



Violence against women: education as prevention strategy

The *Differenza Donna* Association was founded in Rome in 1989 by a group of women from different professions who were involved in the feminist movement and who believed that permanent sociocultural change could be achieved through gender power relations: understanding, fighting, preventing and eliminating male violence against women.

From the outset, the women of *Differenza Donna* have believed that the discrimination, isolation and suppression of women was a widespread, serious and complex phenomenon which required analysis and specific practical action to bring about change. Alongside the work of our Antiviolence Centres, the Association has promoted education in the area of gender and of violence against women as a denial of human rights as well as training activities with different professional associations, local authorities, institutions, schools and universities.

Differenza Donna has always believed that there needs to be an individual and collective process of awareness-raising of gender discrimination and violence by identifying the gender stereotypes and prejudices that hinder progress while at the same time providing the professionals in our antiviolence network who interact with female and child victims of gender-based violence with the tools for understanding situations of potential and actual violence.

The Association has developed specialized training courses for those working in legal services, magistrates, members of the armed forces and the police force, psychologists, health operators, social workers and members of associations relating to women's issues, as well as schools and educational institutions of all kinds.

The aims of *Differenza Donna* are as follows:

1. To promote awareness of the gender stereotypes and prejudices that hinder societal progress and legitimize and reinforce violence and discrimination against women;
2. To guarantee the effectiveness of protective procedures in the judicial, health and social services through the prevention of the exposure of women and children to further violence (secondary victimization) by increasing skills in the recognition and management of violence;

We believe that it is fundamental to share experiences, ideas and talking points because our educational aims cannot be achieved without a profound understanding of how the structures of gender discrimination influence the lives of all women and men.

Sabrina Frasca

Pedagogist