

The house of women Lucha y Siesta was born in 2008 from reusing and enhancing a suburb apartment building dating back to the twenties, owned by the Rome transportation company. Through the years this abandoned place turned into a material and symbolic space of women's self-determination.

It is a women's project providing information, orientation, attention and hospitality to the women in need; here different cultural and productive activities take place making Lucha y Siesta a space for social relations as well as for sharing experiences and competences. Through these years many women with their different life experiences have come to the house and shaped it, making it a place that contributes to reactivating downtrodden female intelligence, re-giving them strength and value, as well as giving back to citizens an important part of the public patrimony.

It is also a political project promoting new ways for welfare and claiming of rights starting from women, who are the main characters. Here new ways of bottom up intervention are experienced thus enhancing personal competences and skills, using partnerships between institutions, associations and the local area as well as neglected public patrimony, with the objective of fostering local development and providing updated services with a wider coverage.

In this context Lucha y Siesta is an innovative experiment and, we can say, also a successful one: it is a mixed project between refuge house, semi-autonomy and antiviolence center; it is all these things and much more. It is a project that came from the fight and self-organization of women, a place that has soon become a reference place in the city as it works together with social services, antiviolence centers, centers for social disadvantage and different women-oriented associations and organizations, in order to achieve autonomy rather than assistance.

Besides the activity supporting women to become independent there are several actions aimed at preventing cultural and social violence as well as violence in inclusion, education and participation. Some examples are:

- the lab project of the tailor's lab LyS
- workshops and courses
- the library and study room accessible to the people in the neighbourhood
- the center for clinical psychology
- activities dedicated to childhood
- training (female) operators of antiviolence centers
- the projects in schools to promote initiatives in order to oppose gender violence and make people more aware about differences
- the Festival, the Film club, book presentations, theatre, handicraft market
- participation in networks, committees and local associationism

Still on a volunteer basis, the association offers women asking the counselling service an articulated set of services ranging from legal to psychological support, orientation to social services and third sector, orientation to vocational training and work and projects for getting out of violence situations within the family.

Specifically, the activity of Lucha y Siesta is carried out through:

- accommodation of 13 one-woman family units or woman-with-children family units (reaching a maximum of 22 places) in 11 hospitality rooms plus 2 emergency rooms;
- a counselling service for women open 5 days a week from 10 am to 5 pm with a phone number with oncall system active 24/24;
- a counselling service for the hosted women open one day a week to draw tailor-made individual projects, created together with these women hosted in the building also through network meetings, empowerment spaces, orientation to work and support to parenthood.

In the 10 years of activity the center welcomed, oriented and supported 1105 women and about 300 minors. About 120 women and 60 minors were accommodated for variable periods, that were carefully defined based on the individual project of getting out of male violence and social emergency.

For Italy the number of beds in the refuge house indicated in the survey WAVE 2017 (Woman Against Violence Europe) is barely 680 while based on standards of the Istanbul Convention they should be 6.067.

The number of beds the Municipality of Rome has to oppose violence is shameful, they are less than 20 mainly dedicated to mother/child units, leaving out young women, women without children and old women.

We have often thought that if each Municipality of the city had a place as Lucha y Siesta, we would have 195 places to host women in an area going from the city center to the suburbs, we would have 15 houses of women, we would have 15 places where hospitality combines with sociability and aggregation to carry out projects of integration and autonomy. The 195 places wouldn't be the solution but that would show, as a matter of fact, the effort this problem requires and that would be the signal that no area must lag behind, as there are no female citizens belonging to B division.

In 2010 there was a first attempt to sell the building by the transport company that owns it. Open negotiations with the Municipality of Rome ended quickly given the proposal to clear the building and to solve the housing emergency of the 15 women that lived in the house at that time. Going through this chapter of the story of Lucha y Siesta again today is essential for us, as we are at risk again, to report how, since the beginning, it was clear for us that the Roman administration wasn't able to understand the complexity of the project of Lucha y Siesta. It wasn't at that time and it isn't now about finding accommodation for 15 women but giving real chances to the more than 1100 women who arrived after them, giving space and autonomy to an antiviolence centre that provides orientation, supports and hosts autonomy stories of women and minors. It was about and it is about giving us activists a space of feminist reflection, acting for the fight against male violence towards women, redefining it as a complex, systemic and cross-board phenomenon, concerning us all. It was therefore about enhancing a political lab with social participation, involving all the area and hundreds of projects. Ultimately, it is about choosing to replace speculation, waste and abandonment with a project of real enhancement, consisting in daily care, people that relate to each other, experiments, active inclusion and accessible culture.

Today Atac, whose financial bankruptcy risk is on every newspaper, accumulated a debt of more than a billion and four hundred millions that it intends to pay by a plan including, among other actions, the sale of most of the public estate patrimony, including the house of women Lucha y Siesta.

This unfortunate chapter - showing once again an intentional blindness in acknowledging the value of an experience and of a model able to find answers, both tangible and not tangible, to the vacuity of references and solutions - starts in December 2017.



Several times during these long months the seriousness of the situation was reported to the institutions and a prompt action was requested in order to exclude the building of Lucha y Siesta from the list of the directly alienable buildings, presented in the Atac economic recovery plan.

We believe that the several exchanges had with the communal and regional administration - an irregular series of absences, postponing and timid reassurances - were possible also thanks to the solidarity and the participation of those of who have got to know and experienced the reality of Lucha y Siesta and right now, continued together with us to reiterate with strength the importance and the centrality of the places of the women. These spaces build a better society, limit fear, loneliness, violence, racism, sexism and fascism.

The picture we look at today is not only a risk anymore, putting on sale the building that hosts Lucha y Siesta is a reality. So what initially appeared as a failure in taking responsibility concerning one of the most advanced experiments in the fight against male violence, is revealed, cruelly and inevitably, as a clear political plan aiming at emptying, dispersion and isolation.

The ruins of financial operations that are private-orientend and obtuse are left falling on us and on many more spaces with eviction letters, debt injunctions and failed renewal grants.

The social, civil and political value of the project of the house of women Lucha y Siesta in these years grew with the interventions started that became more and more structured, with the involved professionals and the individual and association contributions that were given and created new projects within the structure.

Trying to defend ourselves from privatisation and 'enhancement' of what is currently Lucha y Siesta, we have started a reflection starting from a different idea of value and convenience. We substituted enhancement and convenience from a financial point of view with another idea of value that makes it broader in a social sense and that finds in its financial component only one of its multiple aspects. If enhancement, that is giving value to something, means also taking care of a public asset and using it to achieve common projects, making them available to citizens and so, if that means giving all, men and women, the possibility to enrichen their own lives becoming part of a network of relations and social exchanges, then we are convinced we have produced a lot of value.

Is the sale of an apartment building really going to pay off a debt of several billions? Is closing a project that provides support and hospitality to women getting out of violence that one thinks to save the public transportation service? Can years and years of bad reputation and bad management be fought crushing everything that the self-organization of women built with strength?

We did the counts using the resources that the City of Rome and the Region of Lazio allocate normally for the services we have offered for free: below we have outlined the saved costs and the incurred costs, in addition to a social balance that makes it immediately clear as the project of the women's house constitutes a wealth to which the city of Rome can not give up.

ANTI-VIOLENCE CENTER - COUNSELLING SERVICE

Annual cost supported by public institutions for this service: €59.564,33

Annual service hours: 1776

Total costs for 10 years: **€ 595.643,30**

Estimate carried out with reference to the call
of the Municipality of Rome n. 21 of 2017

REFUGUE HOUSE

Biennial cost supported by public institutions for this service: €460.408,97

10 places for every 6 months

Total costs for 10 years: **€ 2.302.044,85**

Estimate carried out with reference to the call of the Municipality of Rome n.34 of 2017 for 2 years

INFORMATION AND AWARENESS RAISING ACTIVITY ON GENDER PROBLEMS

(in schools, cultural centers and through initiatives in the House)

Annual cost supported by public institutions for this service: €20.000,00

Total costs for 10 years: **€ 200.000,00**

Estimate carried out with reference to the call of the Lazio Region Violence of Gender 2016

WORK ORIENTATION

Annual cost supported by public institutions for this service: €23.280,00

14 users for 1 year

Total costs for 10 years: **€ 232.800,00**

ACCOMPLISHED WORKS

Demolitions € 2.193,26

Waterproofing € 6.503,66

Drawers € 1.149,50

Partitions and plasters € 23.321,60

House painting € 13.854,05

False ceilings € 5.775,36

Coverings and floors € 3.843,01

Stone works € 871,00

Electrical system € 3.850,00

Water and sanitary system € 10.385,33

Total costs for 10 years: **€ 79.514,37**

TOTAL COSTS FOR 10 YEARS: € 3.410.002,52

In these years of activity carried out with passion and desire, the house of women Lucha y Siesta, looked after, participated and helped in the construction of a tight network of relations with different associations at a local, national and international level.

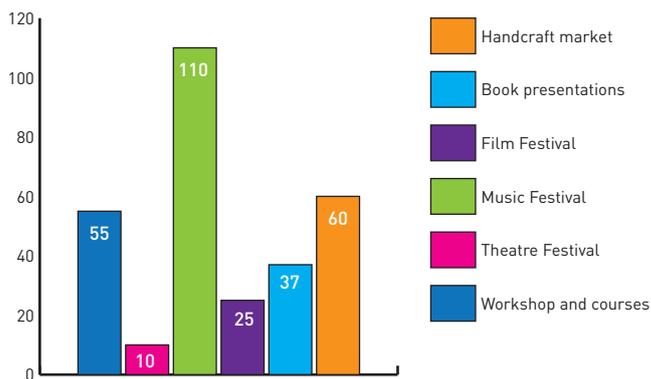


It is in fact involved in carrying out networking activities with feminist unions and spaces all over the world, from Argentina to Mexico, from Palestine to Kurdistan. Lucha y Siesta has always preferred setting objectives towards solidarity and feminist sisterhood, rather than towards individualism and rhetoric of identity. This has led us to believe and participate in the project of the network Non Una Di Meno, finding its impulse and its aspiration in the international network Ni Una Menos born in Argentina in 2015.

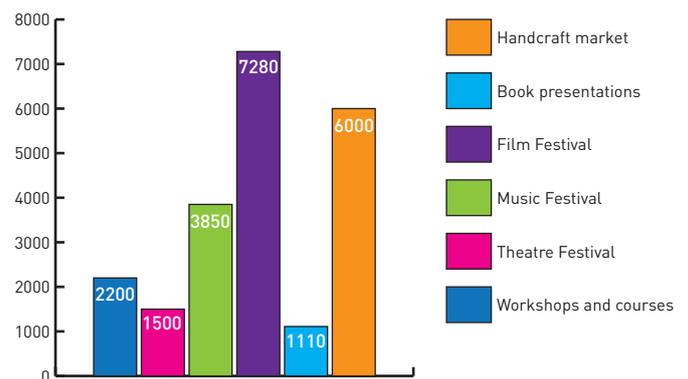
PARTNER

Servizi Sociali del Municipio III, V, VII, VIII Roma Capitale; Centro Comunale assistenza e accoglienza per donne vittime di violenza Donatella Colasanti e Rosaria Lopez; Casa Rifugio "La Ginestra", Centro Provinciale di accoglienza e assistenza sociale per donne in difficoltà, Valmontone; Consultorio Familiare Asl Roma B; Be Free Cooperativa sociale contro tratta, violenze e discriminazioni; Associazione Donne in Genere O.N.L.U.S; Associazione Ponte Donna; Freedom for Birth - Rome Action Group; Associazione Il Cortile - Consultorio di Psicoanalisi Applicata; Società Cooperativa Sociale Stand Up; Casa Internazionale delle Donne - Roma; Sportello Antiviolenza "Una stanza tutta per sé" - Roma; Circolo di Cultura Omosessuale Mario Mieli; Cooperativa Sociale Le Rose Blu; Casa Cereza, San Cristobal de Las Casas - Messico; Reseaux des Femmes de Keur Marietou, Energia per i diritti Umani onlus - Senegal; Wofak - Beyond Hiv and Aids, Ong Nairobi - Kenia; Kijiji Cha Upendo (Village of Love), Ass. Nairobi - Kenia; ActionAid International Italia Onlus

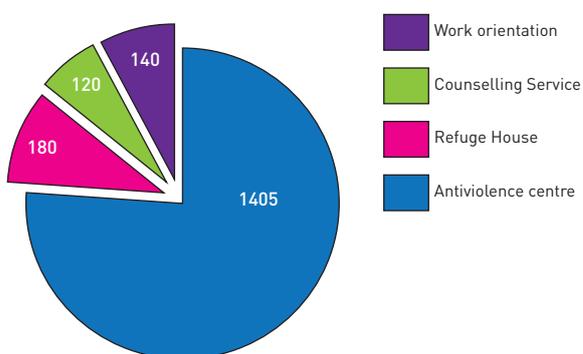
CULTURAL ACTIVITY



PARTECIPANTS



SERVICES



INFO

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