THE CONDITION OF GIRLS
AND YOUNG WOMEN IN THE WORLD - 2013

by Terre des Hommes Italy Foundation
On the occasion of the **International Day of the Girl Child**, introduced by the **UN** in 2012 and celebrated yearly on 11 October, **Terre des Hommes** launches again the **“Indifesa” Campaign**. This initiative aims at safeguarding education, health, protection from violence, discrimination and abuse for girls worldwide.

With this important **awareness raising campaign**, Terre des Hommes places the protection of girls’ rights worldwide at the core of its interventions. It commits itself to defend their right to life, freedom, education, equality, and protection. It will achieve this starting from concrete field interventions, leading to tangible results in breaking the poverty cycle and offering better opportunities to thousands of girls and young women globally.

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Cover photo: ©Alberto Molinari
Forward

What exactly do we mean when we speak about girls? This is my starting point, as recent years have witnessed a broadening of the divide between those who have and those who have not, between those born in a safe crib and those who must fight from the start for their survival. One cannot count how many girls worldwide are mutilated. Infanticide to avoid female daughters is an on-going practice, despite the many initiatives to contrast it. Precocious marriage, abuse, prostitution, exploitation of child labour. Poverty. In the case of girls, plagues such as these swell like things do under a magnifying glass.

When we look beyond our borders, at the global rather than the local, Italy appears a lucky country. In some respects it is indeed so, but it is also not so. Italy is socially and culturally receding into a «Poor country».

Right to freedom, equality, education and health are under threat. The reasons lie both in the crisis, and in weak or absent political choices, the price of which is particularly felt in the South and in socially deprived areas. Means are scarce, political and civil responsibility is even scarcer.

I continue to believe that institutions must protect the rights of minors in all possible ways. This means also contrasting all forms of sexist discrimination, eradicating the weeds of a male-centred and chauvinist culture. It means giving real “equal opportunities” from the beginning, investing in schooling, in profound civic and human education.

I wish I may no longer have to read of violence against girls and young women in Italy. I wish for greater cooperation between countries and organisations to contrast the many «crimes against children».

Vincenzo Spadafora
National Guarantor for children and young people
Introduction

Her name was Zeina, she was fifteen and indeed very pretty. There she was, locked up in the centre for minors in conflict with the law in Nouakchott, Mauritania, her large eyes full of suffering. She did not trust anyone; in fact she did not even speak to anyone. She spent the whole day curled up on her camp bed, fiddling with the hem of the sun-faded red veil of her traditional Mauritanian dress. She ate very little and spoke only in monosyllables with her roommates, despite all the efforts of the social worker and teacher. In short, she made the minimum necessary effort to survive in the centre. She was distracted, aloof, and hopeless: this is how I saw her for the first time. It had been already longer than three weeks since the judge had condemned her to four years of detention for aggravated assault and, because she was a minor, had sent her to the centre.

I had heard her story already and, alas, it was not very different from the stories of many girls like her: at the age of thirteen, her mother had sent her from the village to live with relatives in the city. She thought that, for such a pretty daughter, this would have been better than living amidst goats and camels. As a compensation for her studies, she would have helped out her aunt with her large family. At more or less thirteen, the girl was repeatedly raped first by her uncle, then her older cousins, until one day she rebelled and wounded one of her aggressors with a kitchen knife. Justice was rough and overlooked the reason for her reaction: the beautiful Zeina was condemned. The lawyers of the centre would later ask for a review of her trial and, after two years of detention, Zeina would be free again: it had been self-defence.

I met her several times during her stay at the centre, but it is the last one that I remember. I walked with the director into the so-called ‘multi-functional’ room for educational and play activities. Zeina gave me a cautious look, from the top of my head to the tips of my toes. It was an inquisitive look that lingered particularly on the painted red nails of my hands. I asked her if she liked my varnish and whether she would have liked a bottle. She said that yes, she did like it, but if I really wanted to give her a present she would have preferred some shea butter for her dry and tangled hair. We spoke at last. She was about to leave. She was calm and quiet, as always, but no longer hopeless. With a light in her eyes she said: “I want to be a secretary. Have you seen my good marks? I can do it. Maybe I will marry, but no one will touch me again unless I wish.” Then she took my hand and whispered: “I know, now, what life is. I didn’t before …” This report is dedicated to Zeina and to other girls like her. She speaks for all of them.

*Donatella Vergari,* Secretary General of Terre des Hommes Foundation Italy
Gender disparity and violence: an important topic for discussion

La 27ora (the 27th hour) is a female blog devoted to the stories and ideas of women who try striking a balance between work (in an office or at home), family and self. The name reflects the findings of a research, according to which a woman’s day in Italy is 27 hours long, and the line separating public and private sphere is increasingly fuzzy and flexible.

And there is more. La 27 ora is a section of the Corriere della Sera. It was started two years ago and presents reports about violence and gender disparity. Some of this work has been collected in the book on domestic violence Questo non è amore [This is not love], published by Marsilio. These reports and the testimonies of women clearly show that femicide is just the tip of the iceberg and hides a much bigger problem: a society that still tends to view women as objects and as the property of someone else.

Violence against women – whichever their cultural background – is the result of a cultural attitude that cannot come to terms with equality. This is what emerges from the thousands of comments that are posted every day on our blog. It emerges from the testimonies – anonymous and not – given by readers.

Violence against women is deeply rooted in our society. Often, too often, being the victim of abuse is accompanied by guilt or shame. Increasingly, women’s bodies are seen as a piece of meat that can be controlled and has no self-determination.

These stereotypes are constructed during puberty and – as established by the Istanbul Convention – need addressing with prevention measures in schools. These flawed assumptions have repercussions also on the economic and working conditions of women. For these reasons, we believe that it is important to adhere to the international day of the girl child and to Terre des Hommes’ campaign InDifesa. It is important for girls in Italy and beyond. It helps them grow up aware of their rights and worth, so that they may never find themselves in the role of victims.

La 27ora - Corriere della Sera
Chapter on Infanticide, selective abortion

(box)
“Sudha, why is the girl screaming?” Sudha signals not to disturb, to let the girl unburden. Then she tells that ten year old Kanshika arrived at the centre on her own to let out all her anger. “She is angry with us for having saved her after birth, when her mother was about to kill her. She says that her life is worse than a ‘non-life,’ because her father doesn’t want her, doesn’t feed her, doesn’t buy her books and shoes, treats her worse than the goat, tells her she is worth less than the goat ... Sometimes he ties her up. To his first daughter, instead, he gives precious bangles and saris. He hates her because he didn’t succeed in getting rid of her and now, with two daughters and not one son, he is the laughingstock of the village ... What’s worse, the girl is a genius at school and her disappearance would not go unnoticed.” Kanshika should have died. Sudha was the one to save her. She is responsible for Terre des Hommes’ small but brave centre “Rescuing Female Babies” in the Salem district, one of the world’s major textile centres in the State of Tamil Nadu, in the most Southern part of India, one of the most affected by girl infanticide. Kanshika should have died as has happened to millions of baby girls: ten million girls have been killed in twenty years in India. The country’s GDP shows without doubt that it is a colossal economic power. However other figures, such as those in the latest census – 905 girls born for every thousand boys – indicate that it is the worst place in the world for a girl to be born. According to a recent and disturbing research by the University of Toronto, selective abortions (12 million in 25 years) “increase with the growth of economic and professional assertion of Indian women.” From the article by Marzio G. Mian published in Io Donna, 5 Nov. 2012)

India: one million girls missing

Every year in India one million girls goes ‘missing’: this is the picture painted in a research1 published at the end of 2012 by the Central Statistical Organisation of India. The report analysed oscillations in the sex ratio (i.e. the proportion between the two sexes) among various population age groups.

In the decade 2001-2011 the percentage of children on the total population decreased and this decline is greater for girls in the age group 0-6 years. While the sex ration on the total population is showing progress2, in that particular age group the trend is descending and this is an alarming fact. In absolute terms, Indian girls between 0 and 6 were 78.83 million in 2001, whereas in 2011 they were 75.84 million. Boys went from 85.01 million in 2001 to 82.95 million in 2011. The research comments that “[w]hile the size of child population in the age group (0-6 years) is declining with decline in the share of children in the total population, the share of girls of 0-6 years is declining faster than that of boys of 0-6 years. This process has led to missing of nearly 3 million girl children compared to 2 million missing boy children in 2011, compared to 2001. There are now 48 fewer girls per 1,000 boys than there were in 1981.” The decline in child sex ratio is particularly significant in rural areas. In the ten years between 2001 and 2011 the decrease in these areas is three times larger than in cities. This suggests that infanticide and selective abortion, the latter probably more widely resorted to in cities, are far from

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1“Children in India” http://mospi.nic.in/mospi_new/upload/Children_in_India_2012.pdf
2In the sense of a restored equilibrium between the number of men and women: between 1991 and 2011 women in India have increased from 927 to 940 for every 1,000 men.
being abandoned practices.

**How many girls in India between 0 and 6?**
1991: 945 girls for every 1,000 boys (935 in cities – 948 in rural areas)
2001: 927 (906 in cities – 933 in rural areas)
2011: 914 (902 in cities – 919 in rural areas)

Source: Census, Office of the Registrar General of India

Direct confirmation of this phenomenon comes from World Health Organisation data on infant mortality below the age of 5: only in Southern Asia is mortality higher for girls than for boys. In 2011, for every 1,000 births, 63 girls died against 61 boys. Globally, figures indicate 53 boys against 50 girls. It is most likely that girls are given less care and/or feeding compared to boys and that, despite their genetic and biological advantages, this leads to a higher number of deaths among girls.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Mortality 0-6 years (per 1,000 live births)</th>
<th>1990</th>
<th>2011</th>
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<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>boys</td>
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<td>Sub-Saharan Africa</td>
<td>171</td>
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<td>Eastern and Southern Africa</td>
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<td>West and Central Africa</td>
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<td>East Asia and Pacific</td>
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<td>Central and Eastern Europe</td>
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<td>World</td>
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The Unicef report “Improving Child Nutrition: The achievable imperative for global progress” (April 2013) also records a higher percentage in India of underweight girls (43%) compared to boys (42%) in the age group 0-5.

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Project against infanticide, Terre des Hommes Core Trust, partner of Terre des Hommes Foundation Italy
Founded in 1994 by Ramu Chezhian (photo)

Since 1998:
- Almost 7,000 pregnancies supervised,
- 1,558 baby girls saved, 90% of which remained with their families, 10% were adopted in 72 Tamil Nadu villages, Salem district
- The project currently provides direct support to 173 girls (medical care, education, nutrition)
- Current activities:
  o monitoring of families ‘at risk of infanticide’
  o awareness raising in villages
  o educational support for saved girls
  o assistance for the start-up of economic activities for their families

Please note: It is possible to sponsor girls who have been saved from infanticide.
Malnutrition and mother-and-child mortality

Child malnutrition as the outcome of easily preventable illnesses worldwide is shrinking. Malnutrition and its associated dysfunctions, nonetheless, remain the cause of 45% of the 3 million deaths affecting children under the age of 5 each year. This enormous amount of deaths could be significantly reduced if mothers had access, from childhood, to adequate nutrition. Underweight girls have significantly higher chances of becoming mothers when they have insufficient body mass index and when they suffer from lack of essential minerals such as iron and calcium. Globally, at least 16 million girls and adolescents become mothers before turning 19. In some regions, such as Sub-Saharan Africa, over 50% of babies are born to adolescent mothers.

As highlighted by the World Health Organisation, mothers suffering from anaemia are likely to give birth to underweight infants. According to a recent report published in The Lancet, insufficient foetal development causes the death of 800,000 babies within a month of their birth every year, accounting for over one third of all preterm births. When they survive, these babies are at greater risk of suffering from stunting in the first two years of life if the mother is underweight and cannot feed them adequately.

Each year, 165 million children worldwide (especially in Sub-Saharan Africa and South-East Asia) suffer from stunting, which severely compromises their intellectual and growth capacities. This issue is relevant not only for its ‘humanitarian’ impact: as underlined in The Lancet, malnutrition affects the economic progress of a nation by at least 8% because of losses in terms of direct productivity, in addition to losses due to poverty and low levels of education. Other experts have demonstrated that 1 dollar invested in reducing chronic malnutrition can generate a return of 30 dollars thanks to decline in health costs and better educational services.

The fight against malnutrition and anaemia, among girls in particular, has to be a priority of the international community. It contributes to eradicating infant mortality and containing one of the most insidious dynamics of underdevelopment: the inter-generational transmission of mothers’ vulnerabilities to their children. In 2012, the World Health Assembly agreed upon 6 Global nutrition Goals to be achieved by 2025, among which halving the incidence of anaemia among girls and women in fertile age.

Bangladesh
Disparities in feeding
Children up to 5 years affected by stunting
Boys 41%
Girls 42%
Urban areas 36%
Rural areas 43%

Underweight children
Boys 34%
Girls 39%
Urban areas 28%

6 Reduced growth rate resulting from chronic malnutrition during the most important period for the development of a child (up to 13 years).
Rural areas 39%

Children up to 5 years affected by acute malnutrition (wasting)
Boys 16%
Girls 15%
Urban areas 14%
Rural areas 16%

Women with low body mass index: 24%
Urban areas 14%
Rural areas 28%

Pre-school girls affected by anaemia: 51%

(Source: Unicef7)

Nutrition and health of mothers in Bangladesh

Women giving birth before their 18th year of age 40%
Mother mortality rate (per 100,000 births) 240
Risk of dying during childbirth 1 in 170
Incidence of anaemia among non-pregnant women 40%

(Source: Unicef8)

India
Disparities in feeding
Children up to 5 years affected by stunting
Boys 48%
Girls 48%
Urban areas 40%
Rural areas 51%

Underweight children
Boys 42%
Girls 43%
Urban areas 33%
Rural areas 46%

Children up to 5 years affected by acute malnutrition (wasting)
Boys 21%
Girls 19%
Urban areas 17%
Rural areas 21%

Pre-school girls affected by anaemia: 70%


8 Ibidem.
Women with low body mass index: 36%
Urban areas 25%
Rural areas 41%

(Source: Unicef⁹)

Nutrition and health of mothers in India

Women giving birth before their 18th year of age 22%
Mother mortality rate (per 100,000 births) 200
Risk of dying during childbirth 1 in 170
Incidence of anaemia among non-pregnant women 53%
(Source: Unicef¹⁰)

¹⁰ Ibidem.
Female genital mutilations: 125 million victims worldwide

The practice of female genital cutting/mutilation is not only a severe violation of human rights, but also one of the most obvious manifestations of gender inequality. It is rooted in cultural biases that consider this a necessary step in raising and protecting a girl and, often, also in making of her a suitable bride.

The most recent research on this practice prepared by Unicef, “Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting: A statistical overview and exploration of the dynamics of change”¹¹, finds that 125 million girls and women globally have suffered some form of genital mutilation, in most cases before turning 5. In the coming ten years – according to Unicef – 30 million girls risk undergoing this practice, unless major changes are instilled both in the social protection system for girls, and in societies where these mutilations are widespread. Currently, the largest number of mutilated girls and women concentrates in 29 nations (mainly in Africa and the Middle East). Somalia, Egypt, Guinea and Djibouti, where over 90% of girls are mutilated, occupy the lead positions.

(Infographic %, source Unicef)

How many women are victims of female genital mutilations (FGM)?

On 20 December 2012, the **General Assembly of the United Nations** unanimously approved a **resolution** for the intensification of global efforts to eradicate female genital mutilations. This resolution invites individual countries to condemn all practices inflicted to girls and women. It encourages implementing all necessary measures, including the adoption of specific laws, the launching of awareness campaigns, and the allocation of sufficient funds for protection measures against this form of violence. **Some States** such as Cameroon, the Gambia, Liberia, Mali and Sierra Leone, where these practices are a widespread tradition, **have no legislation** in this domain. The resolution, moreover, requests all countries to offer special measures of assistance to women victims of FGM or at risk of becoming victims, including refugee and migrant women. This however is still not enough. It is essential for change to occur also within local communities and families. As highlighted by the Unicef report “education can play a fundamental role in favouring social change. The higher the level of mothers’ education, the lower the risk that their daughters are cut; the higher the levels of girls’ school attendance, the easier it is for them to seek confrontation with people who refuse this practice. What clearly emerges from the report is that **legislation** alone is insufficient, but that the joint effort is needed of all actors (Governments, Non-Governmental Organisations and local communities) to **promote positive social change** through targeted policies and programmes for the eradication of mutilations and all other forms of violence against children that are the direct or indirect outcome of social norms.”

Some results have been already achieved. In countries like Kenya and Tanzania, the proportion of girls who have undergone mutilation is almost one third compared to women aged 45, whereas in Benin, Central African Republic, Iraq, Liberia and Nigeria it is half.

Social expectations are also changing. According to the same report, not only most women and girls are against this practice, but a significant number of men and boys also refuse it. This trend has been observed in particular in Chad, Guinea and Sierra Leone.

![Image of bar chart showing the percentage of girls aged 15 to 19 years and women aged 45 to 49 years who have undergone FGM/C in various countries.](image-url)
Terre des Hommes and female genital mutilation:
The first appeal at the international conference in Geneva in 1977

On 25 April 1977, two years before female genital mutilation was put on the agenda of the World Health Organisation during the so-called “Khartoum Seminar” (1979) and before Unicef issued its first declaration against this practice, founder of Terre des Hommes Edmond Kaiser held a press conference at the Intercontinental Hotel in Geneva denouncing to the general public female genital mutilation as a cruel and unacceptable violation of the human rights of girls and young women. On this occasion, he appealed to the UN and WHO that had until then considered this practice part of the tradition and culture of some countries, without openly denouncing it. The same year, Terre des Hommes issued two information booklets on this issue, which contributed to disseminate knowledge about female mutilation and capture the interest of international institutions. In 1980, Kaiser founded Sentinelles, an organisation devoted to fighting against FGM.

(box)
This is about children who are hurt, who we hurt children raped by the worst kind of rape in their present and in their future. With a knife, a stone, a razor blade, a piece of glass, in a holiday atmosphere, or one of terror, or even in a hospital, millions of babies, girls and adolescents are sexually mutilated. In 1977 we broke this taboo wide open. In this never-ending fight, the girls are the winners. Irreversibly. The bush fire that we have lit will not go out. Edmond Kaiser
THE MALALA EFFECT

“I want to be a teacher.” “And I Ministry for Education.” “I want to be the next Ban Ki-moon.” It was November 2012 and these were the dreams and projects of girls travelling from different developing countries to participate in the international summit on education in Doha. “One of you should become Minister of Finance” was the advice to them of UN Special Envoy for Global Education Gordon Brown, aware of scant government funds and limited international aid. This was the start of the Malala effect.

Malala, the sixteen year old Pakistani girl who was punished with a bullet to the head for having opposed the Taliban ban on education for girls and the bombings of girl schools in the Swat valley, was being cared for in a hospital in England. She needed to regain strength, but she had survived with no cerebral damage. Her challenge against the Taliban, her victory over death, her clear voice in the defence of right to education inspired millions of people. The UN immediately defined Malala a heroin and a symbol, “the bravest girl in the world,” and renewed its commitment to ensure universal primary education by 2015, whilst important initiatives were launched in her name in Pakistan and elsewhere. “Time” magazine nominated her among the people of the year; Angelina Jolie donated 200,000 dollars to the “Malala Fund” for education; and the girl was nominated for the Nobel Peace prize.

For some, it became clear only then how big the obstacles are preventing children, especially girls, from going to school. In becoming a symbol, Malala drew global attention on the discrimination in their right to education faced by girls – first and foremost by her school mates, who were too afraid to go out of school and celebrate the Malala Day established by the United Nations. She told this herself in her first public speech, at the UN, on 12 July, day of her sixteenth birthday. “Brothers and sisters – she explained – today I am focusing on women’s rights and girls’ education because they are suffering the most.” Data confirm this: one in four, in developing countries, does not finish primary education (1 in 6 among boys) and two thirds of the 774 million illiterate adults worldwide are women. Globally, the number of non-schooled girls has halved since 2000, but progress has slowed down in recent years and the situation in countries like Pakistan and Yemen has even worsened. Alongside gender, other factors affecting access to school are poverty and area (urban or rural) of residence: Malala’s Pakistan, for instance, is one of the 12 Countries of the world in which at least half of the poorest girls have never set foot in school.

Clearly, six weeks or six months of enthusiasm will not change the situation. Thanks to Malala, however, there is new hope. At the UN, on 12 July, almost one year after the attempt on her life, the sixteen year old explained: “There was a time when women social activists asked men to stand up for their rights, but this time we will do it by ourselves. I am not telling men to step away from speaking for women’s rights. Rather, I am focusing on women to be independent to fight for themselves.” On this occasion, an American activist who works in Africa noted that – compared to last year – many people on the continent are much more aware and ask: “How can I help?” It’s the Malala effect.

No access to education

Still too few girls attend schools globally. The latest Unesco report on gender disparities in education\textsuperscript{12} shows that recent positive results of some countries are outweighed by the clear difficulties faced daily by millions of girls, adolescents and young women who have no access to primary and secondary education, which could free them from a future of discrimination and poverty.

First, the positive news. According to Unesco, the number of girls and young women not attending school between 1999 and 2010 decreased by more than one third. In the same period, the number of countries in which girls live in extremely disadvantaged conditions halved, dropping from 33 to 17 nations worldwide.

Despite this progress, much still needs to be done. 68 countries have not yet reached gender equality in primary education; in 60 of these, girls are the ones to be disadvantaged. Gender disparities are worsened by income disparities: in most of the poorest developing countries, girls are more often excluded from primary education.

Some countries suffer from huge gender disparities. In Pakistan, over 3 million girls are left out of primary school. In Afghanistan, despite significant progress, for every 10 boys there are only 7 girls in school.

Globally, of the 60.7 million children who have no access to primary education, 32.1 million are girls.

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\caption{Almost one in two out-of-school children are expected never to enrol}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{12} “Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2012: Youth and Skill, Putting Education to Work.”
As far as secondary school is concerned, gender equality has not been reached in 97 countries. In 43 of these, girls are in a disadvantaged position. In many countries with medium-high income rates per capita, it is boys rather than girls who do not attend secondary education. Globally and in total, 70.6 million youths do not go to secondary school, 34.2 million of whom are girls.

The exclusion of girls and young women from school has effects especially in the long term: of 775 million illiterate adults, 2/3 are women. In developing countries, 116 million girls aged between 15 and 24 have not completed primary education and can only hope for low skilled jobs. This adds discrimination to discrimination, because these jobs are also badly protected or invisible, as in the case of domestic work.

Lastly, in many countries of the world, female workers with the same level of education are paid less than their male colleagues.

Terre des Hommes has always thought of school as a basic need, just like water and food: a fundamental right that we all need to ensure for every child in the world. Education is the most important incentive for development, starting from girls. Terre des Hommes directly invests 32.6% of its funds in projects that have a focus on education and girls as preferred beneficiaries. 54% of sponsored children are girls.
**Girl workers and domestic exploitation**

Popular views that education is of lesser importance for girls stems from the assumption that their time is better spent undertaking domestic chores in preparation for marriage and motherhood. “The inequalities in access to education mean that by the time girls reach the minimum legal age of employment many are already at a distinct social and economic disadvantage,” according to the latest International Labour Organisation report “Ending Child Labour in domestic work.”

Domestic work is a prominently female sphere of work. The report estimates that 15.5 million minors are employed as domestic workers in homes that are not their own. At least 10.5 million of these have not reached the minimum legal age, they work for too long daily hours, or they undertake chores that are too heavy for them and put their health at risk, or again they work in conditions of veritable slavery. Forced labour situations because of debt incurred by the family is not an exception. Among such cases, 7.5 million girls and young women are forced into domestic work by lack of alternative options.

**Infographic:**
Domestic workers:
15.5 million boys and girls globally

- 11.3 million are girls
- 2.1 million are girls aged 5-11
- 2.8 million are girls aged 12-15

7.5 million girls and young women are domestic workers in unacceptable conditions
5.8 million girls and young women domestic workers undertake dangerous chores

**Figure:** Domestic slaves: % per age group and gender (Source: ILO)

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International protection for domestic workers

On 5 September 2013 an important tool for the international protection of female and male domestic workers will enter into force: Convention 189, followed by Recommendation 201. Adopted by delegates from governments, employer associations and trade unions attending the 100th Annual Conference of the International Labour Organisation in 2011, the new ILO regulations establish that domestic workers who care for families and their homes are eligible for the same fundamental rights that are recognised to other workers. This means reasonable working hours, a weekly break of at least 24 consecutive hours, a limit to payments allowed in kind, clear information about the terms and conditions of employment, as well as respect for the fundamental rights of workers, including freedom of association and right to collective labour agreements.

These two legislative tools introduce special measures for the protection of those workers who, because of their young age, nationality or living conditions, may be exposed to additional risks compared to their peers. At the moment of writing (July 2013), 10 states have ratified the convention: Uruguay, the Philippines, Mauritius, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Bolivia, Italy (that ratified it on 22 January 2013), Colombia, Germany and South Africa.

The Peruvian case

In a society like Peru, still marked by its colonial past, domestic work has traditionally been a field in which domination and discrimination practices are played out on the basis of gender, class and ethnicity. Scorn for domestic work and for those who practice it is still accepted if not even justified on the basis of popular assumptions about the inferiority of indigenous people. The latter are treated as class B citizens and it is therefore believed that they, and especially their women and children, should be exploited as servants. Cases of segregation, male chauvinism and racism within the domestic sphere are widespread. Despite the country's extremely high economic growth rate, ‘padrinazgo’ is still found in Peru. This pre-capitalist institution of colonial origin was used to ensure unpaid child labour in the domestic sphere. Padrinazgo is widely diffused in cities and villages, where it often represents the only opportunity for social mobility and improvement in the quality of life for peasant and indigenous boys and especially girls. Entrusting one's daughter to a family in the city is therefore a largely accepted practice. Padrinazgo offers a girl the opportunity, which is however almost invariably denied, to access better quality food, education, a more comfortable life, and the illusion of becoming part of the modern urban world. The relationships between godfather/godmother and goddaughter (ahijada) are often characterised by racist prejudice and profound despise. Mistreatment, humiliations, violence and sexual abuse are common, and the young domestic servants are paid very little, particularly in relation to their long daily working hours.

Domestic work is the third type of labour that most greatly sees children involved. It follows agricultural work and help in family-run activities (informal trade, small shops, etc.). It is estimated that it employs at least 120-150,000 children and adolescents, 80% of whom are girls. In the region of Cusco alone almost 10,000 girls and young women are thought to be involved in domestic work in conditions close to slavery.

Peruvian law allows domestic work only after the age of 14, when authorised, and for no more than 4 hours per day (24 hours/week). However, the phenomenon of girl domestic slaves is largely invisible and testimonies from centres such as the one in Yanapanakusun reveal that it is still an ongoing dramatic reality.

Peru has not yet (as of 25 July 2013) ratified UN Convention 189 and Recommendation 201 ensuring dignified labour conditions for domestic workers.

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Box The story of Maria Luisa

I come from Puyca, a village in the region of Cusco, where I was born on 20 December 1996. My father is a peasant and, from time to time, when he has a chance, he also works as a labourer in road construction. Money has never been much in our home.

After my sister was born, who is 3 years younger than me, my mother had a strong preference for her. She was her sweetheart and I suffered from this terribly. They told me it was because I was born badly, I didn’t walk properly; my mother was ashamed of me. My father defended me and always ended up fighting with my mother.

When I was 9 my mother became ill, so I was sent to my grandmother. Then my mother died and I returned home and managed to study until I was 13, when my father entrusted me to a woman in our village, who said she would take me to Cusco to work in her daughter’s home. She made him lots of promises: I would have studied; she would have treated me like a daughter; etc. At first my mistress treated me well, but I knew it wouldn’t last, because I had spoken with a girl who used to work for her and who had run away because she was ill-treated.

One month later, things started looking grim. The woman didn’t want me to go to school and she had fights with her husband. I cried so much that they eventually decided to send me to school, but because they
didn’t want to pay fees they had to find a cheap school. When my father came to visit me, the woman always told him that I was out; she didn’t allow us to meet. I used to watch him leave from the window and couldn’t embrace him. She sent me to school when it pleased her, I was often absent. She started hitting me, because she said I was too slow in taking care of the house chores. The truth was that my foot hurt and I limped. One day she hit me hard because one of her clothes had not been washed well and I had tried to explain that it had been washed by her sister-in-law, not by me. She became furious, started hitting and insulting me; she locked me in the bathroom for two days with no food. I stayed with her for 8 months, I was too afraid to run away, until one day I went to school with a bleeding ear because my mistress had pulled it so hard. My classmates noticed and told one of the teachers, who was in contact with the Yanapanakusun centre offering assistance to girls and young women who are exploited as domestic workers. I was there the same evening, but I did not sleep that night. I was afraid that the woman would come and fetch me and hit me again because I had told how I was treated. The following day they took me to the Police and we filed a report for ill-treatment. Since then I have remained at the centre, my father was informed and came to see me. He even went to the woman and claimed compensation for all the months I had worked, but she denied everything and gave him just a few coins. My sister is also living at the centre now, as she was left alone when my father worked far from home.

I have meanwhile gone back to school and got my first diploma. The most important thing, though, is that I saw a doctor for the first time. He looked at my hip and immediately said that it was a bilateral dysplasia and that I urgently needed surgery or there was a risk of me ending up in a wheelchair. The Yanapanakusun centre found a way of signing me up with the National Health Service and arranged for me to be taken to the city of Arequipa, where I spent one year in hospital and had three hip operations. Someone from the centre would often come and see me, so that I didn’t feel lonely, and I carried on studying. I also made some friends in the hospital.

Now I am better, I use orthopaedic shoes and I do physiotherapy to walk better. I would like to study physiotherapy and help children with the same problems that I had. I would like to say to all families in difficulty not to send their girls to become domestic workers in other people’s homes, even if they tell you that they will treat them well: they are lying and the girls will suffer from solitude and isolation.

I am happy to have known the Yanapanakusun centre and the friends from Terre des Hommes who fund the project for assistance and prevention of domestic slavery. I learned what my rights I, I am no longer afraid.

I am now 16 and just want to be happy.

Maria Luisa
Project against domestic work exploitation of the Yanapanakusun Centre in Cusco, partner of Terre des Hommes Foundation Italy

Founded in 1992 by Vittoria Savio (photo)

Since 1992:
- Almost 3,000 girls offered shelter in the hostel
- Interventions for the prevention of child exploitation in 7 villages of the Huancarani district and in 15 of the Accha and Omacha districts
- The project currently supports 2,500 children and more than 1,500 families.
- 250 children are supported through Terre des Hommes’ child sponsorship

- Current activities:
  - support for pre-school, primary and secondary education
  - awareness raising in villages on child rights, child labour, health
  - educational support for girls saved from exploitation
  - assistance for the start-up of economic activities for their families
  - preparation of the radio programme “Sonq Ykipi t’ikarisonchis” (in your heart we shall blossom) in Quechua/Spanish to disseminate the rights of girl domestic workers and children

Please note: It is possible to sponsor girls in Cusco to prevent their exploitation as domestic workers.
The petites bonnes of Mauritania

At six o’clock in the morning, when the owners of house get up, the Petites Bonnes have already been out to buy bread and prepared breakfast. After this they clean the house, go to the market and, if there are children, also take care of them. The day is long and the young domestic workers still cannot go to sleep after everybody has finished dinner. In Mauritania, the life of girl domestic workers is not different from that of those in Peru. They come from extremely poor families; their fathers have precarious jobs; their mothers are occupied with many children. These girls aged between 5 and 13 are sent to the city to work in homes, with the hope that they will study and send money back to their families of origin. A documentary by Terre des Hommes Foundation Lausanne tells the crude living conditions of ‘young servants’ in Nouakchott. In their favour, a project providing assistance and favouring social insertion was started in 2011, in collaboration with the local association AFCF, and funded by Unicef and AECID.

“Many of them don’t have access to school; they are ill-treated, assaulted and raped by the very same members of the families they work for. Of course these crimes never get reported,” says the Foundation’s delegate in Mauritania, Enrique Medina. After identifying girl victims of exploitation, project staff takes care of their protection, ensuring their basic rights as children: education, medical care, food and registration in the General Registrar, as many of them are without documents. The identification and intake of girls often take place in Police offices for the custody of minors who have perpetrated a crime: it is in fact not unusual for the employer to accuse the girls of theft in order to send them away and avoid having to pay them.

Re-insertion in their families is another fundamental aspect of the project, which holds many meetings with parents to raise awareness about the true consequences of domestic child labour and the rights of children. So far, almost 15,000 parents have been involved and over 2,500 petites bonnes have received assistance. Many families have been given additional help, in the form of assistance to start self-employment activities for mothers, to avoid them being dependent on the work of their daughters. Mauritania was the last country on Earth to ban slavery in 1981, and a law to sanction those who make use of slave workers was introduced only in 2007. For this reason, the exploitation of girls as domestic workers is considered normal and necessary, despite the fact that it is practiced as a veritable form of slavery.
Violence against girls and young women: a global emergency

ANSÄ Contribution

++ FEMICIDE, EVEN ADOLESCENTS ARE VICTIMS ++

It is their first love. True passion, intense, fresh, violent. It starts as a dream; then turns into a nightmare. Beatings, abuse, harassment, death. Violence against women does not make distinctions of age. In recent months the news has brought several cases of adolescents who were beaten, sometimes massacred, by their partners to public attention. Fabiana was 16 when she was burned alive by the man who said he loved her. Carmela was 17 when she was victim of the homicidal fury of a boy not much older than her, who wanted to kill her sister. Young women killed; true cases of femicide. Anger and ‘right of supremacy’ overcome the men who act cruelly towards ‘their’ women, to the point of casusing their death.

CARMELA AND FABIANA, YOUNG VICTIMS OF YOUNG ‘LOVERS’
++ MURDERER OF GIRL KILLED IN PALERMO ARRESTED ++
HE IS THE FORMER FIANCE OF HER SISTER, ALSO WOUNDED

(ANSÄ) - PALERMO, 19 OCT 2012 – The Police arrested the murderer of Carmela Petrucci, the 17 year old stabbed to death in Palermo. He is the former fiancé of Lucia, the 18 year old sister of the victim, who also suffered from knife wounds. The young man, who is 23 years old, was arrested in the station of Bagheria. Initial clues suggest that the young man and the victim’s sister had had a yearlong relationship, to which Lucia Petrucci had put an end. The former fiancé, however, never accepted this decision and continued to mob and look for the girl, to convince her to change her mind.

Between 1 July 2012 and 30 June 2013 ANSA issued 93 press feeds regarding the murder of Carmela Petrucci. The girl was slaughtered in the lobby of the building where she lived, in the attempt to defend her sister from the homicidal fury of Samuele, unable to accept the girl’s refusal. On 19 October 2012, Carmela and Lucia were coming back from school when, in front of their home, they bumped into Samuele. Lucia, afraid of her former fiancé who used to harass her with phone calls and text messages, rang the entry-phone and asked her brother to open the door quickly. The killer, however, was quicker than them and caught up with his victims in the lobby. Screams, cries, then the knife suddenly appeared. A terrified Carmela stepped between the boy and her sister. She tried to defend her. This act cost her life. The strokes of the aggressor killed her. Lucia lay on the floor, wounded.

Carmela was not the only ‘child’ victim of the homicidal fury of a young man. In Corigliano Calabro, Cosenza, another 16 year old girl, Fabiana Luzzi, was knifed and burned alive by a boy of the same age. Also on this occasion, a troubled love story was behind the violence.

++ SIXTEEN YEAR OLD VICTIM: THE KILLER, I BURNED HER ALIVE ++
(ANSÄ) - CORIGLIANO CALABRO (COSENZA), 26 MAY 2013- “She was still alive when I set fire to her.” This is the astonishing revelation made to investigators by the seventeen year old self-confessed murderer of his girlfriend of the same age in Corigliano Calabro. The young man told the Public Prosecutor of Rossano that, on Friday 24 May, he fetched his girlfriend from school and then they slipped over to a nearby isolated road. The minor declared that he had a discussion with the girl, after which he repeatedly hit her with a knife. He later got rid of the weapon not far from the scene, together with the victim’s rucksack and mobile phone, which have not yet been found, and
went to buy petrol.

A frightful confession. Fabiana tried to defend herself up to the very end, her persecutor said. It appears that she tried to snatch the petrol tank from his hands but, weakened by the wounds, she failed and gave in to her fiancé’s violence. Friends of the victim said that “his relationship with the young girl was morbid and he often beat her.” What sparked the fight in the car, that Friday, was a discussion about the relationships they had both had in recent months, since their own relationship had broken up. They were both accusing each other, he was the most jealous. Fabiana paid this obsession with her life. ANSA press feeds about the tragic death of the girl were 78.

The deaths of Carmela and Fabiana are two extreme cases of violence against adolescent girls. Nonetheless, in the period considered, the press agency bulletin collected also other stories of young women raped and saved on the point of death. Here are two cases.

REJECTED BY UNDERAGE GIRLFRIEND, HE THROWS HER IN A RIVER ARRESTED FOR ATTEMPTED MURDER CLOSE TO BENEVENTO, SHE IS 15

(ANSA) - BENEVENTO, 8 FEB 2013 – He harassed his underage girlfriend for two years, then after the umpteenth rejection, he pushed her into a river and tried to kill her. A young man from Gioia Sannitica (Province of Caserta), O.D., aged 23, was arrested by the Carabinieri. The charges against him are stalking, rape, kidnapping, and attempted murder.

SEXUAL ASSAULT: 17 YEAR-OLD ENDS UP IN YOUNG OFFENDER INSTITUTION FOR RAPE HIS UNDERAGE FIANCEE IT HAD STARTED WHEN THE GIRL WAS 14. ARRESTED BY THE POLICE

(ANSA) - CROTONE, 5 JUN 2013 – For three years he raped his underage fiancée. On one occasion, he even kidnapped her and threatened her with a gun; he often hit her when she opposed herself. Author of this violence, according to officers of the flying squad of Police Headquarters in Crotone, is a young man, a minor himself, M.A., aged 17. Against him, the investigating magistrate of the Juvenile Court in Catanzaro, upon request of the Public Prosecutor’s office for Minors, asked for provisional detention in a young offender institution for stalking, rape and kidnapping.

These stories have no ‘happy ending’: the life of these girls will remain marked by violence. These are wounds that cannot be healed.
Femicides of girls and young women

Since the InDifesa Campaign was launched in October 2012 to date, the issue of violence against girls and women has been heatedly debated in the media. Sadly, this interest has been accompanied by a series of cases, reported in the crime news, of women and girl victims. During the first six months of 2013, 81 women were killed in Italy, 75% of whom within the family or the circle of loved ones. Among these victims, Fabiana Luzzi, the girl from Corigliano Calabro burned alive by her ‘boyfriend’, made the whole world quiver. This case was a reminder that femicide\(^\text{15}\) is not only a concern for adult women. As highlighted by the Eures report on voluntary manslaughter in Italy\(^\text{16}\), between 2000 and 2012 also 140 girls and young women were victims of this extreme type of violence in our country.

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
 & Total femicides & & Family femicides & & \\
 & A.V. & \% & Index / 1 million women & A.V. & \% & Index / 1 million women \\
\hline
Up to 10 years & 92.0 & 4.1 & 2.4 & 83 & 5.3 & 2.2 \\
11-17 years & 48.0 & 2.2 & 1.9 & 31 & 2.0 & 1.2 \\
Total minors & 140.0 & 6.3 & 4.3 & 114 & 7.3 & 3.4 \\
18-24 years & 196.0 & 8.8 & 6.7 & 117 & 7.5 & 4.0 \\
25-34 years & 376.0 & 16.9 & 7.1 & 258 & 16.4 & 4.9 \\
35-44 years & 408.0 & 18.4 & 6.9 & 308 & 19.6 & 5.2 \\
45-54 years & 308.0 & 13.9 & 5.7 & 233 & 14.8 & 4.3 \\
55-64 years & 231.0 & 10.4 & 4.8 & 107 & 10.6 & 3.5 \\
Over 64 & 524.0 & 23.6 & 6.1 & 368 & 23.4 & 4.2 \\
N. c. & 37.0 & 1.7 & - & 5 & 0.3 & - \\
Total & 2,220.0 & 100.0 & 5.2 & 1,570 & 100.0 & 4.0 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Total and family femicides based on the victims' age group. Period 2000-2012 - Absolute values, \% and average annual index per 1 million resident women}
\end{table}

\textit{(Eures report, p. 152)}

Most often, daughters are killed by one of their parents (134 cases between 2000 and 2012). In total, minor girls represent 8.5% of the victims of femicide within the family, with an annual average of 10.3 cases.\(^\text{17}\) In most cases (27, equal to 20.1%), the victims are younger than one year; the number of girls killed in pre-school age is consistent (25 girls aged 1 to 5, corresponding to 18.7%) and so is the number of girls in the following age group (24 girls aged 6 to 10, accounting for 17.9%); a progressively smaller number of victims is found in older age groups.

\(^{15}\) The term \textit{femicide} indicates extreme violence perpetrated by males against females because they are females, e.g. with a strong gender connotation (Russell D., 1992).

\(^{16}\) “Voluntary manslaughter in Italy: EURES report 2013,” in collaboration with the Agency ANSA.

\(^{17}\) \textit{Ibidem}, p. 152. In this calculation infanticides are never taken into account, as they constitute a different type of crime from a legal perspective (falling under Art.578 and not Art.575 of Italian Criminal Law).
(report on Voluntary Manslaughter, p. 186)

Violence against girls and women: a global emergency

World Health Organisation data presented in July 2013 by the National Observatory on Women’s Health, speak clearly about a global health emergency. 35% of women and girls worldwide (one in three) is victim of physical or sexual violence perpetrated by a partner, or by strangers. The main consequences of this abuse are found in mental and sexual health, in reproductive capacity and in the risk of death and bodily harm. 30% of ill-treatment against women starts during pregnancy and 1 in 4 women is currently victim of violence in this phase of life.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>A.V.</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than one year</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>20.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 to 5 years</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>18.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 to 10 years</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>17.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 to 13 years</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 to 17 years</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 to 24 years</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 to 34 years</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 to 44 years</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45+</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: EURES Economic and Social Research, Archive on voluntary manslaughter in Italy

It is estimated that over 6.7 million women between the ages 16 and 70 have been victims of physical or sexual abuse in Italy, and that approximately one million has suffered rape or attempted rape.

14.3% of women has been victim of acts of violence perpetrated by partners, however only 7% has
reported them. Equally alarming is the fact that 33.9% of those who suffer violence by their partner and 24% of those who suffer violence by an acquaintance or a stranger do not talk to anybody about what has happened. Domestic violence, moreover, is the second cause of death for pregnant women.

Violence against women is often unspoken by its victims; violence against girls and young women comes to surface even more difficultly. These victims have fewer tools to defend themselves and can be more easily controlled psychologically by perpetrators. Police data on reported crimes against minors are to be interpreted as the tip of the iceberg. Yet these official numbers are certainly not small, and they increase by the year.

Minor victims, in fact, increased from 4,946 in 2011 to 5,103 in 2012 (3% more, following a 15% growth the previous year), 60% of whom were females. The surge in sexual abuse against minors is particularly worrying, as victims (505) have risen by 204% compared to the previous year. 78% of these victims are girls and adolescents.

The largest increase has been recorded in minor pornography: +370%, with 108 minor victims, 69% of whom are girls.

Girls and adolescents are the majority (56%) of minor victims of voluntary manslaughter (18 in 2012), underage prostitution (77.6% of whom are girls), and kidnapping of a person of unsound mind (263 minors, 53% girls).

Data show that girls and young women are particularly vulnerable to sexual violence: they are 85% of the total, adding up to 689 victims in 2012. To them, one must add the 422 victims of aggravated sexual assault, 79% of whom are female. A consistent decline (-70%) was recorded in crimes of corruption of minor; where 81% of cases saw girls and young women as victims.

Ill-treatment within the family is still the crime with the highest number of child victims, which reached the record number of 1,246 in 2012, 82% more than in 2011. Girls are 50% of the total.

A national database of intake records by Social Services, which would include also cases that cannot be defined as veritable crimes, is lacking in Italy. In response to this gap, Terre des Hommes and Cismai (Italian Association for the Coordination of Services against the Ill-treatment and Abuse of Children) recently undertook a study to estimate the scale of child ill-treatment and abuse.

Findings confirm that girls are the most exposed to violence: 3,901 in 7,464 minors (52.51%) taken under the responsibility of Social Services for ill-treatment are girls.

The Istanbul Convention: an important starting point to improve girl protection

On 12 June 2013 Italy ratified the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention), thus adopting a fundamental tool to prevent and contrast all forms of violence against women, regardless of age and all other categorisations.

After Turkey, Albania, Portugal and Montenegro, Italy is the fifth country to ratify this convention. The threshold of 10 ratifications by member States of the Council of Europe must be reached for it to become legally binding, before the next challenge starts of harmonising national legislation to achieve the highest possible level of protection and safeguard of women and girls at the European level.

In 2012, Terre des Hommes had already presented to the Council of Europe first, and later to the UN, the first comparative research about global legislation on violence against girls and women,18

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undertaken in collaboration with the international law firm Paul Hastings. This important work highlights how the European Union can make a decisive contribution to the harmonisation of different kinds of crimes and to minimum sanctions that must be applied by member States. To this aim, Terre des Hommes launched the “Human Rights without borders” Appeal to ask for an extension of the European Union’s legislative competence to all human rights violations. This would allow a homogeneous, prompt and effective EU response to the various forms of discrimination and violence against girls.

On 14 August 2013, the Italian law by decree nr 93 introduced urgent dispositions to contrast gender based violence, which came into force on 17/08/2013. This testifies willingness, on behalf of the Italian government, to tackle the escalation of violence against women. This problem is nonetheless addressed as an issue of public order rather than as a cultural and social phenomenon that is deeply rooted in our society.

The latter approach is at the heart of dispositions contained in the Istanbul Convention. This document calls States to adopt an organic and structural approach against gender based violence, inclusive of actions for the prevention of, awareness raising and education about gender based discrimination. Although law by decree nr 93/2013 foresees an “Extraordinary Plan against sexual and gender based violence” under which these initiatives should be developed, it also indicates that they must be undertaken “with no additional cost or cost increase for public finances.” This clearly weakens Italy’s ability to respond to gender based violence.
Before it is too late

What can be done when the life of a woman in love is in danger and she does not want to be saved? In an interview, a girl from Caserta whose spleen had been crushed by kicks from her fiancé said that she forgave him and still loved him. A girl from Nettuno came home with a broken nose saying that she had fallen, and when her father found out from other people that she had been punched into that state by her boyfriend, she refused to report him. For us, as observers, the acts of these two vandals are just rehearsals for the next homicide. For the victims, blinded by sick emotion and sentimental immaturity, they may appear as an extreme and masculine form of passion.

When I still had faith in the power of words, I thought that love for the wrong person could be dissolved by the right sentence at the right moment. For instance: who beats you does not love you and is undeserving of your love. Victims, however, are unaware of being trapped. They hope that the brute can be cured and they become lost in a psychological maze that goes from masochism, to protective instinct, to pride and unwillingness to admit their mistake. When there are no more words, acts are all that is left to shake their clouded conscience. The father of the girl from Nettuno reported the beater against his daughter’s will. The lawyer of the girl from Caserta renounced her mandate and refused to further defend her. Strong acts, provocative acts. A light illuminating the cracks of a sick love, so that people will see and stop, before it is too late.

Massimo Gramellini, Buongiorno, La Stampa 29/05/2013 (with kind permission of the author)
Violence against children is often followed by silence. This is even more the case when the victims are girls and young women with disabilities. In a research on this issue, the High Commissioner for Human Rights recalls that disability amplifies the risk of being a victim of violence also as a result of prejudice. In many societies, disabled persons are not considered as bearers of rights, especially when they are women and minors. Isolation and social exclusion, difficulties in mobility and communication, and extreme dependency on their carers increase the vulnerability of disabled persons to violence and ill-treatment. The same factors often also allow the perpetrators of violence against them to go unpunished.

Disabled girls and young women are at greater risk of sexual abuse because they are female. Their education often does not cover sexual education because they are wrongly considered asexual beings. This makes them unable to recognise behaviour that is inappropriate or abusive toward them in time. These cases soar in situations of conflict, when the incidence of rape is high: disabled girls and young women are the first victims, because they can neither defend themselves, nor can they report the violence. In some African countries, disabled girls are also particularly vulnerable to phenomena such as the ‘virgin myth,’ according to which a man raping a virgin can cure himself from AIDS.

According to a research by the European Parliament, almost 80% of disabled young women and girls are a victim of violence. The most vulnerable are those suffering from intellectual disabilities. These girls often undergo violent or mutilating treatments, such as forced sterilisation or electroshock. In societies that consider disability as a family disgrace, girls are more often than boys victims of ‘merciful death’ (infanticide), because gender based discrimination adds to disability based discrimination. Girls who suffer from physical or visual impairment are also more subject to precocious marriage and trafficking for the purpose of begging. The risk of violence escalates when ethnic discrimination is combined with discrimination based on gender and disability, as in the case of indigenous and/or refugee girls and young women.

19 “Thematic study on the issue of violence against women and girls with disability”, Human Rights Council, 20th session, 30-03-2012
20 Report on the situation of minority women in the European Union (2003/2109 (INI)).
Witnessed violence: a lifelong mark

*He did not cry out. He fell as gently as a tree falls. There was not even any sound, because of the sand.*

(‘The Little Prince’ by Antoine-Marie-Roger de Saint-Exupéry)

Domestic violence remains a largely invisible, underground phenomenon.
Yet on a daily basis national and local crime news report on women’s lives ended by a partner or ex-partner.
Yet a few days ago the Council of Ministers approved a law by decree to prevent and combat gender based violence.

And yet … Knowing that male violence against women is globally the first cause of violent death for women between the ages of 16 and 44 (WHO, 2002) is not enough. Research and data on the one hand provide quantitative indicators for this ‘alarming’ phenomenon, and on the other hand reveal certain understandings of relationships within families. Behind the data are the life histories of women, men, daughters and sons who live in a ‘deafening silence,’ as Patrizia Romito defines it, made of fear, shame, and helplessness.

Violence in so-called relationships ‘of trust’ seeps into the closest of bonds, into love stories that turn into ties that are impossible to break. Violence Support Centres are there to bring to light what has been locked in obscurity for a long time. Tackling the reasons that lead affective relationships to be or become violent, in fact, requires questioning one’s identity, gender, culture, and unhappiness experienced in the silence and loneliness of domestic jails.

LiberaMente is a Violence Support Centre in Pavia. For 25 years it has been welcoming women who do not wish to ‘punish bad men,’ but who want to exercise their right of choice and put an end to a violent relationship. In 2012, almost 300 women from the province and town of Pavia were assisted. 70% of them have minor children, who are also direct victims of violence or witnesses of violence. Observing relationships crumble in front of their eyes, watching this ‘drama’ unfold on a daily basis, daughters and sons pay the highest price. Witnessed violence, as it is defined by experts and scholars, produces traumatic effects similar to those suffered by the direct victim of ill-treatment (Luberti and Pedrocco-Biancardi, 2005). Witnessing acts of violence, or simply being aware of them, produces in children a sense of powerlessness that disables coping and adaptation capacities, and induces strong feelings of failure. Consequences may be so severe that they may lead to structural psychic suffering in all spheres of everyday live (school, friends, health).

In 2008, LiberaMente started its first pilot project offering educational support to primary school children. Since then, the Cooperative has set up several services to combat witnessed violence, including an ‘area for minors,’ thanks to the three-year project “The hidden city – family interventions on witnessed violence,” funded by Cariplo Foundation and currently in its concluding phase.

Minors that we have met over the years, through the project and when hosting mothers and children at the Shelter Home, are young men/women, boys/girls that teachers, relatives and their own mothers define as ‘difficult.’ They are sometimes hyperactive, angry, confused, sometimes silent, impenetrable, concealed. For sure, they are children who suffer. Years of contact and presence at the Violence Support Centre have allowed establishing dialogue, talking about their fears, and redefining relationships anew so that they do not grow up trapped into the role of violent or victim adults.

Stopping violence is the first step toward the protection of women and children, but it is not enough. Stopping ill-treatment does not automatically lead to its opposite. It is urgent to identify and restore damage made to the capacity to believe in oneself and others. It is necessary to support mothers as well as fathers in becoming aware, as parents, of the effects of violence and in acting responsibly with the different people who are concerned with the violence, including those who suffer from it, perpetrate it, and support it.

Martina says: “I never want to see my father again … when he came home and mum sent us to bed I was
afraid … as if we couldn’t hear the screams, I hoped they’d stop, I didn’t want to hear mum cry and scream anymore … I hid my head under the pillow in order not to hear … I didn’t make a sound … I just wanted to disappear. Do you have an ex-father too? …”

The project “The hidden city” has allowed social workers and psychologists to acknowledge how witnessed violence forces most minors to adopt abusive relational models, as they identify in the role of the perpetrator or of the victim. From a very early age, children team with one or the other parent, unconsciously building an identity model that they will carry with them in the future. Many of them struggle to admit and mention their fathers’ violence, believing instead that they were simply the strongest. It is a way not to have to recognise the struggle and pain suffered by their mothers.

Federica is 11; she lives alone with her mother. Her father, who alternates long absences and controlling, violent presence, has never been a reference for her since he was obliged to leave the home. “My dad is the strongest of all. Once he was responsible for a car accident and he hurt some people, but nothing happened to him because he is smarter. He is great … not like my mum who cries every time there is a problem.”

For girls and future women the relation with their mothers is marked by conflict, probably because they wish to distance themselves from and rebel against a model that they do not see as protective, but that exposes them to fragility.

“I will never be like my mother. In a relationship, I am the boss.” Cristina, 15 years old and always in conflict with her mother, repeats this often. She is eager to prove that “she can have what she wants” and is unable to accept frustration. She suffers from psychosomatic disorders.

Damage produced by witnessed violence can be severe and structural: the majority of minors are exposed to dysfunctional relational models before they are even born. Over time, these become a repeated, devastating experience and can lock children into suffering that is difficult to address and destructive.

Chiara is 14 years old. Since the age of 7 she has been living with her mother and two younger brothers. Her father left after a court order to leave the home, when he moved abroad. “When I was called by the teacher to be questioned I hadn’t studied … but I didn’t even say what I did know. I stayed silent … Inside I felt that thing growing, that thing that I still feel in dreams. Mum is on the floor and he is kicking her. I know that I must do something; I must run outside with my brothers and call for help. I know that there is a hole in the wall and that outside I can run, but I can’t do it … so I don’t move.”

Valentina Morandi, psychologist and psychotherapist, Coordinator of the project “The hidden city – family interventions on witnessed violence”, and Francesca Salvini, psychologist, LiberaMente Violence Support Centre in Pavia
"You always know after you are two. Two is the beginning of the end."

Peter Pan repeated this phrase to the Lost Boys of Neverland. Reading it today, given what we now know, gives the shivers.
In our eyes are the recent images of children massacred in Syria. We know that these are just the most recent images, and that we shall unwillingly witness a horror without end. In this horrifying spiral of violence and oppression, being born a girl comes with greater risks. When boys are in danger, girls are even more so.
It is called gender based violence. Following this report by Terre des Hommes, nobody can say that they did not know, that they had not realised. This report uncovers numbers and data that are all but cold and neutral: they are stories, names, and eyes. They are heart-breaking. They call us to action, they dismiss all alibies. They ask us to do one simple but difficult thing: look.
Look and see what is truly happening around the world and just around the corner from us, in homes, in the streets, in schools. Look even when it hurts and when it devastates us. It is important not to close our eyes, not to pretend that this is not our concern.
"Stay awake, don't close your eyes..."
Even Mary Poppins used to say it, and she was a child expert.

Lella Costa
Conclusions

Awareness: key to prevention

This second “Indifesa” report confirms a dramatic picture of circumstances leading to violence against girls. Nonetheless, it also points to positive aspects in the understanding and awareness of this phenomenon, internationally as well as nationally, that raise good hopes for the future. Awareness is the key to prevention. In this direction, the report presents global and local data, followed by concrete examples from the field that draw on the experience of Terre des Hommes in defence of girls.

The report is therefore an analytical as well as a working tool. In line with the mission of an international organisation devoted to the defence of child rights, it aims at presenting the various, often unknown faces of violence against girls. It also puts forward a methodological approach that links the global and the local, from International tools such as the Istanbul Convention, down to good practices that can be applied locally to prevent or combat violence against girls and their growing exposure to various forms of exclusion. In short, it covers all aspects of challenges to the principle of gender equality, which is at the centre of ideals for the universal enjoyment of Fundamental Rights.

A core aspect of this report is that the analysis of violent situations is backed by specific practices to combat and prevent them. Although invariably marked by violence, every situation has its own specificities that need to be taken into account in developing adequate responses. An overall framework must then depart from these situation-specific responses, to achieve organic unity whilst also incorporating the diverse scenarios illustrated in this report.

The defence of girl Rights corresponds to the possibility for half of the world’s population to access equal rights and opportunities. At the same time, each and every one of these lives must be defended and safeguarded in its uniqueness. This is the basis of dignity.

Terre des Hommes’ awareness raising campaign, therefore, not only asserts the need for awareness before action. It also claims that knowledge and awareness of local specificities are at the basis of responses that are not merely inspired by global ideals, but rooted in practicable actions.

In the Italian context, to which one section of this report is dedicated, violence against women in general, and against girls in particular, has worsened. This reality casts a sinister light on our current times and on the deviated reactions that they trigger. Awareness of given phenomena, the possibility to report them, alongside laws to combat them must be framed within the crisis of civic and moral values that characterises our country today. Growing uncertainty in Italy is affecting not only the economic sphere, but also the deeper level of national identity.

Terre des Hommes’ answer always lies in inclusion, at all levels: from the defence of victims to the extension of citizenship, from immigrant protection to active support for whoever wishes to escape any form of violence.

By presenting data and possible solutions, we hope that this second report will broaden awareness and lead to a concrete will to act accordingly.

Raffaele K. Salinari, President of Terre des Hommes International Federation
Indifesa: one year campaigning for the rights of girls and young women

Indifesa is the campaign launched by Terre des Hommes Italy in response to the United Nations’ call in defence of the rights of girls and young women. It combats and prevents gender based discrimination and violence in Italy and globally. It will last until 2015, when achievement will be measured of the Millennium Goals.

Indifesa was inaugurated on the First International Day of the Girl Child, on 11 October 2012, with the Department for Equal Opportunities and at the presence of the Speaker of the Italian House of Commons. The campaign is centred on the promotion of girl rights and includes interventions to prevent and combat gender based violence and discrimination, as well as actions to achieve concrete results in breaking the poverty cycle and offering better living conditions to thousands of girls and young women.

Significant interventions were carried out internationally, including specific projects in favour of ‘house-girls in domestic service’ in Peru, of ‘girl brides’ in Bangladesh, of ‘child mothers’ in Cote d’Ivoire, of ‘girls saved from infanticide’ in India. In many ways, however, it was in Italy that Terre des Hommes’ commitment was broader and more innovative. What follows is a summary of what we have done and continue to do in this first year of activity.

INDIFESA: FIRST MONTHS OF ACTIVITY IN ITALY

In just one year, Terre des Hommes has already implemented decisive actions for the protection of girls and young women against violation of their fundamental rights. These are the main achievements of the indifesa campaign in Italy.

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<th>Indifesa Report</th>
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<td>On 11 October 2013 Terre des Hommes presented the first report on the “Condition of girls and young women in Italy and globally.” It paints an up-to-date and dramatic picture of: selective abortion and infanticide; malnutrition and child mortality; female genital mutilation; breast ironing; schooling and gender education; child labour and domestic exploitation; gender based violence; sexual education; girl brides; legal discrimination; child trafficking; precocious motherhood; girl soldiers.</td>
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<td>On the International Day of the Girl, Terre des Hommes and ANSA (that made its huge DEA archive available) jointly presented the report “Girl Chronicles”, which analyses for the first time the frequency of news regarding girls and young women in Italy and the associated themes. A dramatic picture emerges in which, as one may imagine, crime news is at the top of the parade with stories of homicide, abuse, violence and oppression. On average, 6 cases of violation and abuse are reported every day!</td>
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<th>The first comparative research on legislation on violence against girls and young women</th>
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<td>In November last year, at the Council of Europe International Conference “Role of Development Cooperation in combatting exploitation and sexual abuse of minors” held at the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Terre des Hommes presented the first comparative research on legislation on violence against girls and young women. The study, undertaken with the unpaid services of the international law firm Paul Hastings, was brought to the attention of the general public during the 57th session of the CSW (Commission on the Status of Women) at the UN Headquarters in New York in March.</td>
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This work highlighted how the European Union can make a decisive contribution to the harmonisation of different kinds of crimes and to minimum sanctions that must be applied by Member States. To this
aim, Terre des Hommes launched the “Human Rights without borders” Appeal to ask for an extension of the European Union’s legislative competence to all human rights violations. This would allow a homogeneous, prompt and effective EU response to the various forms of discrimination and violence against girls.

| Hand in Hand: Meetings for awareness raising and the prevention of gender based discrimination in secondary schools |
In collaboration with Soccorso Rosa/San Carlo Hospital, Terre des Hommes held meetings in secondary schools for awareness raising and the prevention of gender based discrimination. Under the title: Di Pari Passo [Hand in Hand], the meetings aimed at contrasting prejudice and discrimination in pre-adolescents and equipping teachers and parents with effective tools to identify potentially dangerous situations of unease.

The courses targeted over 250 young boys and girls in Milan’s middle schools and were facilitated by two psychologists from Soccorso Rosa with the collaboration of Terre des Hommes’ legal advisors on the identification and reporting of gender based violence.

We worked with students on man-woman relation, causes of violence and how to manage it, television and its stereotypes, the display and commodification of women’s bodies, advertising and its myths that reduce women to mere objects or relegate them to marginal roles. How to recognise violence, stalking or bullying, how to report it and who to were also addressed with students, their parents and teachers.

Students confronted themselves, engaging directly. They learned to look with different eyes at their everyday reality and we hope to have given them some additional tools for their own defence. We tried to assess this impact through an anonymous questionnaire, which was distributed before and after a cycle of three meetings.

Some numbers:
- Before the course, 20.4% of interviewees said that “violence within a couple is a private affair and others should not interfere”, after the course incidence dropped to 11.9%;
- 70% thought that violent men are so because “of issues with alcohol and other drugs.” This reveals an interpretation of violence as a marginal episode, caused by momentary loss of control due to exogenous factors. This percentage dropped to 40%;
- 11.1% thought that “violence is sometimes the only way to express feelings.” This figure dropped to 6.8%;
- 46.3% thought that taking care of the house and family is an exclusive prerogative of women. This figure dropped to 30.5%;
- According to 37%, men “must head the family.” This figure dropped to 22%.

Courses started again in September, with the ambition of becoming a structured part of the national curriculum.

“Di Pari Passo” has also become a Handbook (the first of its kind) for secondary schools that will be available from October 2013.

| Paediatricians and ill-treatment of children |
On 21 March 2013, in Milan, the report on knowledge of child ill-treatment among paediatricians was presented. The report was realised in partnership with the Mangiagalli Clinic in Milan/Desk for Ill-Treated Children and Adolescents (SBAM). It highlights clear failings in the capacity of doctors and paediatricians to recognise ill-treatment, as well as in their ability to report cases to competent authorities.
Shockingly, while 65% of paediatricians declared to have encountered cases of violence and abuse throughout their career, 51.5% decided not to report them. Most paediatricians said they did not have sufficient evidence to make a sound judgement (55.1%). 13.6% declared that they feared repercussions in the family environment. A significant percentage (18.3%) admitted that they took no initiative because they did not know who to report the cases to and how. The study also revealed lack of knowledge about who should compile the medical report. Only 5% of doctors have a form to assist with writing an ill-treatment diagnosis, although most of them (over 89% of respondents) admitted that such a tool would be greatly useful.

The questionnaire highlights the urge for more training: almost half of the respondents had never taken part in a congress about ill-treatment in the last 3 years, whereas 34% had been to only one. The need for refresher courses is nonetheless strongly felt by 89% of the sample.

Last dramatic data, which reconfirms the need for campaigns such as indifesa: girls and young women account for 79% of the reported cases and are the most likely victims of sexual violence and inadequate treatment pathologies.

The research “Ill-Treatment of Children: How do Milan doctors recognise it?” was conducted at the end of 2012, distributing a questionnaire to 1,170 doctors and paediatricians in Milan and its hinterland. The response rate was 259.

| Milan Charter for the respect of the image of girl and boy children in communication and against discriminatory stereotyping in advertising.

In 2012, Terre des Hommes finalised the compilation of a Charter for the Respect of the Image of Girl and Boy Children in Communication (the Milan Charter) that can be consulted and commented on the website www.cartadimilano.org. The Charter is made up of 10 articles and was written with the support of over 70 experts. It fills a cultural gap in Italy and spotlights the use (and abuse) that is made of child images, especially in commercial communication. It addresses heated issues such as hyper-sexualisation, objectification and adultification of children; the challenge to educational and parenting models; the diffusion of bad eating patterns; the use of sense of guilt and health alarmism; the exploitation of pain and illness; ethnic and cultural difference; discrimination and sexist communication.

On this last issue, within the indifesa campaign, the Charter has become a tool through which citizens reported the worse cases of sexist and discriminatory communication on several occasions throughout the year (thanks to the solicitation of Terre des Hommes and its partners, such as Il Corpo delle Donne, to cite the most prominent).

In order to increase the effectiveness of the Charter, on 21 May 2013 in Milan Terre des Hommes, in collaboration with Pubblicità Italia, Assocom and ADCI, organised the first of a series of events targeting professionals in the communications sector and addressing gender stereotyping. (The programme of the day is available here: http://bit.ly/12Gl7qU).

In Autumn 2013 two new events have been planned on the same issue

- On 24 September, in the Main Theatre of Milan’s Judicial Court building, the Law Society of Milan organises a conference on the rights of girl and boy children in communication. The Charter of Milan will be officially signed on this occasion;
- On 18 November, at the Franco Parenti theatre, Terre des Hommes organises the event “Girls and young women: stereotypes, discrimination and violence in gender communication.” The event is inspired by TED Talks and will foresee the participation of Lorella Zanardo, Serena...
Dandini, Concita De Gregorio, Sonia Bergamasco, Vincenzo Spadafora (National Guarantor for Children and Young People) and Pierfrancesco Majorino (Councillor for Social Policies at the Municipality of Milan).

| Monitoring ill-treatment of minors in Italy and evaluating the costs of prevention policy failings |

One of the themes that Terre des Hommes has addressed in recent years, following the recommendations of the working group on the UN Convention for the Rights of the Child (CRC), is the lack of a system for the collection and analysis of data about the ill-treatment of girl and boy children in Italy.

In collaboration with CISMAI (Coordinamento Italiano Servizi contro il Maltrattamento e l’Abuso all’Infanzia) and within the indifesa campaign, Terre des Hommes started two extremely innovative studies in the Italian context:

- The first national survey on the scale of ill-treatment against children, undertaken in collaboration with ANCI, titled “Ill-Treatment of children: how widespread is it in Italy?” A detailed, picture, unique in its kind, realised thanks to the involvement of relevant municipal councils and social workers at the local level. It portrays phenomena such as material and/or emotional negligence; assisted violence; psychological mistreatment; sexual abuse; inadequate treatment pathologies and physical violence.

- The first evaluation in our country, thanks to the contribution of Bocconi University in Milan, of the costs deriving from lack of prevention of ill-treatment and abuse against minors in Italy. A fundamental contribution, despite it comes several years later than in other countries, toward a more efficient and effective use of financial resources available for social policies.

Another year full of challenges, commitment and unique interventions on the Italian scene that will give centrality to the rights of girls and boys: indifesa is this. To find out more and download our studies and reports, visit the website www.indifesa.org.

Since 50 years, Terre des Hommes is in the front line to protect children worldwide from violence, abuse and exploitation and to ensure every child with schooling, informal education, medical assistance and food. Terre des Hommes is currently present in 64 countries with over 840 projects in favour of children. Terre des Hommes Foundation Italy is member of the Terre des Hommes International Federation; it works in partnership with ECHO and is accredited by the European Union, the UN, USAID and the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. For more information: www.terredeshommes.it, tel. +39 02 28970418