6. MUNICIPAL ASSISTANCE SERVICES FOR WOMEN

### 6.1 Municipal Service Centre for Social Emergencies (CMAUS)

A service that, in an immediate and ad-hoc way, addresses any social emergency situation outside the normal working hours of other services in the city and districts. The services carried out by CMAUS are the care and evaluation of every case, occasional intervention, and management of the

necessary emergency resources: accommodation, emergency economic help, transport and medicine, among other things. It also forwards the case to the appropriate service once the emergency situation is dealt with, so that every situation or problem receives the correct treatment.

### 6.2 Municipal social service centres (CSS)

Barcelona City Council has a network of 33 primary care social service centres at its disposal that offer a safe haven to look for possible solutions for all those who need them. The primary care social services are the first level of care for social problems and the

people who require information and assessment. People are attended by a team of professionals that inform, advise, assess and intervene in the area of individual and group treatment, as well as carrying out community-based projects.

### 6.3 Information and service points for women (PIAD)

The PIAD are services open to all women of the city. They are characterised by their easy accessibility, due their location in all parts of the city, and their local involvement, which lends itself to working in networks and accessibility to all women, keeping in mind the city's diversity.

The PIAD are spaces of reference; they offer information and guidance services for women who can go directly to a centre, during fixed opening hours, without having to first make an appointment. The PIAD offer basic care, advice, information and, if necessary, redirect the person in question to mu-

municipal resources or other appropriate resources or organisations.

They aim to strengthen the autonomy of women, answer requests for information and care, and contribute to the awareness and early detection of situations of discrimination and gender violence.

The aims of the PIAD are:

- To give basic information and advice to women, both as individuals and in groups.
- To strengthen and support specific actions of prevention, awareness and early detection of violent and discriminatory situations towards women.
- To improve the situation of women, strengthen their abilities and change attitudes and roles

in order to build their autonomy through group work.

- To work together with the various women's groups and the Women's Council in every district in order to make visible and value women's knowledge and their contributions to society.
- To initiate awareness-raising campaigns along with women's groups and associations in order to achieve a city free of violence towards women through the awareness of gender discrimination.
- To promote an inter-professional network and coordination with other care services: local social services, specific services for women of the city, etc.
- To participate in the Barcelona Circuit Against Violence Towards Women in every district.

## 6.4 Support service for dealing with gender violence in the family environment

A series of programmes and care services for women who suffer from violence have been developed in the framework of the Plan Against Violence Towards Women, but the multidimensionality of the problem makes it necessary to create support services for working with those children who have suffered violence, in order to deal with the consequences of the situations and help them to establish new relationship models based on respect and confidence. It is also necessary to deal with the rehabilitation of men who mistreat women and children, whether they are directed to the police or justice services (without it being an alternative penal measure), or those, that before exhibiting violent behaviour as the norm, want to begin the process of change and personal development.

The service consist of two programmes:

- **Assistance programme for children who have suffered violence.** Mentorship time, which consists of helping the children of families with family and gender violence problems identify an alternative and positive parental model that allows them to build new kinds of relationships, avoid the repetitive cycle of family violence, and develop this model within themselves.

- **Assistance programme for men who mistreat women and children.** To try and diminish the level of domestic violence in order to improve the well-being of families and the protection of victims, through information and therapeutic treatment for the aggressors.

The access to the service could be:

- Direct, after a request for consultation.
- Through re-direction by other means of support.

When the re-direction comes about by other means of municipal support, it will always be accompanied by a re-direction protocol.

When the people using the services are also being assisted by other municipal bodies, coordination meetings will always be established to articulate a joint working plan between the different services.

Assistance is from Monday to Friday, with a 35-hour commitment on the part of all professionals.

## 6.5 The Women's Assistance Team

The Women's Assistance Team is a municipal public service specialised in the care of women and their children who suffer from gender violence.

It is a *multi-disciplinary team* (comprised of social workers, psychologists and lawyers) that offers integrated assistance in order to be able to work on the whole recovery processes of the women in care, and their children, with or without the need for shelter services.

The Women's Assistance Team (EAD) is *the entry point to all means of specialised municipal assistance for the care and protection* of women and their children who suffer gender violence.

Integrated assistance is specified in a working plan, adapted to the evolution of a situation while the woman and her children need any of the municipal means of support specialised in gender violence. This working plan is complementary and is linked to the different refuge service teams that a woman may require.

The working timetable is from ten o'clock in the morning until six o'clock in the afternoon, Monday to Friday.

The users of the service are all women, resident in Barcelona as well as their children and any other people in their immediate circle, and minors with authorisation, who suffer or have suffered any manifestation of gender violence. There is no discrimination based on age, physical or mental state, legal situation or sexual orientation.

### Assistance Approach

- **Integration.** Incorporating all aspects of the personal and social structure of the women and their children because of the situation suffered, not only the damaged aspects.
- **Flexibility and adaptation to a reality in constant evolution.** The profound social changes that have occurred over the last few years (increasing immigration, increased life expectancy, attention to diversity, recognition of other effective relationship models, etc.) demand greater flexibility

and adaptation on the part of the Women's Assistance Team, both in terms of the principles of their intervention and the diversification of their proposals.

- **Intervention in the processes and dynamics of gender violence.** Gender violence is not only a personal problem that affects people, but also a social one. The diverse consequences of the problem require different interventions. Here we highlight two:

- To mediate between women and children, and to influence their interaction, whenever it may be necessary, so that the relationship is satisfactory and they can build a family dynamic that can repair the damage of the violent process.
- To use diverse intervention tools: individual, group or community attention.

- **Interdisciplinarity.** The Women's Assistance Team articulates the assistance for women through the collaboration and shared analysis between different disciplines that make up the team, such as social work, psychology and law.

From the complementary perspective of each discipline, the complexity of the situation presented, the risk entailed for the woman and the people closest to her, the magnitude of the problem, and the proposal of a working plan are evaluated. This is always done bearing in mind the reality and interests of each woman, respecting her decisions and strengthening her self esteem and personal autonomy.

- **Psychosocial.** The team should carry out a global job that includes personal training in order to confront the psychological circumstances of the problems and the situations detected.
- **Centred on the rehabilitation process.** The intervention has to bear in mind the situation of the woman and her children, her emotional state and her educational background, and should respect her decisions regarding the actions and time needed for each case.

## 6.6 The Refuge Centre for women in situations of gender violence

The Barcelona Women's Refuge Centre is a temporary residency service that aims to offer a place to stay, integrated assistance, psychosocial services, and support for those women and their young children who have suffered a violent situation as a nuclear family or in any shared living situation.

In order to give integrated assistance, the service will facilitate the necessary means to overcome the after-effects of the violent situations experienced, leading to development work that helps recover autonomy, self-esteem and personal worth. It will coordinate interventions with community resources and the different services that intervene in the resolution of the problems that the women and their children have.

The objectives of the Women's Refuge Centre are:

- To offer a safe and shared living space for women and their children who have suffered violent situations and who do not have the benefit of a supportive family or social network, or who have one that they cannot use for fear of personal safety. Also, to provide them with a secure environment, both physically and emotionally, and integrated assistance for their needs.
- To offer integrated assistance that facilitates working with women and their children in all aspects of the rehabilitation process following their mistreatment.

The Barcelona Women's Refuge Centre offers women and their children the following services:

- *Shelter and security* for women and/or shared living units, with an infrastructure of 10 bedrooms and 27 places.
- *Accommodation and support* for all people in the shelter.
- *Continual Assistance* 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.
- *Psychological assistance*, centred on the mother-child relationship, provided by the resident professional of the refuge centre.
- *Schooling of children*, incorporation into educational centres in the public system and into educational activities in the refuge centre or via community resources during leisure time.
- *Access and physical accompaniment*, if necessary, to the network of community resources and services: health system, schools for adult education, organisations specialised in entering the workforce, Barcelona Activa, Women's Groups, civic centres, and so on.
- *Economic help, if necessary.*





## 7. WORKING CRITERIA

- To work on the basis that women who are suffering or who have suffered violence are not only victims but also *survivors*, keeping intact all the skills and capacities that allow them to act as individuals and lead their own lives. Whenever the woman suffering violence is only seen as a victim by the social worker, his/her intervention contributes to perpetuate such a role. If the social worker, as well as recognising and understanding the consequences of the violence suffered by the woman, identifies and supports the skills, capacities, dispositions and attitudes that can help her increasingly gain independence and control over her own life, the social worker will contribute to the woman's empowerment.
- *To recognise and make visible experiences suffered by women* who underwent different violent situations and became active agents in an individual and collective process leading to an awareness of and an overcoming of this conflict in the city of Barcelona.
- *To recognise the historic breakthrough of the feminist movement* in making this social issue visible and creating strategies to stop it. It has been mostly through the work of women's institutions and associations that the struggle to stop violence against women was included in the public agenda during the 1990s.
- *To recognise the particular and specific nature of this sort of violence*, as well as the need to define in greater detail women's rights and strategies to stop such violence. Violence against women is systemic and typical of patriarchal societies, since this violence is a consequence of the lack of equality between men and women, and the perpetuation of a social pattern that, even today, justifies women's inferiority to men. Sexual hierarchy and the higher status to men contribute to underestimating women, supporting the belief that they are inferior and can be used, underrated and battered. Violence is not natural behaviour, but an *attitude learnt through socialisation*. Socialisation, supported with words and images, creates our identities. That is one of the reasons symbolic violence against women in advertisements and on television, among other media, becomes one of the main causes of the social perpetuation of violence.
- To assume institutional responsibility. Care policies focused on women suffering gender-based violence must take into account *women's diversity and women's different needs*: old, adult and young women; single mothers; women from different cultures; women with different cultural and socio-economic levels; women in a specific health condition; disabled women; HIV positive women; women suffering social exclusion. Each woman is as different as her personal background and the way she decides to cope with it.
- To work using a holistic approach. Strategies against gender-based violence should be aware of its *multiple causes and dimensions* and seek a

global response to this issue, covering aspects like care, prevention, assistance, protection and, eventually, rehabilitation and claiming of all women's rights, including, particularly, economic rights.

- *To guarantee all women's independence* trying to avoid questioning decisions taken by any woman suffering gender-based violence and respecting the fact that she is responsible for taking any measure whenever she considers it appropriate; resources facilitated by Barcelona City Council to its citizens shall not discriminate against any woman when offering its assistance.
- *To guarantee assistance for the victim*, no matter what her situation may be when she accesses Barcelona's public resources. The mechanism currently in place to certify that gender-based violence is occurring consists of making a formal complaint to the relevant court accusing the aggressor. Experience shows that many women suffering gender-based violence cannot exercise all their rights because they are not able or willing to certify the violent incident(s) before a court. That is why women accessing municipal resources are not required to present any court certification, thus guaranteeing every woman's rights.
- *To address every single case, taking into account* the complexity of personal situations and mul-

iple realities occurring in our city. Bearing that in mind, our city resources shall try to be as flexible as possible to adapt to every single situation, recognising the woman as the only decision-maker during the whole process.

- Public policies currently in place to stop gender-based violence shall grow more solid through a *cross-section implementation model* involving all municipal bodies to define specific actions relevant both to individual and coordinated intervention in terms of policies and implementation.
- Coordination and cooperation between the institutions involved in this process is essential to define, design and put into practice the necessary strategies while recognising all complexities and adaptations required.
- All women suffering violent situations should have the same opportunities to access the resources they need; thinking locally is essential to facilitate such accessibility. Therefore, we need to work to provide specific care and assistance services within districts and neighbourhoods. By removing architectural and communicative obstacles we can guarantee all women are able to access our services.





## 8. MAIN GOAL

Our main goal is to guarantee that the programme to stop violence against women is tackled globally, by recognising the experience, consolidating the working tools that allow us both to make the current assistance model better, broader and more

accurate, and to establish new and specific services that eventually will be essential to address the diversity of situations created by new realities and new demands. All these measures have one common goal:

**To make violence against women history**

# STRATEGY 1. Prevention, education, awareness and detection

*Prevention* is the cornerstone in avoiding gender-based violence, that is, to detect and identify it the moment it happens so that we can assist the victim at an early stage. Stopping violence means working on the various factors creating or supporting such behaviour. Therefore, we need information, education and awareness strategies targeting public opinion to help reject all kinds of violence. It is also necessary to support relationship models based on respecting human rights and differences.

When it comes to preventing gender-based violence, it is extremely important and urgent to do so. Most agents agree on education as being the perfect framework to develop strategies that reach the whole of the population, paying particular attention to primary and secondary schools. It is true, nevertheless, that education implies more than compulsory education, and includes colleges, grammar schools and adult continuing education programmes.

Whereas schools might seem the perfect place to implement violence prevention schemes, we must not forget they are only one part of society. This means that if there is no common commitment, cooperation and responsibility framework shared between the school, the family and the media, it will be difficult to carry out any prevention work successfully.

This intended co-education means an integrated development for each individual, breaking down stereotypes while respecting differences and overcoming discriminatory inequalities, and it is the basis from which to work on preventing gender-based violence. (Working Group "Violence prevention on formal education").

The network of civil associations is the ideal environment in which to develop prevention programmes, due to the number and variety of centres throughout the city and therefore its proximity to people. From here, we can detect violent situations, make social denunciations and, above all, create a favourable environment where women and men can design alternative relationship models.

## Strategic and operational objectives

### 1.1 Design violence against women awareness and prevention campaigns focused on young people, involving, if possible, education professionals.

- 1.1.1 Coordinate and work together with formal and non-formal education institutions to develop programmes to establish co-education as the main principle against gender-based violence.
- 1.1.2 Design, develop and offer prevention workshops in secondary schools and youth associations as a strategy for fostering respectful behaviour, as well as developing values, attitudes and relationship models that help avoid the formation of abusive behaviours in relationships.
- 1.1.3 Develop and offer prevention workshops in universities in collaboration with university student unions and focused on abusive behaviour, understanding it is at this stage when people first form long-term relationships.
- 1.1.4 Facilitate teachers' involvement, not only in the detection process but also in their own day-to-day teaching in order to increase their awareness of gender-based issues and promote co-education, public demonstrations of innovative gender-based violence education programmes, and development of prevention models and actions appropriate to each age and education stage, from nursery school to university.
- 1.1.5 Develop, together with all education agents, strategies to prevent, detect and increase awareness of violence against women in professional training, non-formal education, associations and leisure spaces.
- 1.1.6 Work together with the institutions managing leisure spaces, as well as with street educators, to define prevention, detection and assistance strategies regarding violence against women.
- 1.1.7 Establish training programmes targeting both teachers and students in order to develop strategies to tackle violent situations occurring within the education centre.
- 1.1.8 Establish workgroups comprised of mothers in primary and secondary schools to work on the prevention and detection of violence against women, and include men in those

groups depending on their characteristics and development.

1.1.9 Define formal protocols, in cooperation with the Education Consortium of Barcelona, that enable the teachers to channel any gender-based violence situation they detect in their classroom, based on the discussions held in the school councils.

1.1.10 Collaborate with primary and secondary school teachers to design educational packages appropriate to each school level to address violence against women incidents in the classroom.

1.1.11 Draft a unified list encompassing all resources available to prevent violence against women, with the help of the educational resource centres, and define a programme including all services offered in the city, based on the cross-sectional experience of local circuits.

**1.2 Define the required skills and training levels for professionals involved in the assistance of women suffering gender-based violence to guarantee an excellent care service, as well as to assure that professionals do not suffer emotional damage and to avoid secondary victimisation.**

1.2.1 Foster mandatory, specific and continuous training for professionals in different fields by establishing a team to this end within the framework of the Observatory On Violence Against Women.

1.2.2 Enable the supervision of the professional teams in charge of the assistance services.

1.2.3 Include a self-evaluation exercise in the training of professionals, as well as a review of their own gender stereotypes and reactions to violence.

1.2.4 Involve all services of all fields in the process to prevent and detect violence against women.

1.2.5 Create information exchange frameworks where professionals can share best practices, experiences, materials, resources, methodologies and difficulties.

1.2.6 Create an easy to use website targeting professionals, including updated information on

all available resources and activities taking place in the city.

1.2.7 Incorporate, in collaboration with the Catalan Women's Institute, all services that Barcelona City Council already has in place to address violence against women in the next issue of the Resource Guide on violence against women.

**1.3 Develop social awareness campaigns and design communication strategies that help to change how society perceives gender-based violence.**

1.3.1 Ratify, as every year, the Civic Agreement for a Barcelona Free of Violence Against Women within the celebrations of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, on 25 November.

1.3.2 Confirm and extend the acceptance of the Civic Agreement for a Barcelona Free of Violence Against Women among associations and city youth groups, together with the existing resource list available to all parties signing the Agreement (Youth Plan).

1.3.3 Conduct an opinion poll in the city of Barcelona to know the real state of the problem of violence against women as well as the attitudes and ideas associated with it.

1.3.4 Meet and discuss with professionals of all fields (social and health services, education, law enforcement, the justice system and associations) to define a general framework and devise a shared prevention project.

1.3.5 Draft and publish new materials to inform and raise awareness based on formats that are already in place: three-part, fold-out brochures, guides and leaflets, as well as audiovisual material.

1.3.6 Develop campaigns targeting young people, intended to cause a major impact on the public so that they stay alert to the presence of violence, and are able to prevent and detect certain abusive behaviour that can occur in personal interactions.

1.3.7 As the local authority, urge the relevant bodies to take full advantage of the media to

highlight the prevention of violence against women.

- 1.3.8 Publish materials targeting male readers and focused on the prevention of violence against women.

#### **1.4 Encourage positive portrayals of new models of masculinity, femininity and relationships between men and women.**

- 1.4.1 Promote the watchdog function of the Women's Observatory in the media to report patterns of violence against women shown in television series, films, advertisements and other materials.
- 1.4.2 Find and support models of masculinity, femininity and relationships between men and women based on non-violent interactions, citizenship and respect, considering personal independence as the antidote to violent and abusive relationships.
- 1.4.3 Involve all education institutions, together with unregulated social spaces, in designing and developing modules in the curriculum to encourage respectful behaviour and recognition between boys and girls, including stereotypes associated with gender-based violence and abusive conducts, and the development of skills to communicate and solve conflicts in a non-violent way.
- 1.4.4 Guarantee institutional responsibility by showing positive images of women, using non-sexist advertising campaigns and language.

#### **1.5 Work on violence prevention based on a responsibility model shared with the association network of the city.**

- 1.5.1 Increase the commitment level as well as the number of parties signing the Civic Agreement for a Barcelona Free of Violence Against Women making use of the resources and materials offered by the City Council.
- 1.5.2 Involve all associations and trade unions in tasks of prevention and denunciation of violence against women based on the experi-

ence of women's institutions and movements in the city.

- 1.5.3 Involve men in processes related to prevention and questioning of stereotypes, relationships and gender models, following the example of the projects developed in the Personal Services Sector framework.
- 1.5.4 Make all groups of women visible: disabled women, immigrant women, old women, women drug addicts, women with serious mental illnesses, etc.; develop specific prevention campaigns focused on these groups and assure they can easily access all available resources.
- 1.5.5 Make all the resources available that are required to guarantee the programme Women's Skills in all neighbourhoods and take an active part coordinating common working spaces to help implement gender-based violence prevention strategies on a local basis, based on every district's reality.
- 1.5.6 Encourage local projects in every district to involve institutions that are especially aware of this particular issue in order to work together and define specific strategies for each district in the city.
- 1.5.7 Encourage Information and Assistance Points for Women to participate in community projects in order to put gender-based violence at the heart of the specific working programme.
- 1.5.8 Involve particularly aware men in the community framework to act as a reference in prevention and detection campaigns.

#### **1.6 Support initiatives from women's associations, non-governmental organisations, trade unions and other social agents related to gender-based violence.**

- 1.6.1 Increase specific financial lines to support projects and women's institutions and associations addressing gender-based violence in the city on a daily basis.
- 1.6.2 Plan, in cooperation with women's associations experienced in dealing with gender-based violence, awareness campaigns for

organisations, school parent associations and municipal participative councils.

- 1.6.3 Organise training days for associations, professional agents, experts and non-governmental organisations to share their experiences.
- 1.6.4 Train, in cooperation with women's associations, a group of social agents involved in programmes to prevent, detect and act in cases of gender-based violence.

**1.7 Improve information strategies so that every woman living in Barcelona can be aware of gender-based violence and the services available to them.**

- 1.7.1 Analyse different communication and information distribution strategies, together with all women's institutions and groups in the city, especially those working on sexist violence programmes and that form part of the Barcelona Women's Council.
- 1.7.2 Carry out a new information campaign—in several languages and with major coverage of all services available in the city, especially education and health services—in relation to the concept of violence against women, so that different female population groups in Barcelona can identify it more easily.

1.7.3 Publish and distribute, in different languages, information about the service network the city offers to women suffering violent situations.

1.7.4 Work to increase and diversify the information tasks in relation to violence against women, both in the Information and Resource Centre for Women (CIRD) and in the Information and Assistance Points for Women, as key services and reference points in providing women living in Barcelona with data about city resources, both public and private.

1.7.5 Continue to use, improving and regularising if necessary, information transfer strategies within the existing coordination networks (networks working for the area of Barcelona, for the regions, for the districts, etc.).

1.7.6 Strengthen the communication with the hotline for women suffering violence (a 24/7 phone line) managed by the Catalan Government, for that institution to have constantly updated information on the resources available in the city of Barcelona.

1.7.7 Agree, together with the Barcelona Health Board and the Public Health Agency of Barcelona, action lines to prevent violence against women, both in their professional training to help detect it at early stages, and in other aspects of their work.

## STRATEGY 2. Assistance, protection and rehabilitation

The goal of the Operational Plan is to increase efficiency and effectiveness in the municipal assistance, protection, relief and rehabilitation actions for women who suffer or have suffered gender-based violence. Therefore, municipal resource services should respond to the diverse needs of those women; they should guarantee full access, continuity and complementarity; finally, they should efficiently detect and transfer women to the relevant services, thus avoiding secondary victimisation.

It is necessary to launch new services, as well as to diversify existing resources, improve personal tools, accept professional individual and team limitations and appreciate coordination between professionals as key elements in highlighting intervention and assistance actions focused on women suffering gender-based violence.

We agree with the idea of the woman as the first resource. It is essential to start from the possibilities pertaining to every woman and to respect her timing in the decision-making process, as well as to adapt our actions and the public resources to her needs.

It is equally important to respect and assist the professional individuals and teams involved as a policy measure, since, at the end of the day, they are going through the whole rehabilitation process with the woman.

### Strategic and operational objectives

#### **2.1 Raise citizenship awareness regarding the resource network available to women suffering violent situations.**

- 2.1.1 Create a website with updated information about gender-based violence, available resources and activities.
- 2.1.2 Publish informative material targeting the female population and distribute it in workplaces, in cooperation with trade unions, and in visible locations, such as markets, bakeries, pharmacies, hairdressers and schools.
- 2.1.3 Provide all health centres with two-part fold-out brochures about resources for women in violent situations.

- 2.1.4 Make this information accessible to visually, hearing and intellectually impaired women, taking into account accessibility criteria, using Braille, audio newsletters, CD-ROMs, and so on.
- 2.1.5 Make this information accessible to immigrant women groups, publishing the material in several languages.
- 2.1.6 Publish guidelines regarding practical measures women can take to protect themselves.

#### **2.2 Strengthen coordination with the Catalan Parliament**

- 2.2.1 Establish relocation procedures, together with the Catalan Government, to be able to guarantee protection for women, as well as for their children, in case they need to leave the city due to reasons of safety. Facilitate cooperation between the Interior Ministry of the Catalan Government and all other public institutions.
- 2.2.2 Request that the Catalan Ministry of Social Action and Citizenship act as mediator with other Spanish regions whenever a woman needs to look for a foster home outside Catalonia due to reasons of safety.
- 2.2.3 Define and implement, with the help of the Generalitat, relocation procedures to increase availability in the refuge centres managed by the Catalan Government.

#### **2.3 Optimise existing services and create new ones.**

- 2.3.1 Upgrade the global assistance model offered both in the specific services of the city and in the primary assistance workspaces of the districts.
- 2.3.2 Reinforce the Women's Assistance Team:
  - Eliminate waiting lists.
  - Guarantee that, if they need assistance, women are not alone while accessing the re-

- sources and filling in the paperwork, trying to help them from an educational point of view.
- Develop and regulate measures regarding the children of women suffering violence.
- Promote group actions, both with women and with children.
- Increase guidance and support for other teams and professionals.

2.3.3 Strengthen educational and psychological support offered by the refuge centre.

2.3.4 Design a specific service to treat victims in emergency cases and deal with crises suffered by women as a result of a violent situation.

2.3.5 Create a Municipal Emergency Refuge Centre that guarantees women's safety and covers their basic needs (accommodation, meals, etc.) for a maximum of two weeks, as well as providing the psychological support required to cope with the physical and emotional ordeal suffered by the victim, and help start the decision-making process. This centre shall avoid using hotels and guesthouses as emergency shelter services.

2.3.6 Implement an emergency phone and fax service to complement the Women's Assistance Team working hours, offering assistance from the Municipal Emergency Refuge Centre.

2.3.7 Offer bridging flats that give temporary and shared accommodation, with social and educational support providing an environment as normalised and independent as possible so that the women and their children can live independently in a non-violent context.

2.3.8 Promote and disseminate information about the innovative actions applicable to the children of women suffering violence. These actions, carried out by different services within the city assistance network, are designed as preventive measures and enhance the skills these children need to cope with the emotional impact caused by violence and to repair possible damages following the situation.

2.3.9 Activate mechanisms that help women living in refuge centres to access permanent housing, either in a subsidised housing programme or in the regular rental market, in order to complete their independence and rehabilitation process.

## **2.4 Continue to work on an assistance model based on a rapid, accessible and balanced service that respects every woman's decisions.**

2.4.1 Improve specific care provided to every woman, as well as to their children, through the application of relationship models based on a non-violent approach.

2.4.2 Maintain and reinforce current assistance programmes for children of women who suffer or have suffered gender-based violence.

2.4.3 Broaden coverage for assistance programmes and psychological support for women suffering gender-based violence, as well as for their children: support and rehabilitation groups; groups assisting people living in a violent environment; and social skills workshops.

2.4.4 Increase and adapt training courses and courses focused on reintegration into the labour market to the needs and situation of women who suffer or have suffered gender-based violence.

2.4.5 Analyse, in the framework of municipal jurisdiction, the current circumstances to define support strategies so that women who suffer or have suffered gender-based violence can have access to housing, either in a subsidised housing programme or in the private sector.

2.4.6 Consider the importance of understanding the woman in her community environment, underlining the definition of specific programmes to work with men, as well as with their children, based on the experiences of the Counselling Service and the Assistance Service for Abusive Men.

## **2.5 Establish concrete actions to deal effectively with the diverse and specific needs of women, considering the groups that, due to their circumstances, suffer different forms of violence, including young women, elderly women, immigrant women, women forced into prostitution, transsexual women, disabled women, HIV positive women, women in prison and women suffering severe mental illnesses.**

2.5.1 Adapt the specific actions targeting immigrant women suffering gender-based violence to the changing reality through: mediation ser-

vices in municipal assistance centres; referral and information protocols for municipal social services for immigrant women; publishing informative materials in several languages.

- 2.5.2 Provide professionals with specific training to adapt their actions to the woman's beliefs and values.
- 2.5.3 Continue to support specific assistance services targeting disabled women suffering gender-based violence.
- 2.5.4 Define a global social and health assistance model in cooperation with the Public Health Agency of Barcelona focused on women involved in situations related to drug addiction and/or mental illnesses who suffer or have suffered gender-based violence.
- 2.5.5 Design a specific working line targeting women in prison who are suffering or have suffered gender-based violence.
- 2.5.6 Involve the Mental Health Network in identifying violence against women, and promoting specific training on mental health and gender issues.
- 2.5.7 Create a specific programme to detect and make visible gender-based violence, as well as to advise young women and men how to follow relationship models based on freedom and respecting human rights, together with the Youth Council, located in the Youth Information and Advice Centre (CIAJ).
- 2.5.8 Encourage the implementation of resources and psychological treatments for women in situations of violence who, additionally, suffer other conditions (psychopathologies, drug addiction, etc.).
- 2.5.9 Promote services involving gypsy women with experience in violence issues within the gypsy community to act as mediators. Promote similar services for immigrant women involving women with experience in this sort of cultural mediation to act as a link within different communities of immigrant women.

## **2.6 Consolidate and define new tools to globally tackle the struggle against gender-based violence: working**

### **local circuits, protocols and inter-institutional agreements.**

- 2.6.1 Guarantee psychological help along with the treatment through collaboration with the network of mental health services in order to consolidate assistance protocols that take into account the effects of violence on women in rehabilitation.
- 2.6.2 Increase and diversify women's assistance resources in order to examine the kind of attention needed by each woman, avoiding secondary victimisation that makes assistance conditional on the existence of the suitable resource.
- 2.6.3 Establish the creation of violence rehabilitation spaces to be able to continue assisting women and their children in the last stage of the process of breaking away from gender-based violence.
- 2.6.4 Create accompaniment services for immigrant women so they can overcome specific difficulties arising from lack of information about the city, and recover and respect those values and cultural beliefs that do not violate women's rights.
- 2.6.5 Increase staff at the women's information and assistance points in order to guarantee initial assistance to the violence cases that access the service as a reference centre.
- 2.6.6 Extend the services available at the information and assistance points to offer psychological support for those women who need it.
- 2.6.7 Add, in all assistance services for women, a specific line of information on their labour rights and on the professional integration resources available in Barcelona.

### **2.7 Improve assistance and legal advice services for women suffering gender-based violence.**

- 2.7.1 Continue offering women legal advice on all matters of interest.
- 2.7.2 Inform women, when required, about formal complaint and judicial processes.

2.7.3 Increase physical accompaniment, during the whole process, to women who have suffered gender-based violence.

**2.8 Promote early detection strategies for situations with the highest vulnerability and high risk of violent impact.**

2.8.1 Include gender-based violence prevention in health prevention programmes.

2.8.2 Work in cooperation with sexual and reproductive health assistance services in order to develop joint strategies for prevention and early detection of cases involving violence against women.

2.8.3 Make companies aware of the importance of adapting workplaces to the needs of women who suffer or have suffered violence.

2.8.4 Show the impact and effects of gender-based violence on women's health and find out the origins of the pathologies treated.

2.8.5 Facilitate the use of mediation resources in order to assist immigrant women who are victims of violence, and guarantee specific training on gender-based violence for mediators working in this service.

2.8.6 Promote detection of female sex workers suffering violence and better adapt the appropriate resources to their needs.

**2.9 Work in favour of the freedom, independence and autonomy of women who suffer or have suffered mistreatment, as well as of the exercise of all their rights.**

2.9.1 Guarantee housing for women who require it in shelters or shared flats, decreasing the use of guesthouses. Negotiate shelters or shared flats with municipal housing services.

2.9.2 Continue offering work to women in companies aware of their personal situation that guarantee allowing all necessary leave needed to manage any matter related to their situation, or changes to working hours or position.

2.9.3 Add violence against women as one of the criteria for accessing public housing and social housing in Barcelona, in the framework of the Municipal Council of the Social Housing Board of Barcelona.

## STRATEGY 3. Coordination and participation

This Plan is intended to involve all the agents taking part in this area within the city of Barcelona in its implementation process. For this reason, specific strategies and joint working spaces will be designed in order to make this strategic line effective. On the one hand, inter-institutional coordination with different areas and bodies of the Civil Service is needed. On the other hand, effective harmonising, cooperation and coordination with the network of associations of the city, the women's movement and labour organisations are essential.

Women do not always follow a linear process within the gender-based violence assistance circuits and, therefore, the possibility that women move in and out of the circuit intermittently must be foreseen, without evaluating this as a failure of the assistance system. In every case, priority must be given to quality instead of quantity and all efforts must be made in order to ensure that the woman is always well assisted, whatever her assistance circuit may be.

Women must be active agents within the assistance and rehabilitation process, which means that accompaniment processes must be guaranteed without underestimating women or inciting them to unnecessarily depend on social services.

### Strategic and operational objectives

#### **3.1 Increase coordination and cooperation among the police, social, sanitary, judicial and associative fields in connection with prevention and assistance for women who suffer or have suffered gender-based violence.**

- 3.1.1 Support the Barcelona Circuit against gender-based violence and recognise the tasks performed by professionals in those fields—social, judicial, police and health—involved in assisting situations of gender-based violence.
- 3.1.2 Foster awareness of women's information and assistance points in every district of the city to provide women with information, access and assistance to the different services available.
- 3.1.3 Continue promoting the Women's Assistance Team as a reference point for the

city by linking and coordinating the districts of Barcelona, associations assisting women who suffer or have suffered violence, the health network, security bodies and courts.

- 3.1.4 Preserve the annual organisation of an exchange day aimed to facilitate thinking spaces and the participation of all professionals working in the Barcelona Circuit against gender-based violence.
- 3.1.5 Foster and preserve local circuits against gender-based violence in all the districts of the city.

#### **3.2 Foster and support programmes and projects related to gender-based violence at district level by guaranteeing the decentralisation of prevention and assistance and maintaining the centralisation of working criteria.**

- 3.2.1 Design, together with the implementation bodies and women's boards in all districts, joint strategies of coordination, prevention and assistance for gender-based violence cases from a common knowledge base.
- 3.2.2 Continue fostering the organisation of talks, meetings, workshops and other actions aimed at the awareness and prevention of gender-based violence.
- 3.2.3 Design accompaniment programmes for women who suffer or have suffered gender-based violence.
- 3.2.4 Support volunteer programmes in districts aimed at the accompaniment of women who suffer or have suffered gender-based violence.

#### **3.3 Define joint indicators, objective criteria and evaluation methodologies in order to properly monitor intervention processes for women who suffer or have suffered gender-based violence and their families.**

- 3.3.1 Create a common database for all professionals, with different levels of consultation and an up-to-date website for the public.
- 3.3.2 Establish joint working spaces aimed at defining which variables must be shared between services and professionals to be able to properly assist women from different specific and general assistance resources.
- 3.3.3 Update data from public and private services assisting women who suffer or have suffered gender-based violence and publish a catalogue.
- 3.3.4 Update diagnosis of gender-based violence in the city of Barcelona and diffuse the results to all involved agents.

**3.4 Design, together with schools, primary assistance centres and trade unions, specific protocols to detect gender-based violence so they can become active agents in the re-direction to specific assistance resources.**

- 3.4.1 Arrange specific training actions that facilitate the implementation of preventive, educational and welfare strategies of the Plan.
- 3.4.2 Coordinate the actions of Barcelona City Council with the Framework Protocol envisaged by the Law for Women's Rights and Against Gender-based Violence—that will be passed shortly—according to the Barcelona Municipal Charter.

**3.5 Create specific assistance services for professionals directly assisting women who suffer or have suffered gender-based violence by creating exchange and supervision teams through which we can improve quality, coordination and communication in services.**

- 3.5.1 Give institutional recognition to stable coordination spaces in each district in which all professional and social agents involved in preventing, detecting and intervening in gender-based violence situations are represented.
- 3.5.2 Regularly arrange inter-section and inter-institution exchange days.

- 3.5.3 Facilitate a personal reflection space for all professionals working with women suffering violence, whatever their working field may be, in order to know and be aware of the previous ideas and thinking about the problems they deal with.
- 3.5.4 Give compulsory training, oriented towards gender, to all professionals working in social services, health, justice, education, the police, etc., who have to deal with women living in violent situations.
- 3.5.5 Improve training of professionals to give them mediation skills so they can assist immigrant women coming from very different cultural contexts.
- 3.5.6 Improve the training of professionals so they can assist women with particular profiles that make them more vulnerable to violence.
- 3.5.7 Improve professional training in order to address every form of violence against women: harassment at work, sexual harassment, etc.
- 3.5.8 Evaluate the impact of the training given by professionals related to both courses and attitudes. Evaluations should be designed to bring about improvements to the training strategies so that they question attitudes, as much as or even more than knowledge.

**3.6 Improve working conditions of professionals working with women suffering gender-based violence.**

- 3.6.1 Increase the number of professionals to avoid, in any assistance service, them having to work alone and under waiting list pressure.
- 3.6.2 Jointly define the service and the reference professional at every stage of the case.
- 3.6.3 Offer resources to professionals according to their needs regarding training, supervision, infrastructure, technical support in their day-to-day work, etc.
- 3.6.4 Foster and allow spaces for reflection and assessment of the work, and for a systematic research evaluation so we can improve actions, plan and give priority to decision-making and professional training.

### **3.7 Work towards improving the Barcelona Circuit against gender-based violence.**

- 3.7.1 Create an IT platform to update the Circuit and adapt it to professionals' needs.
- 3.7.2 Create a centralised database at city level and statistical measures to facilitate coordination between services according to principles set out in the current Law on Data Protection.
- 3.7.3 Facilitate intervention and participation by all agents involved in the Circuit.
- 3.7.4 Regularly arrange inter-section and inter-institution exchange days.
- 3.7.5 Arrange joint supervision sessions in local circuits against gender-based violence.

3.7.6 Review workloads of municipal specialists who are in charge of, and points of reference for, the Circuit.

3.7.7 Provide local circuits in Barcelona districts and neighbourhoods with the necessary resources in order to guarantee their autonomy and ability to define appropriate training projects according to the reality of the area.

3.7.8 Work through the IT Platform E-Catalunya to guarantee that professionals can access different kinds of free software and tools to work online, taking as an example the pilot experience developed in the Sant Martí district. The goal is to implement it in the whole city and improve communication between the agents in the Circuit.

## STRATEGY 4. Information and research systems

Articulating social phenomena allows us to understand them, among other things. Words do not create social reality but they do give the necessary visibility to break with the silence. Thinking about the concept we use to define a social phenomenon, such as violence against women, and sharing experiences and observations derived from the everyday task of assisting women and their children who suffer violence, allows us to make progress in the creation of a shared theoretical corpus, know more about the causes of violence, and structure a model of analysis and action.

Gender-based violence is a structural element of social order: it shapes the world and the “being” in the world of men and women and, therefore, is a result of the construction of social order from a sexual-gender system. Taking gender as the concept that refers to relationships between men and women, in relation to the socially defined roles that are assigned to one or other gender, we also understand that these relationships are social constructions subject to changes.

For this reason, it is essential to evaluate the impact and effects of the assistance interventions in the services that are provided. And it is also necessary to clearly give support to systematic evaluation aimed at improving proceedings and evaluating impacts. A concerted effort must be made to promote research into the cause of gender-based violence and, above all, the evaluation of its incidence in order to determine and eliminate the social constructions that discriminate against women.

The development stage of services and participation has already started and now we can implement mechanisms that make a more informed decision-making process possible and professional instruction that is self-regulatory, thus improving what it has to offer, while we can also begin to open up to new needs and innovations. However, evaluation needs to go beyond exclusively quantitative information and must allow detection of dysfunctions and make for better planning.

There is an urgent need to foster and allow spaces for assessing the work, and for systematic research evaluation so we can improve actions, plan and give priority to decision-making and to professional training. Thus, the idea is to combine results analysis with process analysis in order to obtain a continued

analysis of both the services and the management of these services.

Research is not a luxury for services and assistance programmes but a necessity in order to consolidate quality assistance and to optimise and innovate the deployment of resources, and the assistance given in terms of results: well-being, social participation, quality of life and citizens’ health.

Frontline workers, in their capacity as agents of transformation, are the very people who can best transfer the needs and requests detected and/or expressed by the population. Nevertheless, little time and attention have been devoted to this task and, consequently, a suitable transfer system is needed in order to communicate this information to decision-making spaces.

### Strategic and operational objectives

#### **4.1 Boost a Plan of Applied Research into Gender-based Violence that allows for greater awareness of the gender-based violence social phenomenon in order to make innovate improvements to prevention and assistance protocols for municipal social services.**

- 4.1.1 Create the Observatory of Violence Against Women within the Women’s Observatory to allow the real magnitude of the phenomenon in the city to be known and to bring about the appropriate responses.
- 4.1.2 Reach collaborative agreements with trade unions and universities in the framework of the Observatory of Violence Against Women.
- 4.1.3 Define qualitative and quantitative psychosocial indicators that, transformed into tools through a scientific method, can give us a gradual knowledge of the real situation.
- 4.1.4 Create and implement a unique information and indicators system shared by all municipal services in coordination with all the agents involved.
- 4.1.5 Carry out a triannual analysis of the data on violence in the city that allows the monitoring of the problems and assessment of the

impact of improvement actions and current deficiencies.

- 4.1.6 Define a diagnostic map on the attention given to the problems of gender-based violence that properly reflects the link between supply and demand in order to define institutional responsibilities and know the resources available.

**4.1 Preserve and promote thinking and discussion spaces among professionals in the services and politicians in charge of this management area.**

- 4.2.1 Ensure assessment feedback on the Annual Institutional Report of all the services by the responsible politicians.
- 4.2.2 Ensure collaboration among different municipal services in order to add research to the day-to-day work of the service without making the assistance task difficult.
- 4.2.3 Create an information transfer system that eases the link between frontline workers and those responsible for political decision-making.
- 4.2.4 Create a study on what violence means to the general public, aimed at learning their current thinking, perceptions, attributions and explanations of gender-based violence.

**4.3 Add the gender perspective to all research.**

- 4.3.1 Create studies on cases that do not reach social services. These can be reported by non-institutional community agents so we can assist them.
- 4.3.2 Promote research on other forms of violence (harassment at work, sexual harassment at work, sexual abuse, etc.) through collaboration with trade unions.
- 4.3.3 Carry out research into the impact on children of women suffering violent situations, and the needs of people living in the woman's environment who suffer violence indirectly.
- 4.3.4 Carry out research into psychological violence: provide interview protocols and strategies to properly detect and identify violence, and create reliable and agreed indicators.
- 4.3.5 Include studies on the male population that does not resort to violence against women in order to better understand the factors leading to gender-based violence.
- 4.3.6 Start research processes to design new methods of tackling the fight against gender-based violence, and new therapeutic treatments.

## STRATEGY 5. Make violence against women visible

Gender-based violence forms include:\* physical violence, understood as any act or intentional or negligent act of force against a woman's body that results in, or is likely to result in, physical harm or suffering to women; *psychological violence*, understood as any behaviour or intentional act resulting in devaluation or suffering to women, through threats, humiliation, forced obedience or subservience, verbal coercion, insults, isolation or arbitrary deprivations of liberty; *sexual violence* and *sexual abuse* of women and minors, understood as any sexual act without consent or forced by the aggressor, including exhibition, observation, imposition through violence, intimidation, dominance or emotional manipulation, regardless of the aggressor being married to or having an affective or other type of relationship with the women or the minor; and financial violence, consisting of intentional and unjustified privation of resources needed for the physical or psychological well-being of the woman and her children, and limitation in the availability of her own and shared resources within the family or couple.

This gender-based violence is possible and has specific characteristics within: a) *the couple*, where it consists of physical, psychological, sexual and/or financial violence against women by their present or former spouse or by the person they are or have been linked to by similar affective bonds; b) *the family*, where it consists of physical, psychological, sexual and/or financial violence against women and girls, including forced marriages, by their family members and is determined by affective and family bonds; and c) *the workplace*, with two forms of violence: *harassment*, when there is an undesirable behaviour in connection with the gender of a person aimed at or resulting in harm against women's dignity and in the creation of a threatening, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment, and *sexual harassment*, understood as the situation created by any unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical behaviour of a sexual nature, that the aggressor is or ought to be aware of, aimed at or resulting in the violation of female dignity.

We also have to mention violence against women within *social* and *community* environments, including: sexual aggression, meaning the use of physical and sexual violence against women determined by the premeditated use of sex as a weapon to prove the possession of power over women and girls and to abuse this power; *sexual harassment*; *sexual traffic and exploitation of women and girls*; *female genital*

*tal mutilation*, including all the procedures resulting in a total or partial elimination of female genitals and/or injuries to female genital organs; *violence during armed conflicts*, including murder, rape, sexual slavery, pregnancy, abortion and sterilisation, deliberate infection of diseases, torture and sexual abuse; and *violence against sexual and reproductive women's rights*, such as selective abortions and sterilisations.

### Strategic and operational objectives

#### 5.1 Make visible every form of gender-based violence: rapes, sexual harassment at work, sexual harassment in the street and symbolic male chauvinist violence.

- 5.1.1 Carry out information and awareness campaigns targeted at formal and non-formal education.
- 5.1.2 Boost awareness of sexual harassment at work within the framework of the Corporate Equality Plan.
- 5.1.3 Increase awareness of different cases of violence against women taking place in the city.
- 5.1.4 Report any organisation, body or person that supports violence against women and thereby justifies its continuation.

#### 5.2 Increase the municipal political response to other forms of gender-based violence.

- 5.2.1 Facilitate response mechanisms to harassment situations in the city.
- 5.2.2 Support specialised resources for assistance and rehabilitation of women who have suffered sexual violence.
- 5.2.3 Promote specialised legal and psychological assistance for women who have suffered moral harassment at work due to their gender by creating a programme to work together with trade unions.

\* Bill on women's rights for the eradication of gender-based violence.

5.2.4 Monitor prevention measures and assistance in sexual harassment situations in Barcelona City Council.

5.2.5 Support bodies and associations working in the fields of prevention, assistance and the reporting of all situations of violence against women.

5.2.6 Optimise initiatives that are already being implemented as part of this strategy in the city of Barcelona.

5.2.7 Strengthen and extend legal advice services for women.

## Evaluate processes, results, services and their management regularly

### Barcelona City Council's Commitments:

- To create an initial diagnosis that establishes priorities in the implementation order of the working goals of the Plan, and its schedule.
  - To carry out a feedback and assessment, together with the relevant services and bodies, on the reports submitted annually from 2007.
  - To evaluate the level of application of the Municipal Plan Against Gender-Based Violence (2007-2009) every year with the commitment of submitting this evaluation report to the Permanent Women's Council, the implementation bodies for Women in districts, the Welfare, Education and Culture Commission and, if necessary, to the Barcelona City Council Plenary.
- To Analyse results, programmes and assistance models that have already been implemented in order to detect their strengths and weaknesses.
  - To analyse the impact of the gender-based violence assistance circuit, especially on the professionals and citizens affected, in order to detect functionalities and dysfunctionalities, secondary victimisation spaces and reasons for “losing women” during the services circuit. To evaluate the diagnosis of repeated or empty services and strategies to improve coordination and information; and also to find out best practices within the circuit.

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