



IMPACT REPORT

WP5-A2 - DISSEMINATION AND MULTIPLICATION EVENT

OCTOBER 15, 2024 | ROME, ITALY



Co-funded by
the European Union

PROJECT: "RESILIENCE AND INCLUSION FOR THE MILITARY"
2022-1-R201-KA220-VET-000085808

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- October 15, 2024 | ROME, ITALY -

Erasmus+ Programme – Strategic Partnership

Project **“Resilience and inclusion for the military”**

2022-1-Ro01-Ka220-Wet-000085808

Partners:

DIGITAL KOMPASS - Bucharest, Romania

I.V. International - Foggia, Italy

Organization for Promotion of European Issues - Paphos, Cipru

BUMIR - Bucharest, Romania

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Location: Rome, Italy

Organizer: Igor Vitale International

Number of Participants: 83 people

Date: October 15, 2024

1. Introduction

The dissemination event organized in Milan aimed to present the results and impact of the project "Resilience and Inclusion for the Military", a program funded at European level to support veterans affected by PTSD. Italy, with a significant military community, is a context in which support for veterans' mental health is of crucial importance.

2. Main objectives of the event

- ✦ Raising awareness of PTSD and its long-term effects on veterans.
- ✦ Promoting the educational resources developed within the project: the brochure "Il Fronte Invisibile" and the online course dedicated to mental health professionals.
- ✦ Presentation and demonstration of the digital application "Freedom for Army", a modern tool to support the mental health of veterans.
- ✦ Facilitating the exchange of best practices between participants and developing interdisciplinary collaborations in support of veterans.

3. Conduct of the event

a. Registration and official opening

The event began with the registration of the participants, and they received information folders containing the brochure "Il Fronte Invisibile" and guides on how to access the online course. The atmosphere was positive, but initially more reserved, with many of the participants coming from various regions of Italy and having no previous connections.

The keynote speech, delivered by the Italian project coordinator, highlighted the importance of continuous and effective support for veterans experiencing psychological trauma. The speech referred to recent studies showing that PTSD affects an increasing number of Italian veterans, which underlines the need for support resources tailored to the local context.

b. Presentation of the context and motivation of the project

The presentation of the context highlighted the specific challenges of the Italian military community, including the lack of specialized resources to support the mental health of veterans. During the session, case examples from Italy were discussed, which highlighted the importance of early interventions in preventing the worsening of PTSD.

The session was well received, but participants asked for more concrete examples of how the project can be implemented within existing veterans' support programs in Italy.

c. Presentation of the objectives and results of the project

This session was essential to familiarize the participants with the tangible results of the project:

- ◆ The brochure "Il Fronte Invisibile" was appreciated for the practical information it provides to professionals working with veterans. However, questions were raised about adapting the material to the Italian cultural specificity.
- ◆ The online course was presented as a flexible and easy-to-access resource intended for training those working in rehabilitation centers and mental health clinics.
- ◆ The demonstration of the "Freedom for Army" application was the focus of this session, with participants being invited to explore the functionalities of the application on their

own devices. However, interest was moderate, and some participants expressed reservations about the effectiveness of the app in the Italian context.

The breaks gave the participants the opportunity to get to know each other and discuss the topics addressed. Although the interactions were constructive, the atmosphere was less dynamic than that observed at other similar dissemination events.

The participants appreciated the informal discussions, but mentioned that they would have preferred a more structured format for networking, which would facilitate the identification of possible concrete collaborations.

d. Demonstration of the "Freedom for Army" app

The app was presented as a modern digital tool, meant to support veterans in managing post-traumatic stress through self-help techniques.

The participants appreciated the interface of the application, but they had questions about its adaptability to the cultural and specific needs of Italian veterans. Some suggested the inclusion of additional functionalities, such as support in Italian and the integration of local resources.

e. Q&A

This session was an opportunity for participants to ask questions to the project team. Although some relevant questions were raised, the level of interaction was moderate. Participants were particularly interested in:

- Long-term sustainability of the project in the Italian context.
- The possibilities of integrating the application into existing mental health programs.
- Cultural challenges in adapting project resources for local communities.

During the closing ceremony, diplomas of participation were awarded, and the organizers thanked the participants for their interest. Although the event ended on a positive note, some participants suggested in the feedback that they would have preferred more interactive sessions and more case studies adapted to the Italian context.

4. Participant feedback

Results of the feedback questionnaire

Of the 83 people present, 78 completed the feedback questionnaire. Here is a summary of the answers:

a. Overall quality of the event

- Excelent: 55%
- Very good: 35%
- Good: 10%

b. Relevance of the information presented

- Highly relevant: 60%
- Highly relevant: 30%
- Moderately relevant: 10%

c. Usefulness of the "Freedom for Army" app

- Very helpful: 50%
- Useful in some contexts: 30%
- Needs improvement: 20%

d. Intention to recommend project resources

- Yes: 80%
- I'm not sure: 20%

e. Answers to open-ended questions

- "The app has potential, but I think it needs to be customized more for Italian veterans."
- "I liked the brochure, but I would have liked more case studies specific to Italy."
- "The event was well organized, but I would have liked more interactive sessions."

5. Assessing the impact of the event

A. The impact of the event on the participants and the community

The dissemination event in Milan had a **significant impact** on both the participants and the wider community. The event contributed in a notable way to **raising awareness** about PTSD and highlighted the urgent need for support for Italian veterans.

The positive impact on the participants consisted in the fact that they left more informed and more prepared to address the problem of PTSD in their professional activity. In particular, the event managed to raise awareness among the military personnel and psychologists present about the psychological difficulties faced by veterans retired from theaters of operations. Some participants noted that as a result of the event, they gained a **deeper understanding** of the long-term effects of trauma and expressed a desire to implement the resources presented in their current work.

B. Impact on veterans and the general public

This event was also important for veterans, as it highlighted the **importance of continuous psychological support** for social and professional reintegration. **The impact on veterans** could be long-lasting, especially through the use of the "Freedom for Army" app in rehabilitation and psychological support centers. The app has the potential to become a **valuable tool in support of mental health**, once it is adapted to the cultural and linguistic needs of Italian users.

The general public has also been indirectly targeted through the dissemination of the booklet "Il Fronte Invisibile", which will be distributed in several support centers and local libraries. Thus, the event had a **positive impact on community education**, contributing to a better understanding of the issue of PTSD among the civilian population.

C. Impact on professional collaborations and exchange of best practices

The event provided a conducive framework for the **exchange of ideas and best practices** between professionals in the field of mental health and support for veterans. Although the level of interaction was more moderate than in other locations, some **promising collaborations** were initiated between NGOs and rehabilitation centers. These collaborations could lead to **joint projects that support veterans** sustainably in the long term.

Participants appreciated the opportunity to learn from each other and share **strategies for managing PTSD**. This **impact on professional collaborations** is crucial, as it opens up new opportunities to support veterans in a more coordinated and effective way.

D. Impact of the app and educational materials on veterans

Although the initial impact of the "Freedom for Army" app was more reserved, participants recognized that, once adapted, it could become an **essential tool for Italian veterans**, providing them with constant support in managing PTSD symptoms. The app has the potential to make a significant impact on **users' autonomy and well-being**, allowing them to better manage their emotional states and find support resources directly on their phone.

The brochure "Il Fronte Invisibile" was considered a **valuable educational tool**, which can have a real impact on **awareness and sensitization** among the Italian public. By distributing this booklet in community centers and through partnerships with various institutions, the project has the potential to change **mentalities and perceptions** related to veterans' mental health.

6. Conclusion

Strategic impact for the future

In conclusion, **the impact of the dissemination event in Italy was nevertheless significant** in terms of raising awareness and stimulating collaborations. The participants left better informed and more motivated to contribute to supporting Italian veterans.

The long-term importance of this event lies in opening new channels of collaboration and disseminating valuable educational resources that can have a transformative impact on military **mental health** and the broader community.

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