

A study on domestic gender crimes and the protection of orphans: the experience of social services in Italy

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Abstract

The orphans of domestic crime constitute the hidden face of human and family violence. Indirect violence on children in a family unit affects their imagination, their certainties, their emotional, affective and psychic world, their present and their future. From this emerges the need to ensure preventive interventions to support fragile parenting and in situations where educational competences are most at risk. To the pain of loss are added other difficulties of a different nature: material, emotional, social and judicial. The dramatic condition experienced by orphans for domestic crimes, of which gender-based homicides are often the main cause, calls for specific attention, which requires the deployment of adequate and efficient tools, capable of providing a rapid response to their multiple needs, also with reference to the new family context. This study aims to identify the real needs and requirements of the orphans of such crimes, good practices and critical points in the system, and this in response to both the demands of Article 19 of the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and Adolescent, which provides for the use of all legislative, administrative social and educational measures to protect children against all forms of violence, to prevent them from being orphaned three times over, due to the loss of both parents and the indifference of the state, and to other more recent European recommendations to prevent and combat violence against children, with particular reference to the family environment.

Keywords: *Orphans; crime; family; social services; gender violence; gender homicide.*

1. Introduction

When the situation of violence has already occurred, the duty of a state that bases its reason for existence on the protection of fundamental rights is transformed into a duty of timely intervention, also aimed at repairing the damage. In general, according to Aizer (2010), the murder of one parent by the other causes children to experience a trauma aggravated by the simultaneous loss of two fundamental reference figures (the victim parent and the perpetrator parent, who is either imprisoned or suicidal). This is a complex phenomenon whose true extent is unknown and which the State has a duty to counter at the cultural, regulatory and judicial levels, adopting, as provided for in Article 19 of the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and Adolescents, 'every legislative,

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administrative, social and educational measure to protect the child against all forms of violence', to prevent these children from being orphaned three times over, through the loss of both parents and the indifference of the state (Felice 2019). There is a need for a general intervention strategy to prevent and combat violence against persons under the age of 18, also in the wake of the recommendations of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child and Adolescent contained in the concluding observations to Italy's Fifth and Sixth Periodic Reports of 1 February 2019 (CRC/C/ITA/CO/5-6). Actions are needed to listen to and support children and adolescents, as well as material and psychological support to foster families. In Italy, the protection system has recently been strengthened with Law No. 4 of 11 January 2018, which contains a series of provisions to protect economically non-self-sufficient minor and adult children orphaned as a result of a domestic crime, born from any type of union, including non-marital (Muscialini and De Maglie 2017). In 2019, again in Italy, a special group of experts was set up to deal with the delicate issue of the protection of orphans for domestic crimes, with precise directives aimed at surveying (a) of the procedural instruments capable of safeguarding and protecting the orphan child, with particular reference to cases of forfeiture of parental responsibility, the methods of fostering to third parties and any relations between the minor and the parent responsible for the murder of the other; (b) of the means activated to provide support to orphans for domestic crimes and foster carers (training courses for foster carers of minor victims of domestic violence), and also with the task of: 1) to examine the regional rules and municipal regulations that have intervened on the subject, in order to identify good practices and disseminate them; 2) to carry out a qualitative analysis of the phenomenon through interviews with the children directly concerned, foster carers and associations, in order to understand their needs; 3) to verify how the provisions of Law no. 4 of 2018, with reference to minors orphaned by a parent as a result of a homicide committed by the spouse, even if legally separated or divorced, or by the person who is, or was, bound by a loving relationship and stable cohabitation (Bruno 2022). The survey on the measures issued by the Juvenile Courts in favour of orphans for domestic crimes was conducted on the basis of a list of women who were victims of domestic crimes in Italy in the years 2018-2019-2020, potentially mothers of minor children. The examination of the measures revealed and compared the following aspects: - the characteristics of the crime (type, relations between the offender and the minor(s)); the socio-demographic data of the minors and of the family unit as a whole; the methods of reporting to the Juvenile Court; the presence of the minor at the time of the murder; the procedures adopted (ex art. 333 Italian Civil Code/adoption); the procedures for representing and listening to the minor; the summoning of the offender, other family members or other persons involved; the presence of psycho-social investigations; the acquisition of the criminal investigation files the parental responsibility interventions, if any, in the interim decree; the characteristics of the interim placement; the regulation of relations between the juvenile and the offender and between the juvenile and the offender's family members; the characteristics of the definitive placement of the juvenile(s); the application of the measures provided for in Law no. 4 of 2018; the support interventions in favour of the juvenile and foster carers (typology and subjects in charge); the interventions on parental responsibility in the final decree; the possible opening of administrative proceedings for the continuation until the age of 21 (Ammirati 2020).

2. The International Legal Framework

In the international context, there are no provisions specifically regulating the status of orphans for domestic crimes or providing for intervention measures against them. However, in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and Adolescent and in the Istanbul Convention, there are principled norms, of general scope, which protect victims of violence and therefore also apply to orphans for domestic crimes (Baldry 2018). Specifically, the UN Convention, in Article 19 provides that States must take all legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect children and young people from all forms of violence, physical or mental outrage or brutality, abandonment or neglect, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual violence (protection and prevention are the first mandate for institutional actors); in Article 20 it provides that every child temporarily or permanently deprived of his or her family environment is entitled to special protection and aid from the State. States shall provide substitute protection for these persons in accordance with their national legislation. "Such substitute protection may in particular take the form of a family. In making a choice between these solutions, due consideration shall be given to the need for continuity in the child's upbringing, as well as to the child's ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic background. Article 39 of the Convention states that States (parties to the UN) shall take all measures to facilitate the physical and psychological readjustment and social reintegration of any child who has been the victim of any form of neglect, exploitation or abuse. Such readjustment and reintegration must take place in conditions that promote the health, self-respect and dignity of the child (Cucchiara 2015; Ilie Goga 2015). The Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating violence against women (including minors) and domestic violence, ratified and made enforceable in Italy by Law no. 77, explicitly requires states to "collect at regular intervals relevant disaggregated statistical data on matters relating to any form of violence falling within the scope of the Convention and to support research on these specific forms of violence, in order to study their root causes and effects, the frequency and rates of convictions, as well as the effectiveness of measures taken for the purposes of implementing the Convention itself". In particular, the Istanbul Convention in Article 26 (Protection of and support for children who witness violence) provides that States shall adopt such legislative and other measures as may be necessary to ensure that the rights and needs of children who witness all forms of violence falling within the scope of the Convention are taken into account in protection and victim support services. The measures taken include psychosocial counselling appropriate to the age of the child witnesses of all forms of violence within the scope of the Convention and take due account of the best interests of the child. Article 46 (Aggravating circumstances) also provides that States shall adopt such legislative and other measures as may be necessary to ensure that the following circumstances may be considered as aggravating circumstances in determining the punishment for offences established in accordance with the Convention. Aggravating circumstances include the fact that the offence was committed on a child or in the presence of a child (Gadd and Jefferson 2016).

3. The Italian regulatory context

According to Roia (2018), the national regulatory system of protection has been strengthened by Law No. 4 of 11 January 2018, which contains a series of provisions aimed at the minor and economically non-self-sufficient adult children of the victim of a homicide committed by the spouse (even if separated or divorced), by the partner in a civil union (even if terminated) or by a person who is or has been bound by an affective

relationship and stable cohabitation. It should be noted that the text equates spousal homicide with homicide committed by a civil union partner and a cohabiting partner, thus protecting children born of any type of union, including non-marital ones. It should also be noted that the law does not give a gender connotation to victims and perpetrators, so it does not refer only to 'femicide' (gender-based homicide), even though this phenomenon is the most widespread case. The main new elements contained in Law No. 4 of 11 January 2018 are: 1) legal aid: Article 1 of the law amends the Consolidated Law on Legal Expenses (Presidential Decree No. 115 of 2002), allowing also minor or adult children who are not economically self-sufficient - such as orphans for domestic crimes - to access legal aid regardless of income limits. The State bears the costs in both criminal and civil proceedings; 2) the equalization of marital relationships with cohabiting relationships: Article 2 eliminates the unequal treatment between spouses and cohabiting relationships, by intervening on the text of Article 577, paragraph 2, of the penal code, which provided for the application of the aggravating circumstance only in the presence of marital relationships; 3) attachment: Article 3 provides for the obligation of the Public Prosecutor to verify the presence of children (minors or non-self-sufficient adults) and to request, at any stage and level of the proceedings, the precautionary seizure of the suspect's property to guarantee the right to compensation for civil damages suffered by the victim's children; 4) the provisional measure Article 4 provides that "the Judge, having ascertained the presence of minor or adult children who are economically non self-sufficient, who have joined the proceedings as civil plaintiffs, shall provide, also ex officio, for the allocation of a provisional provision in their favour, in an amount not less than 50% of the presumable damage"; 5) the unworthiness to inherit Article 5 establishes indignity to succession for a person who is under investigation for voluntary or attempted murder against the other spouse, even if legally separated, or against the other party to the civil partnership. The suspect is suspended from the succession until the decree of dismissal or final acquittal. In the event of conviction, he shall be excluded from the succession, as he is unworthy of inheritance pursuant to Article 463 of the Civil Code; 6) the survivor's pension: article 7 has provided for the suspension of the survivor's pension or the one-off allowance of the spouse for whom an application has been made for trial for voluntary manslaughter against the other spouse, even if legally separated or divorced, or of the other party to the civil partnership, even if the civil partnership has ceased, until the final judgment. During this period the pension, with no obligation of restitution, will be received by the victim's children; 7) the right of access to assistance services: the State, the regions and the local autonomies are called upon to promote and organise forms of assistance to victims, information, assistance and counselling services, as well as measures to support study and work placement for orphans of domestic crimes; 8) medical-psychological assistance in favour of orphaned children, the law ensures free medical-psychological assistance, by the national health service, for as long as is necessary for the full recovery of their psychological balance, with exemption from health and pharmaceutical expenses; 9) fostering: the law provides for the enhancement by the Judge, in the procedure of custody orders, of the continuity of the affective relations established between the minor and relatives not beyond the third degree, also with reference to the presence of brothers or sisters; 10) the solidarity revolving fund: the fund, initially provided only for the victims of mafia-type crimes, extortion demands, usury and violent intentional crimes, has been extended also to orphans for domestic crimes. As of 2017, the fund's endowment has been increased by two million euros per year (70 per cent for minors and 30 per cent for adults who are not economically self-sufficient), for the

provision of scholarships for orphans for domestic crimes and the financing of orientation, training and support initiatives for their inclusion in the work circuit; 11) forfeiture of public housing: Article 12 of the law states that 'the convicted person assigned public housing shall forfeit the relevant assignment. In such a case, the other cohabiting persons do not lose the right to housing and take over the ownership of the contract'; 12) the change of surname: Article 13 provides for the possibility for the children of the victim of the crime to change their surname where it coincides with that of the parent convicted of the murder; 13) recruitment in the world of work: the law provides for the allocation of the right to the reserve quota in recruitment pursuant to Article 18, paragraph 2, of Law No. 68 of 12 March 1999. To conclude, On 9 August 2019, Law No. 69 of 19 July 2019 on 'Amendments to the Criminal Code, the Code of Criminal Procedure and other provisions on the protection of victims of domestic and gender-based violence, called Code Red' came into force.

4. The conditions of orphans following domestic crimes

According to the most established scientific literature, children and young people orphaned by domestic crimes show post-traumatic stress disorders: for them, the traumatic event is experienced as a watershed between 'before' and 'after' (Lovrin 1999). Symptoms and consequences in domestic crime orphans can manifest themselves on several levels and in different areas. In some cases, they can develop into psychopathological forms typical of disorders related to traumatic and stressful events (Prandi 2020). The lives of children and foster families are no longer the same: all those involved develop a kind of hypersensitivity to potential danger signals, so much so that they constantly live in a state of alertness and tension that conditions everyday life. In very young orphans, there is significant emotional and psychological distress: many of them relate in words or drawings some of the tragic events that occurred (Alisic et al. 2014). Significant emotional and psychological suffering is found in all orphans, which can result, if left untreated, in chronic anxiety and depressive disorders. Many of them report verbally, or, especially the youngest, with drawings, some of the tragic events that occurred (Holland et al. 2020). There are clear signs of distress, worry and fear. The pain will still have to be processed, but the internal suffering after such events will be permanent. At every developmental stage, the memory, grief and anger over the events experienced will be present. If not attended to in a timely manner, orphans may manifest a strong sense of guilt for not having protected their mother and, therefore, a sense of responsibility for what happened (Giusio and Quattrocchio 2014). Many orphaned children 'protect' themselves through processes of dissociation, slipping into a parallel world (Fraud 2021). Others may develop obsessive disorders by which they try to control a world perceived as fearful and threatening. After the death of the mother there follows a very delicate phase of existence that requires caution and attention in order to accompany children through the long and painful, but necessary, grieving process, with maximum respect for individual times, without anticipating or forcing the pace (Cohen and Mannarino 2022). All children need a serene and reassuring environment that allows for a life marked by regularity and predictability (Romito and Melato 2017). For traumatised children, these elements really become indispensable. For these reasons, it is necessary to activate concrete aid to support foster carers, who sometimes already have their own children, who also need to understand what has happened and to be reassured. These facts show how it is necessary to build a solid affective and relational network to support the foster family and the children in their growth. The trauma suffered as a result of the loss of the mother

frequently entails a possible estrangement on the part of the minor, who will tend to take refuge in a "world of his own" that apparently makes him feel safer. In spite of this phase, it is necessary to intervene by expanding the relationships, in order to build a socio-relational experience that is as functional as possible to the minor's overcoming of the trauma (Buccoliero and Soavi 2018). The foster family and the children need to know that whenever they need help, an expert professional will be at their disposal to overcome the consequences of the painful trauma they have suffered. Their condition, which is not comparable in its characteristics to other conditions of psychic suffering, must be addressed by taking into account a number of critical damage-specific issues. These include, in particular, the lack of timely disclosure of the mother's death (Herman 2005). The need to mask the violent death and protect orphans from further harm often results in a strategy that tends to maintain silence rather than inform. It should be remembered that the elaboration of grief cannot disregard the awareness of one's mother's death and, instead, this process is neglected and postponed (Foschino Barbaro and Pellegrini 2015). The reasons behind these choices are mainly linked to the following factors: 1) in cases where the minor was present, the event is neglected because it is erroneously believed that this evocation of memories can cause further and gratuitous pain, not recognising the value of narration as the cathartic experience necessary to overcome the trauma suffered (Lanius 2012); 2) inability and unpreparedness of the caregivers to deal with the subject, not knowing which words to use and how to choose the moment (Grazzani 2014). It is therefore important to guarantee specific support from the socio-health services in charge with the help of local associations and to create a mapping of local associations that can be referred to. Helpers should also act according to emergency-emergency protocols, as required by guidelines for other traumatic events. Post-traumatic stress disorders, which are particularly recognisable in children who have been eyewitnesses to the murder, but not only, should be taken care of quickly and preferably within 48 hours of the incident (Lieberman et al. 2007). This is not just a sudden bereavement, but a form of loss that occurs at the hands of one of the two figures who should have been caring for the child. It is essential to help all those involved to overcome grief but, above all, to grieve, i.e. to accompany them in a process that includes, among its main stages, that of accepting the reality of the facts and the irreversibility of death. Generally speaking and in continuity with what previous studies have already shown, what emerges from the narratives is the need for orphans and their foster families to be able to count on a network of professionals. Teachers, lawyers, law enforcement agencies, social workers, psychologists and psychotherapists who, with adequate theoretical and practical training and with relational and empathic skills, can intervene on this complex problem, both in the short and long term (De Carli and Pignataro 2021).

5. The experience of Italian social services on domestic crimes and orphan protection: tools and limits

In Italy, social services are periodically consulted through a request to answer a questionnaire drawn up by the National Council of Associations and Organisations for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Children and Adolescents (Balducci and Tre Re 2016). The questionnaire is forwarded to some social services with a note signed by the Supervisory Authority for Children and Adolescents (Franzoni and Anconelli 2021). The last survey covered the three-year period 2018-2020. The practice is for the questionnaire to be divided into two sections: one addressed to social service managers (Tab.1) and the other to social workers, orphans and orphan caregivers, also with interviews (Tab. 2),

inviting the categories (managers and social workers) to fill in the online questionnaire directly, in the case of experiences of taking care of orphans for domestic crimes.

Tab. 1 (Thematic areas of the survey submitted to social services managers)
(Source: Authority for Childhood and Adolescence - Italy)

Thematic areas	Persons involved in the survey	Survey instruments
Established practices for the care of orphaned minors for domestic crimes.	Managers of social services	Questionnaire
The training of social service workers on gender-based violence and Law No. 4 of 2018.	Managers of social services	Questionnaire
Network protocols in interventions aimed at orphans for domestic crimes; collaborations with local actors.	Managers of social services	Questionnaire
Servizi di supporto ai minorenni orfani e agli affidatari.	Managers of social services	Questionnaire

Tab. 2 (Thematic areas of the survey submitted to social workers, orphans, orphans' caregivers)
(Source: Guarantor Authority for Childhood and Adolescence - Italy)

Thematic areas	Persons involved in the survey	Survey instruments
Medical/psychological care/support services from which the orphan has benefited.	Social workers	Questionnaire
Referral to specialist medical services and possible hospitalisation of the orphan.	Social workers	Questionnaire
Neuropsychiatric and psychotherapeutic support services for foster carers.	Social workers	Questionnaire
Financial support services for orphans and/or foster carers.	Social workers	Questionnaire
Foster care practices (foster carers, timing of foster care, confirmation of foster care over time, motivations for out-of-family foster care).	Social workers	Questionnaire
Characterisation of intra-familial relations (between the family of the victim of femicide and that of the murderer) and orphan-father relations in case the latter is the murderer.	Orphans (adult) and orphan foster parents	Interviews
Application of the tools provided by Law No. 4 of 2018 (change of	Social workers	Questionnaire

surname, legal aid, obtaining a provision in criminal proceedings, communications to Inps for law enforcement purposes).		
Socio-demographic information on the orphan (compatible with the protection of anonymity).	Social workers - Foster carers of orphans	Questionnaire/Interviews
Reflections of femicide on the orphan's school career.	Social workers - Orphans and foster carers	Questionnaire/Interviews
Activation of individualised plans/projects	Social workers	Questionnaire

6. Discussion of the study results

As far as the results are concerned, since this survey was carried out in parallel with the one involving the Juvenile Courts, the focus is on information that is complementary to that which can be acquired from the aforementioned measures. The thematic areas of the questionnaire are inspired by the project "Who, where, what. Supporting witness children orphans from femicide in Europe - Switch-off". This led to the definition of a number of key topics around which the survey instruments were constructed. With reference to the questionnaire addressed to social workers, the council chose to focus the survey on certain characteristics concerning the interventions provided by the social services in favour of orphans and, at the same time, to collect information on the condition of orphans themselves. The sample of interviewees was identified with the cooperation of associations operating in Italy to support orphans. Despite the diversity of the survey instruments used, the homogeneity of the topics dealt with made it possible to compare the voices of the various actors involved and of the orphans themselves with respect to the procedures for taking charge, protection and support that have been set up. On the contrary, the outline of topics in the questionnaire addressed to social service managers maintained its own specificity. In this case, in fact, the Council chose to focus on aspects that are more pertinent with respect to the level of service coordination. These include: the existence of consolidated practices for taking charge of minors orphaned by domestic crimes, the provision of targeted staff training on the subject, and the activation of territorial network protocols. The picture that emerges shows a fragile system, in difficulty, in which different actions are found, both because of the peculiarities of each case and because of the lack of consolidated experiences and of unitary and clear indications on the interventions to be implemented. It emerged that the taking in charge of the orphan usually takes place between one and three months after the mother's murder. In addition to this, the placement of some orphaned children took place between the third month and one year after the fact. These two events indicate particularly serious facts of a system that took an excessive amount of time before it was activated. In the majority of cases there are no network protocols for intervention to support orphans for domestic crimes: this means that the orphan and his or her family are alone and do not receive the intervention and support they need (Authority for Children and Adolescents). This fact is reinforced by the fact that only a few social workers stated that there is collaboration with associations in the area. Another order of reflections concerns the applicability of Law No. 4 of 2018. In this regard, the findings of the survey show that the targeted training of social workers on the contents of the aforementioned law is still too little widespread practice. This fact calls with great urgency for the preparation of training programmes to implement the specific skills of operators in this field. At the same time, taking into

account that some cases of orphan assistance may have occurred prior to the approval of Law No. 4 of 2018, it is necessary to disseminate information on the rights recognised by the law, so that the opportunity to benefit from it is also guaranteed in these cases. As far as psychophysical support measures for orphans are concerned, the survey conducted reveals that practices of early initiation of psychotherapeutic courses are significantly widespread. At the same time, it is noted that the preparation of individualised plans/projects, which would allow continuous monitoring over time of the orphan's environmental situation and psychophysical state, is mainly, and not always, an initiative of the social services and the Juvenile Courts. Rarely does this type of monitoring programming involve the local health authorities and, in general, the health services. The data of the exploratory survey conducted point, in this direction, to the need for a systemisation of the interventions implemented by the different institutional subjects called to respond to the support needs of orphans for domestic crimes. With particular reference to the support measures for the orphans' foster carers, then, although the survey conducted with the managers of the social services shows that in most cases support measures are provided for the orphans' foster carers, the survey with the social workers shows that only in two thirds of the cases the foster carers benefited from neuropsychiatric and/or psychotherapeutic support interventions. This datum acquires further relevance if we consider that in the sample surveyed, the orphan's foster carers are mainly relatives of the murdered mother, who will therefore have to face the emotions linked to the killing of a person usually very close to them, and that the inter-familial relationships with the family of the murdered parent are often characterised by conflict. In this sense, it seems opportune to recall the need to guarantee dedicated support measures that accompany the foster family in the phases following the trauma of the loss and facilitate the role it will play with the orphan. A final aspect concerns the activation of territorial networks to take charge of orphans for domestic crimes and their foster families. The data reported by the managers of the social services with respect to the cooperation of their service with associations in the territory show that in most of the cases considered there was no involvement of associations. Although the sample of the survey does not allow for generalisations, it seems appropriate to recall that Law No. 4 of 2018 provides that the State, the regions and the local autonomies favour "the activity of voluntary organisations, coordinating it with that of the public services" (art. 8). This reference can be understood as an implicit recognition of the experience gained in the sector by local associations and anti-violence centres, as well as the opportunity that these entities, with their work, can offer in terms of creating a social fabric to support orphans for domestic crimes.

7. Recommendation

The survey carried out by the National Council of Associations and Organisations for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Children and Adolescents offered the opportunity to trace some trend lines of the interventions and practices of the social services with reference to the care of orphans for domestic crimes and their caregivers. The picture that emerges shows a fragile system, in difficulty, in which different actions are found, both because of the peculiarities of each case and because of the lack of consolidated experiences and of unitary and clear indications on the interventions to be implemented:

1. The data on the presence of an individualised project/plan show the fragility and weakness of the system; in addition, there are delays in the placement of the orphan(s) after a period of between three months and a year from the mother's homicide. In the

majority of cases, there are no network protocols for intervention to support orphans for domestic crimes: this means that the orphan and his/her host family are alone and do not receive the intervention and support they need;

2. Another order of reflections concerns the applicability of Italian Law No. 4 of 2018. In this regard, the findings of the survey show that the targeted training of social workers on the contents of the aforementioned law is still too little widespread. This fact calls urgently for the preparation of training programmes to implement the specific skills of operators in this field;

3. As far as psychophysical support measures for orphans are concerned, it is noted that the practice of early initiation of psychotherapeutic courses is significantly widespread. At the same time, it is noted that the preparation of individualised plans/projects is mainly, and not always, an initiative of the social services and the Juvenile Courts. Rarely does this type of monitoring programming involve the territorial Asl and, in general, the health services;

4. With particular reference to the support measures for the orphans' foster carers, the survey with social workers shows that in only two thirds of the cases did the foster carers benefit from neuropsychiatric and/or psychotherapeutic support interventions;

5. The orphan's foster carers are mostly relatives of the murdered mother - who will therefore have to deal with the emotions linked to the killing of a person usually very close to them - and, as we have seen, inter-family relations with the family of the murdered parent are often characterised by conflict. In this sense, it seems opportune to recall the need to guarantee dedicated support measures that accompany the foster family in the phases following the trauma of the loss and facilitate the role it will play with the orphan. Although the circumscribed sample intercepted by the survey does not allow generalisations, it seems appropriate to recall that Law No. 4 of 2018 provides that the State, the regions and the local autonomies favour "the activity of voluntary organisations, coordinating it with that of the public services" (art. 8). This reference can be understood as an implicit recognition of the experience gained in the sector by local associations and anti-violence centres, as well as the opportunity that these entities, with their work, can offer in terms of creating a social fabric to support orphans for domestic crimes.

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