

## CATALONIA

The autonomous community of Catalonia is the only Spanish community that has the competences on the penitentiary policy. Thus, the Catalan government is in charge of the legal execution of the legislation of penitentiary issues. Spain and Catalonia share the same legal framework but Catalonia has its own way of organising the penitentiary system. That is the reason why a difference between Catalan and Spanish in-prison programmes for both men perpetrators and women having suffered gender violence is made.

### Women's programmes

In Catalonia, currently there is one in-prison treatment programme for women victims of gender violence. The programme was initiated in the framework of the ALTRA project<sup>1</sup>.

The current programme is called 'Support programme for women inmates who have suffered gender violence'. It is a psychotherapy and a psycho educational programme. The main aim of the programme is to offer a space to support the imprisoned women who have suffered gender violence before entering into prison. The gender specific objectives of the programme are:

- To facilitate the identification of situations/relationships based on gender violence and provide resources to deal with it
- To facilitate awareness of how the gender system is related to unequal relationships that may result in gender violence and how this situation damages the rights of women
- To offer the possibility to work on the consequences of having suffered gender violence, in herself and her relationships, and to bring women near psychological support in order to promote her access to it, if needed, after release
- To restore the damaged feminine identity and to promote the strengthening of the self-esteem and empowerment

The programme is being developed in two different penitentiary centres. C.P. Brians (a male prison with a module for women) and Women's penitentiary centre of Barcelona (small centre only for women). The organisation in charge of the design and implementation of the programme is SURT. Women's Foundation. Private Foundation. The programme is funded by the Justice Department of the Catalan programme.

The programme has been running from October 2008 to July 2009 (the pilot project took place from January to October 2007 only in C.P. Brians). The programme will restart in October 2009.

Regarding the participants, the target group is constituted by women who have suffered gender violence before imprisonment. However, it is also open to any other woman who is interested in

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<sup>1</sup> More information on the project at: [www.surt.org/altra](http://www.surt.org/altra)

the issue. Thus, in this sense, it is also a prevention programme. Women's participation is voluntary based and its partaking does not influence directly the conditions of their sentence. The selection criteria to participate in the programme are the following ones:

- To be interested in participating in a programme for supporting women who have been victims of gender violence: Motivation is essential to take part in the programme
- Not to suffer serious psychopathologies that could interfere in the normal participation in the programme
- Not to suffer addictions that could be an obstacle for the proper running of the programme
- Acceptance of the basic rules of the programme

From October 2008 to July 2009, around 60 women<sup>2</sup> from both prisons participated in the programme.

Concerning the theoretical background<sup>3</sup>, the programme is based on a feminist and a multidisciplinary approach. The main theories that are taken into account are:

- Sociology and Social psychology: understanding the convenience of researching social phenomena using small units of analysis, and studying people's experiences in specific contexts.
- Feminist social analysis, psychosocial and communitarian approaches, which understand that violence against women is neither a private matter, nor a natural consequence of the relation between men and women. On the contrary, it is a historical process produced and reproduced by gender-based domination in social structures and consolidated by a patriarchal and andocentric culture. Violence against women is understood as a structural problem and an expression of social order based on the inequality between women and men. It is necessary to include psychoeducational and not only psychotherapeutic objectives .
- Psychological approaches, which are useful to help people to identify, understand and modify certain behaviours. In this sense, the following approaches are considered especially important in the design and implementation of the programmes:
  - Ecological model (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). This is a theoretical framework that defends an integral, systemic and naturalistic method to investigate

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<sup>2</sup> There are 10 women per group, and there are 3 groups per prison.

<sup>3</sup> You will find more information of each of these theoretical approaches in the ALTRA manual:  
[http://www.surt.org/altra/docs/manual\\_angles.pdf](http://www.surt.org/altra/docs/manual_angles.pdf)

psychological development. The model holds that the relationship between individuals and the environment is circular, so that different settings have an impact on the individual, and at the same time, the individual has an active influence on the setting in her/his different levels, establishing a dynamic and reciprocal transformation. The so-called 'ecological ambient' is a system structured in a series of 3 subsystems that are inclusive of one another:

- Macrosystem, meaning organisational ways, belief systems, lifestyle and general patterns in culture. In the framework of the in-prison programmes tackling gender violence, the macrosystem refers to the patriarchal system, the vertical belief system, the conception of power and obedience, gender stereotypes, etc.
- Exosystem, meaning the mediator institutions between the macro and the microsystem, such as the school, the church, the mass media, the labour market and the judicial and security bodies. These institutions reproduce the vertical and authoritarian power model, which legitimates violent behaviour and the second traumatisation at an individual level.
- Microsystem, which includes close relations to the individual. The basic structure is the family and its structural elements, beliefs, behaviours, conflict resolutions, authoritarianism, self-esteem, etc. The individual level includes four psychological dimensions: cognition, conduct, emotion and interaction.

In the design and implementation of the in-prison programmes, these 3 levels must be taken into consideration. It is essential that the in-prison interventions tackle gender-based violence taking into account the interrelation of all these levels.

- Narrative therapy: this theory takes into account the fact that each human being is born into a social world and therefore confronted with interpretations, explanations and expectations which serve as a framework for all further experiences. Since all these social processes are mediated by language, it becomes very important what a person is told about how the world is functioning. These *stories* or *narrations* give guidance for further life experiences and help us to interpret all events. The philosophical term '*deconstruction*' (Derrida, 1988; Foucault, 1972) was developed as an answer to the question of how to change such narrations.
- Theory of the link: it is based on the importance of the relationship established between a (woman) therapist and a woman who has suffered gender violence in order to tackle and address it.

- Cognitive behaviour theories: the essential idea of this approach is that a person's core beliefs contribute to *automatic thoughts* that pop up in everyday life in response to different situations.
- Client-centred therapy: it states that every individual has the resources for her/his personal development and growth. It is the role of the counsellor to provide the favourable conditions for the natural phenomenon of personal development to occur.

Specifically, gender perspective is taken into account both in the design and in the implementation of the programme. During the whole process, issues and concepts such as gender system and unequal relationships, gender stereotypes, patriarchal ways of behaving, and empowerment of women are taken into consideration.

In terms of methodology, the programme is being implemented through both individual and group sessions. There are 3 individual sessions: presentation, follow up and closing. Group sessions take place twice a week and they last one hour and a half. The professionals implementing the programme are 2 women with psychological and psychotherapist background.

The programme is divided in 3 different phases:

- Initial phase: In this first stage, the intention is for the participant to be able to use this space to express how she feels. The professional is going to make few interventions through active listening trying to fill them with confidence, understanding and support, while the healthy and affective bond with women and the professionals is being built. During this phase, the objectives to be fulfilled will be defined. If the goals are clearly defined, the process is more likely to succeed.
- Middle phase: It is the core of the programme and the intervention. During this part, several different aspects are introduced. It is during this phase that all the socio-educative dynamics take place. Parallel to this, the individual session helps to keep track in a more personal and detailed way on the whole process and on the participation of women into the programme.
- Final phase: The final phase of the process consists of a review and an evaluation of the programme. The idea is that the professional and the participant jointly state if the initial goals are achieved. At the end of this phase, the participant is given detailed feedback. The need and possibilities for further support or therapy are discussed. The post-programme evaluation questionnaires are given to the participants. The conclusion is carefully prepared to assure a gentle farewell.

The programme is thematically pre-structured by the professionals. However, both the content and the methodology to be used is flexible and it is adaptable to the group. The themes

addressed during the programme are: identity, self concept and self image, love and violence, cycle of violence, indicators of violence and security measures<sup>4</sup>.

All professionals intervening inside prison receive professional supervision at both personal and professional levels. This regular supervision is a space that the professionals have to share the experience and to tackle any risks that they might assume.

The programme is evaluated both by the professionals implementing it and also by the participants. The programme is evaluated through daily observation of the professionals and by standard test before and after the programme. There are two different questionnaires that are used to evaluate the programme, a pre/post test and then a global satisfaction questionnaire. The aspects that are taken into account in the evaluation are the following:

- In the individual sessions: Self image and self concept, autonomous/dependent decision making, locus of control, the pressure of other's opinions, degree of internalisation of relationship problems and physical symptoms.
- In the group sessions: acquisition of knowledge on the subjects of the group sessions such as gender stereotypes, topics about romantic love, indicators of violence and security measures, causes and types of violence, awareness of the specific resources for attending to women, etc.

At the end of the programme, a global satisfactory questionnaire evaluates issues such as the treatment received by professionals, the preparation of the leaders, programme's degree of adaptation to their needs and demands and the achieved results compared with the expected one's, the utility of the issues debated and the frequency and duration of the programme.

Up until now, there are no mechanism to monitor the participants after the programme. However, since the programme is going to be implemented again in the same prison, the professionals might have the opportunity to do so.

Because of the overrepresentation of women inmates who have been victims of gender violence, the implementation of this kind of programmes is crucial. This programme contributes to improve their living conditions and gives tools and resources to prevent them to be victims in future relationships.

Once this year's programme has been evaluated, the professionals implementing it have stated some actions of improvement. The concrete aspects to be improved are:

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<sup>4</sup> To get more detailed information regarding concrete topics addressed and group dynamics implemented and resources used, please check the publication of the ALTRA project: Takling gender violence in prison. Manual of in-prison programmes agasint gender based violence. SURT, Barcelona 2008. Available in the ALTRA project website: [www.surt.org/altra](http://www.surt.org/altra)

- There is the need to improve the dissemination and publicity of the realisation of the programme
- Regarding the definition of individual objective it is essential to clarify and concretely define the objectives to achieve. It is necessary to specify realistic goals. If not, it can lead to deception and discouragement
- With regards to the group sessions, it is necessary to revise the dynamics used and to modify those ones that did not work
- The duration of the programme is too short to achieve a significant internal transformation. It would be good to have the possibility to prolong the psychotherapy
- It is important to take into account that it is possible that there are some drop off. Therefore, it is important to select more than 10 women at the beginning in order to have an average of 10 women during the whole programme. It is essential to insist in the importance of having a regular assistance to the session in order to have better results both at individual but also at group level, especially regarding issues such as group dynamics and group cohesion
- Finally, it is also essential to improve the coordination between the prison staff and administration and the professionals implementing the programme

## Men's programmes

In Catalonia there is one programme for men inmates perpetrators of gender violence. The programme is currently being implemented in all Catalan prisons. The programme is called VIDO<sup>5</sup>.

The theoretical background of the programme is based in authors such as Pueyo and Redondo, Echeburua, Corsi and Dutton.

The programme started in the Penitentiary Centre for men in Barcelona in 2001 and it started in Quatre Camins prison in 2004. Nowadays, the programme is implemented in all Catalan prisons. The number of participants has raised exponentially: from 10 participants in 2001 to 500 in 2007.

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<sup>5</sup> In Catalana: VIDO, from Violència Domèstica (Domestic Violence)

The length of the programmes is 9 months. Nowadays, because of the increase of the demand and taking into account that the average of the length of the sentence is 8 months, they are developing intensive modules of 4 months. After the participation of the programme the inmates are derivated to specialised services on gender violence and psychosocial integration.

The team of professionals implementing the programmes is formed by a psychologist, a jurist, a social educator and a social worker.

The selection criteria to participate in the programme are the following ones:

- To not suffer serious psychopathologies that could interfere in the normal participation in the programme
- To have passed more than  $\frac{3}{4}$  or  $\frac{2}{3}$  parts of the sentence
- To be an inmate classified under the 2nd degree of treatment
- To be adapted to the prison daily life
- To accept the basic rules of the programme

The programme is divided in different phases:

1. Initial interview to check the motivation of the person to participate in the programme
2. Evaluation of the inmate regarding his personality, his behaviour and his emotions at an individual level
3. Cognitive-behavioural group dynamics
4. Transfer to specialised centres on gender violence and psychosocial integration
5. Progressive reinsertion to the society
6. Monitoring of the probation period

During the group dynamics the participants work on several topics. One of the aims of the programme is to make men take responsibility for their violent behaviour. Therefore, during the group dynamics professionals and participants work in order to make men take responsibility for their violent behaviour. Another issues addressed during the group dynamics are gender stereotypes, values and beliefs. They also work on emotional self control to know one's emotions and to know how to control them. And on empathy, in order to learn how to act and how to think taking into account other's necessities. They also deal with issues related to conflict resolution and social abilities working on communication techniques and mediation. Finally they work on the prevention of relapse.

The individual sessions are used to reinforce aspects worked during the group dynamics, to deal with personal issues and to motivate the inmate to keep participating in the programme.

One of the tools used during the programmes is the diagnostic method SARA. This tool aims at evaluating the risk on relapse regarding violent behaviour. It is a continuous evaluation that starts before the trial and ends at the end of the sentence.

Regarding inmates participation in the programme it is important to state that it has been raising. As said before the number of inmates who participate in the programmes has been increasing each year. The statistics show that in 2006 there were 293 men participating. The number of participants in 2009 has doubled being 587.

**Number of inmates participating in programmes on gender violence<sup>6</sup>**

Year	2006	2007	2008	2009
Number of inmates	293	501	519	587

During the whole programme both individual and group sessions are evaluated. All the issues evaluated through out the programme are the followings:

- Interiorization of the contents of the programme
- Inmate's motivation and commitment for change
- Changes on inmate's personality and way of behaving
- Self control capacity
- Level of dependence from inmate's couple and level of social isolation
- Situation regarding associated problems such as alcoholism

Some of the problems detected during the implementation of the programmes have to do with language issues since there is a proportion of inmates who do not understand either Catalan or Spanish. Another problem is the fact that the demand has increased a lot and that the professionals have too many tasks to carry out. This leads to a loss of quality of the services provided. The control of drug-taking is another difficulty detected when implementing the

<sup>6</sup> <http://www20.gencat.cat/portal/site/Justicia/menuitem.cc15117be9e6a1b6bd6b6410b0c0e1a0/?vgnextoid=d3ecf31f87203110VgnVCM1000008d0c1e0aRCD&vgnnextchannel=d3ecf31f87203110VgnVCM1000008d0c1e0aRCD&vgnextfmt=default>



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programmes. Finally, as said before, the average of the length of the sentences is 8 month and in the cases that is less it is difficult to see changes and evolution of the inmate.