

Garance ASBL

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Self-defense for women as a means of primary violence prevention is not widely recognized. This is why Garance was founded in 2000: to teach women and girls the social, verbal and physical skills necessary to prevent violence and effectively protect and defend their psychological, physical and sexual integrity. We believe that gender-based violence is preventable through deconstructing gender stereotypes and that working not only with potential perpetrators, but also with potential victims is a key strategy in combating violence. On this basis, Garance developed specific activities on domestic violence, violence against lesbians, teacher training and training for professionals working with women. Garance is a member of the Belgian coordination of the Global Women's March Against Violence and Poverty, of the French-speaking Belgian Network for the Elimination of Partner Violence and of V-Day Europe.

VPA focal person



Irene Zeilinger

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Irene Zeilinger earned a Master degree in sociology from the University of Vienna, Austria. She has 15 years of work experience in different contexts, most of them with the objective to end violence against women: as a self-defense teacher, working in the fields of human rights and corporate social responsibility and as an activist. After teaching self-defense in Austria, Mexico and Nicaragua, she founded Garance in Belgium. Today, she is the executive director of Garance.