

PREVENTING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN THROUGH FORMAL AND INFORMAL EDUCATION: ARTICLE 14 OF THE ISTANBUL CONVENTION



A collection of papers
on the Council of Europe Convention
on preventing and combating violence
against women and domestic violence

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against women and domestic violence**

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Introduction

Prevention is one of four main principles (often referred to as the “four pillars”) outlined in the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (hereinafter “Istanbul Convention” or “the convention”). Preventative measures must be carried out in parallel with the provision of support services and legal protection for victims as well as the prosecution of perpetrators as part of a set of comprehensive policies co-ordinated among all relevant stakeholders (i.e. integrated policies). One of the key contexts for the prevention of violence against women and girls is *education*.

Education is both a setting where gender-based violence against women and girls, including (sexual) harassment, can take place, as well as one where attitudes and behaviours contributing to such violence can be challenged. Thus, the Istanbul Convention recognises that formal and informal education facilities have an important role to play in enhancing the promotion of equality between women and men, mutual respect in interpersonal relationships and non-violence, and enlightening learners about violence against women and girls. It is therefore crucial to consider how educational interventions can contribute to the prevention of violence against women and girls, as well as how appropriate support and response for victims, and longer-term prevention goals, can be achieved. A fundamental aspect of violence prevention is educating children and young people from an early age about negative gender stereotypes that contribute to inequality between men and women, and attitudes which justify and normalise psychological, physical and sexual violence, as well as other forms of violence covered by the Istanbul Convention. Through teaching materials and initiatives, formal and informal education offers space and opportunities to address the root causes of gender-based violence against women and girls and therefore to prevent it.

The purpose of this paper is to provide policymakers and practitioners in the Council of Europe member states with examples of promising formal and informal educational practices aiming to promote gender equality, mutual respect, non-violent conflict resolution and other topics which relate to the obligations of Article 14 of the Istanbul Convention. This paper first explains the scope of Article 14 before outlining existing research evidence on factors that can contribute to the prevention of violence against women and girls in education contexts. Drawing on research evidence, including Council of Europe legal instruments, policy documents and publications, and a synthesis of reports by state parties on their implementation of the Istanbul Convention outlining their actions towards Article 14, an overview of the promising practices from member states is presented, considering both formal and informal educational contexts. The paper concludes with a checklist for those wishing to implement educational interventions to prevent violence against women and girls in formal and informal contexts, and a list of key resources for further guidance.

Scope of Article 14

The Istanbul Convention is grounded in the explicit understanding that violence against women is both a gender-based violation of human rights and a form of discrimination against women. In other words, violence against women is a cause, and a consequence, of inequality between women and men. The Convention recognises that violence against women occurs in multiple, overlapping forms, including physical and psychological violence, domestic violence, sexual violence and sexual harassment, rape, stalking, female genital mutilation, forced marriage, forced sterilisation and forced abortion, as well as crimes committed in the name of so-called “honour”.

Under Chapter III of the Istanbul Convention, the prevention of violence against women requires long-term changes in attitudes and behaviours that are influenced by prejudice, negative gender stereotypes and gender-biased practices, which can lead to, justify, trivialise and minimise the occurrence of such violence. Since such patterns of behaviours and beliefs are shaped very early on in life, Article 14 contains the obligation to contribute to the prevention of violence against women and girls through both formal and informal education. The scope of the article is clarified in the Explanatory Report to the Istanbul Convention.¹ The ultimate goal of Article 14 is to enhance the promotion of equality between women and men, mutual respect, non-violence and other related values, in order to encourage changes in attitudes and behaviours related to preventing gender-based violence against women.

1. See the Explanatory Report to the Istanbul Convention, paragraphs 94-97.

Article 14 - Education

1. Parties shall take, where appropriate, the necessary steps to include teaching material on issues such as equality between women and men, non-stereotyped gender roles, mutual respect, non-violent conflict resolution in interpersonal relationships, gender-based violence against women and the right to personal integrity, adapted to the evolving capacity of learners, in formal curricula and at all levels of education.

2. Parties shall take the necessary steps to promote the principles referred to in paragraph 1 in informal educational facilities, as well as in sports, cultural and leisure facilities and the media.

Article 14, paragraph 1, requires parties to design, where they deem it “appropriate”, teaching material that promotes equality between women and men, non-stereotyped gender roles, mutual respect, non-violent conflict resolution in interpersonal relationships, gender-based violence against women and the right to personal integrity. Thus, in line with the scope of other international human rights treaties,² the Istanbul Convention is built on the understanding that educational establishments at all levels (i.e. primary, secondary and tertiary or higher education) have an important role to play in promoting human rights and equality between women and men, as well as in preventing violence against women. As the term “where appropriate” indicates, Article 14, paragraph 1, offers discretion to state parties as to which type of schooling and which age group of learners they consider such teaching material to be appropriate for. Under Article 14, paragraph 1, the term “teaching material” refers to any type of formally developed and approved material that forms part of the curriculum and which all teachers can or are required to use in class.

Article 14, paragraph 2, extends the obligation to promote the principles of equality between women and men, non-stereotyped gender roles, and the other above topics in all informal educational facilities as well as any sports, cultural and leisure facilities as well as the media. Considering the diversity of the forms of informal education across the Council of Europe member states, the term “informal educational facilities” refers to organised

2. See for example article 10(c) of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, and article 29(d) of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

education facilities and activities outside formal education systems such as those based on social pedagogy which are offered by community, religious and other groups or organisations.

Articles 12, 13, 15 and 17 of the Istanbul Convention outline more specifically the contextual features that are needed to support high-quality and successful teaching materials or educational programmes that address violence against women, such as general awareness-raising, appropriate training of teaching professionals, and the development of prevention and intervention programmes. Papers published on Articles 12, 13 and 17 of the Istanbul Convention offer more detailed guidance on their implementation.³

Article 12 encompasses general preventive measures which represent core principles for the more specific obligations contained in Article 14. Under Article 12, paragraph 3, any preventive measures must specifically address and take into account the specific situation and needs of people made vulnerable by particular circumstances and shall place the human rights of all victims at the centre. As specified in the Explanatory Report, this means that preventive measures, including educational approaches aimed at the long-term prevention of violence, must include positive measures by specifically addressing and considering the experiences and needs of women and girls who are or may be at risk of intersectional discrimination. This includes, among others, migrant women, asylum-seeking and refugee women, women belonging to national or ethnic minorities, women with disabilities, women living in rural areas, and lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LBTI) women.

The role of men and boys in playing an active part in preventing gender-based violence against women is also emphasised under Article 12, paragraph 4, of the Istanbul Convention. Research has shown that including men and boys as allied partners in violence prevention is an important and necessary component for sustainable attitudinal and behavioural change within a community (Jewkes, Flood and Lang, 2015). Challenging harmful gender stereotypes for women and girls, as well as for men and boys, is important to consider in developing teaching material and any other educational measures to prevent violence against women. Educating men and boys about the harms of the underlying causes of violence against women and girls, as well as of the violence itself, is necessary to the Convention's aim of changing negative attitudes and beliefs

3. Council of Europe collection of papers on the Istanbul Convention, available at www.coe.int/en/web/istanbul-convention/publications.

towards women. As explained in the Explanatory Report to the Convention, the contribution of men and boys in promoting equality, mutual respect and nonviolence can take many forms, in particular as advocates and agents of change.⁴

4. See the Explanatory Report to the Istanbul Convention, paragraph 88.

What do we know about the role of education in preventing violence against women and domestic violence

The Istanbul Convention is based on a recognition of gender-based violence against women and girls as encompassing a range of forms, including physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm as defined in Article 3. Of particular relevance is Liz Kelly's (1987) concept of a continuum of violence to illustrate the multiple and overlapping forms that violence can take, covering, *inter alia*, degrading language and verbal insults, groping or physical harassment, coercion, stalking, sexual assault and rape. While inequality between men and women is a fundamental context for violence against women to occur, it is not the only axis of inequality that produces violence. Alldred and David (2014) have argued that using the concept of *gender-related violence* allows us to recognise violence that is enabled by the very concept of negative gender stereotypes and norms. Jackson and Sundaram (2020) have extended this framing further to consider the ways in which discrimination on multiple and interacting grounds produce different experiences of violence for different women, including gender-based violence against women compounded by racism, disablism, ageism, lesbophobia, biphobia, transphobia or other forms of intersectional discrimination.

Systematically educating young people about harmful gender stereotypes and negative norms for masculinity can contribute to preventing violence against women. Inequality between men and women as learned *inter alia* through rigid gender stereotypes creates a fertile context for accepting and normalising violence that is based on discrimination against women and girls. In line with the requirement of Article 14 of the Istanbul Convention, educational measures can prevent the formation of negative stereotypes and attitudes towards women, through comprehensive and statutory programmes about

equality between women and men, mutual respect, non-violence and the right to personal integrity for all children and young people from an early age.

Based on a) a literature review of 26 peer-reviewed research articles undertaken in Council of Europe member states, analysis of 17 reports by state parties to the Istanbul Convention and the corresponding 17 baseline evaluation reports of the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO), and b) on a synthesis of Council of Europe legal instruments, policy documents and publications, the following six key elements emerge as important and necessary factors for effective education about gender equality and gender-based violence, and that can lead to sustainable attitudinal and behavioural change.

1. Interventions that seek to change attitudes and behaviours should be related to factors associated with violence perpetration, have sustained effects, and should be underpinned by a robust theory of change. A key question to ask when designing educational interventions is: What are the risk factors for men and boys' perpetration of violence against women and girls and how will this intervention address these?
2. Harmful gender stereotypes are central to address in violence prevention interventions. This involves teaching men and boys, as well as women and girls, to question, disrupt and change negative attitudes and practices that entrench the notion of the inferiority of women and sustain inequality between women and men. A failure to address harmful gender stereotypes in such teaching overlooks the specific causes of violence against women.
3. Teaching materials should acknowledge structural inequalities, power imbalances and discrimination based on sex, gender and other intersecting grounds (e.g. age, disability, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, race, belonging to national or ethnic minorities, migrant or refugee status, etc.) that contribute to or exacerbate violence against women and girls.
4. The involvement of men and boys as partners in violence prevention, rather than only being addressed as perpetrators, is necessary.
5. Interventions should take an integrated approach by promoting comprehensive and coordinated measures taken by all relevant stakeholders, including in the formal education systems level, civil society organisations, community level and family level. For example, work to promote

non-stereotyped gender roles in schools needs to focus on interventions within a classroom (e.g. lesson and curriculum), institutional policy (e.g. on sexual harassment, corporal punishment), interactions (e.g. respect shown by teachers for learners, the way bullying or harassment is responded to), and the wider environment.

6. Programme planning should be evidence-based and rely on national and local data, including local variations in the occurrence of certain forms of violence against women risk factors.

On the basis of Council of Europe documents, GREVIO's evaluation of the implementation of the Istanbul Convention in state parties, and additional sources from Council of Europe member states and civil society, we have identified the following key issues to take into account when identifying promising practices regarding the prevention of violence against women and girls.

Curricular learning: teaching about consent and personal boundaries

Information about consent, communication, and promotion of positive models for forming relationships should be included in formal curricula to prevent violence against women and girls. Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)13 on gender mainstreaming in education notes that young people should be taught “to consider and interpret relationships with reference to gender equality, human rights, power relations and violence” (paragraph 44). GREVIO has also noted the particular importance of comprehensive sexuality education⁵ as a context for teaching about violence against women and girls, in particular in relation to personal integrity and the notion that sexual violence is defined by the absence of freely given consent.⁶ The importance of consent to defining what constitutes sexual violence is also emphasised in Article 36 of the Convention. Recommendation CM/Rec (2019)1 on preventing and combating sexism notes that children should be taught to take responsibility in their relationships and

5. “Comprehensive sexuality education” is defined notably by UNESCO’s “International technical guidance on sexuality education. An evidence-informed approach” (2018) and the World Health Organization’s Standards for Sexuality Education in Europe (2010). See also Resolution of the United Nations Human Rights Council, accelerating efforts to eliminate violence against women: engaging men and boys in preventing and responding to violence against all women and girls, adopted on 12 July 2017, A/HRC/ RES/35/10.

6. See “Addressing the prevention of violence against women in the context of sexuality education”, paragraphs 164-165, Mid-term Horizontal review of GREVIO baseline evaluation reports, available at <https://rm.coe.int/horizontal-review-study-2021/1680a26325>.

behaviour, including in relation to consent and personal boundaries. Its provision II.G.6 notes that “curricula should contain age appropriate, evidence-based and scientifically accurate and comprehensive sex and sexuality education for girls and boys. The curricula should also cover intersecting forms of sexism, based for example on migrant status or disability”.

Cross-curricular learning about gender equality and the prevention of violence against women and girls

While comprehensive sexuality education is an important context within which to teach about healthy relationships and the prevention of violence against women and girls, gender equality can additionally be taught in cross-curricular spaces as part of a whole-school approach.⁷ As already identified, challenging harmful gender stereotypes is fundamental to preventing violence against women and girls. Gender equality relates to a wide range of academic subjects and issues that concern young people, including science, sports, arts and culture, and politics to name a few. Each of these curricular topics provides opportunities for discussing harmful gender stereotyping and the ways in which this leads to inequality. An interesting example is the *AGENDA Matters* resource⁸ (United Kingdom), which provides practical activities for teachers to use across the curriculum to discuss issues relating to gender equality, consent, bodily autonomy, intersectional discrimination, and gender-based harassment and violence.

Focus on Belgium

Intervention: In Belgium, the Department of Equal Opportunities of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation has developed a training module for teachers entitled *Girls-Boys: The same school?!*. It is accessible on the website: www.egalitefillesgarcons.be. The module aims to introduce content about gender equality that is relevant to young people, and to tackle stereotypes in education. The website offers many educational resources adapted to different levels of education, different subjects, and issues (including violence, intersectionality and discrimination). It also offers research about inequality

7. Council of Europe, Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture: Volume 3 Guidance for implementation, available at <https://rm.coe.int/prems-008518-gbr-2508-reference-framework-of-competences-vol-3-8575-co/16807bc66e>.
8. AGENDA Online, available at <https://agendaonline.co.uk/>.

between men and women as well as practical strategies for teachers to employ when challenging negative stereotypes with pupils.

Relationship to prevention of violence: This resource represents a promising practice in its central focus on equality between women and men and in dispelling misconceptions and harmful gender stereotypes. The website covers different levels of education, including the organisation of schools, pedagogical techniques, teacher-pupil interactions, and peer-interactions. It covers areas identified by GREVIO evaluation reports as important, including intersectional discrimination, and adopts a cross-curricular approach to teaching about gender equality.

Development of indicators or measures to assess young people's competencies regarding gender equality

GREVIO has identified the need for state parties to the convention to consider the ways in which they can measure young people's knowledge and skills in relation to equality and all forms of gender-based violence against women.⁹ Skills might include being able to define bullying, teasing and violence, and being able to demonstrate safe actions that they can take to respond to violence for primary-aged pupils, or demonstrating knowledge about a range of forms of sexual abuse, including online abuse, and taking safe actions to report abuse against themselves or others for secondary-aged pupils.¹⁰ States parties to the convention have highlighted the importance of teachers' skills to identify children who are at risk of domestic violence (Denmark),¹¹ and for monitoring the content of teaching materials on gender equality and increasing awareness of students and staff (Turkey).¹² In Italy,¹³ a national observatory for monitoring and promoting educational and training activities on gender equality and the prevention of violence against women was set up in 2017. The importance of developing clear indicators to assess the awareness of students and staff and to monitor teachers' usage of existing materials is stressed by GREVIO.

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9. See paragraph 166, Mid-term Horizontal review of GREVIO baseline evaluation reports.
 10. UNFPA (2018), International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education, available at www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/ITGSE.pdf.
 11. See paragraph 75, GREVIO/Inf(2017)14 | Denmark | III. B. Education (Article 14).
 12. See paragraph 107, GREVIO/Inf(2018)6 | Turkey | III. C. Education (Article 14).
 13. See paragraph 93, GREVIO/Inf(2019)18 | Italy | III. B. Education (Article 14).

The role of non-governmental organisations in preventing violence against women and girls

As stated in Article 14, paragraph 2, and in Article 9 of the Istanbul Convention, the work of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and civil society in combating violence against women and girls should be encouraged and supported at all levels, including through effective cooperation with these organisations. Women's rights NGOs, family planning associations and other civil society organisations in state parties have done some important work in this regard. In France, the Hubertine Auclert Centre,¹⁴ a regional resource centre on gender equality, supports professional bodies to promote gender equality in education. The centre carries out studies on gender equality in education, creates and promotes educational tools against sexism, and offers training to professionals in education. In Denmark, the NGO Sex og Samfund¹⁵ has run a co-funded campaign with the government to support sexuality education in schools since 2008. The campaign includes dissemination of effective teaching materials and other activities to support learning, and has reached over half a million primary and secondary school children.

Focus on Belgium¹⁶

Intervention: The *Sensoa Flag System* is a tool developed by Sensoa, the Belgian Flemish member association for Planned Parenthood. The Flag System is a tool for assessing and responding to risky sexual behaviour among children and young people.¹⁷ The tool is similar to the 'traffic light system' developed by the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children in the United Kingdom and can be used to assess whether children are displaying inappropriate sexualised behaviour, as well as to teach children about the boundaries for appropriate sexual behaviour. The Flag System uses six criteria for healthy sexual behaviour and offers health professionals, counsellors, and children and young people guidance on how to respond to inappropriate or concerning sexual behaviour. The tool has been adapted to different sectors, including formal education, sport, youth work, and child welfare.

14. See www.centre-hubertine-auclert.fr/le-centre.

15. See www.sexogsamfund.dk/.

16. See paragraph 71. GREVIO/Inf(2020)14 | Belgium | III. B. Education (Article 14), available at <https://rm.coe.int/grevio-report-on-belgium/16809f9a2c>.

17. See www.sensoa.be/vlaggensysteem-hoe-reageren-op-seksueel-grensoverschrijdend-gedrag.

Relationship to prevention of violence: The Flag System mirrors many of the resources developed by *Sensoa* in its focus on consent, respect, healthy relationships and bodily integrity. This provides a strong foundation for discussing inappropriate or transgressive practices within relationships, including non-consensual practices, disrespect and violence. The Flag System provides clear guidance to teachers and other professionals working with children as to how to respond to sexually inappropriate behaviour. This is important for taking an integrated approach to preventing sexual harassment and violence. However, it would be relevant to expand the scope of this tool to explicitly cover the gender-specific nature of violence, or the centrality of stereotyped gender roles in producing violence.

Digital literacy and the prevention of online and technology-facilitated violence against girls, including image-based abuse

The recently adopted GREVIO General Recommendation No. 1 on the digital dimension of violence against women underlines that states parties shall “promote the inclusion of digital literacy and online safety in formal curricula and at all levels of education”.¹⁸ It also adds that “teaching materials made available in line with Article 14 of the Istanbul Convention should enable learners to learn about equality between women and men, nonstereotyped gender roles, mutual respect, non-violent conflict resolution in interpersonal relationships and violence against women, including in its digital dimension and should be accessible to persons with physical and/or intellectual disabilities”. Acknowledging that the underlying cause of sexism is rooted in inequality between men and women, CM/Rec (2019)1 notes that the internet “has provided a new dimension for the transmission of sexism, especially sexist hate speech.”¹⁹ Provision II.B.2. highlights the role of education in preventing online sexism and abuse, through the establishment and promotion of programmes that teach critical digital and media literacy, and skills for safe and critical engagement with digital media. The provision stresses that “this

18. See GREVIO General Recommendation No. 1 on the digital dimension of violence against women, available at <https://rm.coe.int/grevio-rec-no-on-digital-violence-against-women/1680a49147>.

19. Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)1 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on preventing and combating sexism, available at: <https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=090000168093b26a>.

should be done through school curricula and through the production of handbooks and factsheets on what constitutes sexist behaviour, unwanted sharing of material on the internet, and appropriate responses, including gender-sensitive information about online safety.”²⁰ It also provides for the need to ensure the “wide dissemination of such materials”. Moreover, the Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)13 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender mainstreaming in education contains provisions about “making authors and publishers of school textbooks, and of educational, teaching, assessment and career guidance materials, aware of the need to make gender equality one of the quality criteria for the production of these materials and the development of multi-media products for use in schools” (paragraph 8), or “devising and disseminating indicators for the appraisal of teaching materials – particularly textbooks and multi-media products – from a gender perspective” (paragraph 31).

Promising examples of engagement with violence against women and girls in online spaces were exemplified in some of the reports submitted by state parties to the Istanbul Convention to GREVIO. In Monaco, a national action plan developed by the Department of Education, Youth and Sport contains a training module on peer mediation and an awareness-raising module which addresses child sexual abuse materials. Part of this national action plan is developed in collaboration with the civil society organisation Action Innocence Monaco, and specifically addresses cyber-sexism and cyberbullying. The Commission on Citizenship and Gender Equality in Portugal addresses internet security in its gender and education guides. The guide addresses gender stereotyping in the way information and communication technology is perceived and engaged with by boys and girls, as well as a gender-specific approach to risks associated with internet usage.²¹

Focus on Austria, Denmark, Estonia, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Slovenia, United Kingdom

Intervention: The Cybersafe project²² was a 30-month project run by NGOs and universities operating in 8 European countries from December 2018 to June 2021. It was funded by the European Union and aimed to promote

20. Ibid, Provision II.B.2.

21. See Section 5.2 (S), [Education guide for Gender and Citizenship](https://www.cig.gov.pt/pdf/2014/Education_Guide_3rd_Cicle.pdf). Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality, available at https://www.cig.gov.pt/pdf/2014/Education_Guide_3rd_Cicle.pdf.

22. See www.stoponlineviolence.eu.

healthy relationships and gender equality online. The project involved the creation of an online “toolkit” with 4 scenario-based online workshops for students in schools to work through in the classroom. These were designed to include live quizzes where students can participate anonymously online and are provided with detailed information about the impact of online sexual violence.

Relationship to prevention of violence: The project represents a promising practice in its focus on violence in online and digital spaces. This is a key priority identified by GREVIO in its baseline evaluation reports and is addressed by CM/Rec (2019)1 on preventing and combating sexism. Addressing image-based abuse and other forms of technology-facilitated violence is an important aspect of recognising the full continuum of violence.

Addressing the obligations under Article 14

Across member states, educational approaches to preventing gender-based violence against women and girls can be categorised as falling into one of three categories: primary, secondary and tertiary.

1. *Primary interventions* are those that seek to prevent gender-based violence against women and girls by directly addressing risk factors for perpetration. These might be initiatives targeted to a whole population (e.g. within a school, or targeted at particular populations to reduce or change the social, cultural or structural risk factors for perpetration.)
2. *Secondary interventions* are those that seek to reduce the impact of violence that has already occurred or that target individuals who are exhibiting early signs of perpetration or who are vulnerable to victimisation (e.g. support to the victim, bystander intervention to separate the victim and perpetrator, training for staff who will respond to violence).
3. *Tertiary interventions* are those that address violence once it has happened or try to prevent violence from recurring. They might provide longer-term response and/or that help to manage the impacts of violence (e.g. counselling or after-care to the victim, awareness-raising in the community, perpetrator management programmes).

The review of the literature and Council of Europe legal instruments, policy documents and publications covering aspects of effective teaching interventions, materials and approaches to teaching about equality between women and men and gender-based violence against women suggests that ‘promising’ practices will address the themes outlined in the framework above.

The obligation to develop teaching material for formal education

In terms of formal approaches to teaching about gender-based violence against women, most states parties to the Istanbul Convention adopt primary prevention initiatives; that is to say, educational initiatives which seek to address the root causes of violence. These include the development of national action plans to deal with gender-based violence against women; the incorporation of comprehensive sexuality and relationships education into school curricula; compulsory curricular content on equality and the prohibition of discrimination against women; recommended resources and materials for teaching about gender-based violence against women; training for professionals and educators working in schools; and revision of textbooks to be more gender equal in content.

The most frequent curricular approach involves teaching about the prevention of discrimination, gender equality, and the reduction of negative gender stereotypes. UNESCO (2015) has noted that gender stereotyping is the most common feature of inequality between men and women that manifests in pedagogy. This includes teacher-pupil interactions, assessments and evaluation, and communication. As noted in CM/Rec (2019)¹ on preventing and combating sexism, “children and young people assimilate gender stereotypes through curricula, teaching materials, behaviour and language”. Young people should therefore be given the opportunity to develop positive notions of gender, including masculinity and femininity, through formal education (UNESCO, 2017).

A number of educational materials specifically address violence against women, child sexual abuse and non-violent conflict resolution. A few address forms of gender-based violence against women such as female genital mutilation and forced marriage. Most member states address the need for education on gender equality or violence against women to involve children or pupils, teachers, and other professionals who come into contact with children and young people in educational settings. These include university staff, staff in specialist schools (e.g. reform schools), youth workers, and health professionals such as school nurses or staff specialising in sexual health.

In relation to the evidence base for developing successful educational interventions, a number of member states have developed promising practices that could be used as an example or model for teaching about gender-based violence.

Equality between men and women, and non-stereotyped gender roles

A key finding from the evidence review is that gender stereotypes should be central to teaching about violence against women. There is a link between the social values, behaviours and attributes expected of men and their use of aggression and violence (Jewkes, Flood and Lang, 2015). While there is no one way to be a ‘man’ and multiple masculinities exist across different contexts, the idea that dominance and control is a desirable aspect of masculinity is frequently a shared social idea (ibid., p1582). The most culturally and socially desired version of masculinity, which then becomes normalised and accepted, has been termed *hegemonic masculinity* by Connell (1995, 2000). It is well-established that hegemonic ideals for masculinity are produced and reinforced at an early age, with primary-age children identifying strength, physical prowess and superiority to girls as ‘boy’ attributes (Davies, 1989; Renold, 2005; Atkinson, 2021). Harmful gender stereotypes are also used by secondary-age pupils to justify the use of violence in relationships, drawing on normalised expectations of male dominance and control and female submission and acquiescence to do so (Barter et al., 2009; McCarry, 2010; Sundaram, 2014). Rendering harmful gender stereotypes visible through teaching is thus a necessary part of preventing the use and acceptance of gender-based violence.

GREVIO has similarly noted the need for teaching materials that do not promote negative stereotypes of women and men.²³ The CM/Rec(2019)1 stresses that sexism can be transmitted through “tolerance for and trivialisation of negatively stereotyped imagery, language and expressions; intolerance of non-conforming gender behaviour; and not addressing unconscious biases by staff and students”.²⁴ In its baseline evaluation reports, GREVIO invites authorities to draw from the CM/Rec(2007)13 on gender mainstreaming in education, which encourages the governments of member states to incorporate a gender equality perspective at all levels of the education system.²⁵ This is in line with the CM/Rec(2019)1 on preventing and combating sexism, whose provision I.B.6. stresses the need to carry out “an assessment of textbooks,

23. “Insufficient teaching material on issues such as equality between women and men, gender roles and other aspects required by Article 14”, paragraphs 161-162, Mid-term Horizontal review of GREVIO baseline evaluation reports.

24. Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)1 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on preventing and combating sexism.

25. CM/Rec (2007)13 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on gender mainstreaming in education.

training materials and teaching methods used by/for pupils of all age groups and in all forms of education and training (starting with preschool education) for sexist language, illustrations and gender stereotypes, and revise them so that they actively promote gender equality.”²⁶

The materials developed for teachers in Portugal “intersect gender equality with a series of cross-cutting thematic areas such as sexual and reproductive health, online safety, sexism and stereotypes and non-violent dating relationships”.²⁷ The Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality in Portugal has also set out a number of proposals that aim to reduce gender stereotyping in the organisation of schools and in teachers’ practice. Indeed, the Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality has produced gender and education guides on how to discuss harmful gender stereotypes with children from pre-school age to secondary-school age. Albania’s national action plan stipulates that teachers and communities of parents will be educated about harmful gender stereotypes. In France, gender equality is mainstreamed into the core curriculum, cross-cutting a range of curricular subjects, and ‘equality focal points’ have been designated in some schools, who work in partnership with students, parents and the wider community to raise awareness about gender equality.

Focus on Austria²⁸

Intervention: The Austrian case provides a model example of a range of primary interventions by targeting risk factors for violence perpetration. It addresses the root causes of violence perpetration; explicitly addresses the need to educate about non-stereotyped gender roles; and takes an integrated approach to violence prevention. There is a specific national action plan for the prevention of violence in schools (2014-16) and all curricula must include education on equality between men and women, and on non-violent interaction. A life-course approach to preventing violence, through education about the root causes of gender-based violence against women, is taken as illustrated by some examples below.

26. Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)1 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on preventing and combating sexism, paragraph I.B.6.

27. See paragraph 88, GREVIO/Inf(2018)16 | Portugal | III. B. Education (Article 14).

28. See pages 14-15. Report submitted by Austria pursuant to Article 68, paragraph 1 of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, available at <https://rm.coe.int/16806ee8b2>.

A kindergarten level teaching intervention (“education box”)²⁹ contains suggestions for pedagogical strategies to integrate gender-sensitivity into teaching. This is framed within existing standards for curriculum quality assurance in relation to gender-sensitive education.

At compulsory primary and secondary education level, a teaching pack was provided by the Ministry of Education to support teachers with the requirement to teach about gender equality and non-violent interaction. It contains materials on women’s rights, violence against women and girls, gender norms, pedagogical work with boys, and gender violence against children and young people with disabilities. At tertiary education level, since 2009, the initiative “One in Five”,³⁰ an interdisciplinary lecture series about violence against women, has been delivered to university students across different disciplines and subjects of study. The series is funded nationally and by the City of Vienna. The topic is also covered in depth in schools. In 2018, the Ministry for Education adopted the teaching principles “Reflexive Gender Education and Equality”, which explicitly require schools to address the topics of gender equality, while focusing on sexism and several forms of violence (including female genital mutilation and forced marriage).³¹

Relationship to prevention of violence: The above educational interventions presented in the Austrian state report address the key elements of the research framework for violence prevention. Firstly, the interventions all explicitly address non-stereotyped gender roles as a key component of their formal education initiatives and/or address violence as a gender-specific phenomenon. Secondly, there is some acknowledgment of the need to involve boys as partners in violence prevention through a disruption of harmful stereotypes associated with masculinity. Thirdly, an acknowledgement of the intersection of gender with other marginalised characteristics is present in some of the interventions (e.g. addressing gender-based violence towards children with disabilities).

29. See www.wien.gv.at/menschen/frauen/stichwort/bildung/educationbox.

30. See www.aof.at/index.php/aktuelle/ringvorlesung-eine-von-fuenf.

31. See Reporting form on the implementation of the recommendations addressed to Austria, Committee of the Parties to the Istanbul Convention, available at: <https://rm.coe.int/austria-reporting-form-on-the-implementation-of-the-recommendations-co/1680a22378>.

Focus on France

Intervention: In higher education, France provides a promising tertiary intervention that both acknowledges that violence happens in university communities, and that seeks to reduce its prevalence or prevent it from recurring.³² Since 2018, the government has committed to set up a referral and listening point in each university to provide support and information to victims of violence and harassment. The creation of an “equality mission” in each public university is also required by law since 2013, composed of gender equality specialists responsible for guiding and supporting victims of violence. In October 2021, the French Ministry of Higher Education adopted its first national action plan against gender-based and sexual violence in higher education and research (2021-2025), which foresees the creation of an online mapping system that includes information on the existing mechanisms for providing support to victims of violence in each university.³³

Relationship to prevention of violence: These interventions provide examples of promising practices as clear models for consistent usage across higher education institutions. These initiatives have been developed in the context of other practices that have a clear focus on gender equality as fundamental to responding to gender-based violence against women and girls. While these interventions do not directly aim to prevent violence, it is important that those providing support and response to victims of violence are aware of the gender-specific dynamics of violence.

Involvement of boys and young men as partners

The involvement of boys and men as partners, or allies, in violence prevention is vital. Interventions have developed from positioning men as invisible or only as perpetrators, to recognising the role of boys and men in preventing violence against girls and women, to understanding that gender norms for men (and women) are central to address in violence prevention (Jewkes, Flood and Lang, 2015). The centrality of gender norms for masculinity to the perpetration of violence necessitates a clear and explicit naming of the root cause and the factors to change in violence prevention work. UNESCO (2017)

32. See GREVIO/Inf(2019)16 | France | III. B. Education (Article 14).

33. See www.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr/fr/une-nouvelle-etape-dans-la-lutte-contre-les-violences-sexistes-et-sexuelles-dans-l-enseignement-51410.

notes that an essential aspect of prevention is to promote broader definitions of masculinities, and to work closely with boys and men in doing so.³⁴

Only a few states parties to the Istanbul Convention did explicitly mention the involvement of boys or men in their educational work to address violence against women. For example, Austria includes school-based work with boys in their national strategy. However, nearly all other states parties clearly mention the need to disrupt harmful gender stereotypes as part of their interventions, which implies the need to look at stereotyping around masculinity and manhood as well as femininity. In some states parties, sexual violence was named as an issue to be prevented through education, but the gender-specific nature of this phenomenon was not made explicit. The Mid-term Horizontal Review of GREVIO baseline evaluation reports also notes the need to strengthen teaching about equality between men and women and gender roles as a particular challenge for a number of state parties to address. On the basis of existing evidence, this report also calls for states parties to the Istanbul Convention to consider targeted initiatives to work with boys and men in disrupting norms for harmful masculinity.

Addressing intersectional discrimination

Article 4 of the Istanbul Convention notes that measures to protect women and girls from violence should not discriminate on any grounds, including “sex, gender, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, state of health, disability, marital status, migrant or refugee status, or other status.” GREVIO’s baseline evaluation reports assess the non-discriminatory implementation of the provisions of the Istanbul Convention, including gaps in addressing the needs of women and girls facing intersectional discrimination.

In a number of reports submitted to GREVIO, states parties recognise violence as it manifests for specific groups of women and girls, including the need to recognise racism and disablism as potential contributing factors. For example, this includes initiatives specifically targeting training for teachers in recognising gender-based violence against women and female genital mutilation in Spain³⁵ (as further explained in the box below) or training for sexual health

34. UNESCO (2017). Global guidance on addressing school-related gender-based violence.

35. See paragraph 91. GREVIO/Inf(2020)19 | Spain | III. C. Education (Article 14).

teachers about honour-based violence in Sweden.³⁶ The Netherlands has pointed out the revision of one of their programmes on sexuality education for children with special educational needs which may be suitable for children with intellectual disabilities.³⁷

GREVIO notes that teaching about the specific vulnerability of women at risk of intersectional discrimination is still lacking in many states parties to the Istanbul Convention. Prevention activities need to aim at empowering women and girls from specific groups and communities, such as women belonging to national minorities (e.g. Roma and Sámi), migrant and refugee women, women with disabilities and LGBTI women.^{38,39,40} It is worth noting that an intersectional approach to preventing gender-based violence actively recognises the intersections between multiple forms of discrimination as structurally embedded, rather than as problems relating to specific communities or groups. This approach should recognise the ways in which the structures and systems of majority culture may exacerbate this marginalisation, rather than as a problem specific to a minority group. Embedding this concept in the teaching of gender-based violence against women and girls is crucial to ensure such recognition.

Focus on Spain

Intervention: There is a common education framework for the Improvement of the Equality of Education and regional protocols on the prevention of female genital mutilation (FGM).⁴¹ The common legal framework which applies across autonomous regions obliges primary education to develop pupils' attitudes regarding violence and prejudices and sexist stereotypes, and secondary education to develop pupils' skills to reject discriminatory stereotypes. Organic Act 1/2004 on Integrated Protection Measures against Gender Violence contains a chapter on education which obliges the education system to instil values of respect for women and equality between men and women. While there is some variation between regions in terms of teaching materials and initial and in-service teacher training,

36. See paragraph 84. GREVIO/Inf(2018)15 | Sweden | III. B. Education (Article 14).

37. See page 30. Report submitted by the Netherlands pursuant to Article 68, paragraph 1, of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, available at <https://rm.coe.int/netherlands-state-repot-grevio/16808d91ac>.

38. See GREVIO/Inf(2019)9 | Finland | III. B. Education (Article 14).

39. See GREVIO/Inf(2019)18 | Italy | III. B. Education (Article 14).

40. See GREVIO/Inf(2018)5 | Montenegro | III. B. Education (Article 14).

41. (Organic Act 1/2004, Article 7c). See paragraph 91. GREVIO/Inf(2020)19 | Spain | III. C. Education (Article 14).

GREVIO welcomes the obligation placed on educational administrations to introduce “the learning of prevention and peaceful resolution of conflicts in all areas of personal, family and social life, and of the values that sustain democracy and human rights, including the prevention of intimate partner violence” (page 31).⁴²

In addition, some regions have developed protocols on the prevention of FGM. GREVIO’s baseline evaluation report notes that some regional authorities “are actively tapping into the potential that schools offer in terms of identifying children victims of gender-based violence against women, including girls at risk of undergoing FGM.” The legal obligation within Organic Act 1/2004 to ensure that teaching staff receive training on knowledge and skills to identify family violence is also welcomed by GREVIO. In particular, the Andalusian Protocol for Healthcare Action aims to ensure that all professionals, including teachers, who are in contact with a minor victim of gender-based violence against women or a young woman or girl at risk of FGM, act in a co-ordinated manner.

Relationship to prevention of violence: The common legal framework and the regional protocols for preventing FGM represent promising practices in relation to adopting an integrated approach involving comprehensive and coordinated policies at the governmental level, at the education system level, and at the community level. They also represent promising practices in terms of addressing the specific vulnerability of women at the intersection of discrimination.

Integrated approach

Article 7 of the Istanbul Convention emphasises the need for an integrated approach with “comprehensive and coordinated policies” that are victim-centred. These policies should be effectively implemented through cooperation between a range of relevant organisations at the national, regional and local levels, including human rights institutions and civil society organisations.

Similarly, an ecological systems approach recognises intersections between the individual, the family, the community, wider society and structures in contributing to violence. The prevention of gender-based violence should be based on preventing risk factors for the perpetration of violence (Jewkes, Flood and Lang, 2015). Gender norms, stereotypes and inequalities are held

42. See GREVIO/Inf(2020)19 | Spain | III. C. Education (Article 14).

and perpetuated at different, overlapping levels, including within the family, in the wider community and at the level of structure. Promising education interventions address these factors at multiple levels. The intersections between different levels of society create what Hagemann-White (2010) has termed ‘pathways’ along which violence becomes more likely. The interplay between the structural, social norms, everyday interactions and subjective identities are important to understanding how conducive environments for violence are developed (Cerise, 2011).

In terms of schools specifically, Lahelma (2011) has emphasised the importance of disrupting gendered cultures and structures within the school, as well as considering a gender-neutral curriculum, or teaching about gender equality within the curriculum. In terms of changing stereotyped gender roles in schools, for example, this might imply the need to focus on interventions within a classroom (e.g. lesson and curriculum), institutional policy (e.g. on sexual harassment, corporal punishment), classroom and school interactions (e.g. respect shown by teachers for learners, bullying), and the wider environment (e.g. the involvement of parents in support of schools’ teaching, teacher training) (Jewkes, Flood and Lang, 2015).

Examples exist of approaches that consider the prevention of violence in education through an integrated lens, focusing on law, policy, training, curriculum and pedagogies. Albania’s⁴³ approach contains legal obligations to provide curricular content on preventing violence in family relationships, to provide activities that prohibit discrimination against women and girls, and to include knowledge and pedagogies that promote equality and that prohibit gender-based discrimination. It also involves the education of teachers and parents on gender stereotypes and policy for educational institutions to avoid negative gender stereotyping in advising students on further education and career options. In Finland⁴⁴ there is also a multilayer approach taken which includes national action plans to prevent gender-based violence against women, curricular content (albeit mainly focused on human rights rather than gender equality), training for teachers and other professionals working with children in and outside of mainstream schools on how to prevent violence, as well as on respectful relationships between students and between students and teachers.

43. The Law of 2008 on Gender Equality: chapter V, Articles 24- 25, and LawNo.69/29.06.2012 as discussed on page 29. Report submitted by Albania pursuant to Article 68, paragraph 1, of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, available at <https://rm.coe.int/albania-state-report/16806dd216>.

44. See pages 21-22. GREVIO/Inf(2019)9 | Finland | III. B. Education (Article 14) , available at: <https://rm.coe.int/grevio-report-on-finland/168097129d>.

Focus on Serbia

Intervention: In relation to programmes to educate teachers on identifying and responding to children who are victims of domestic violence, GREVIO highlighted two projects in particular that address this issue: *Protection of Children from Violence in South East Europe*,⁴⁵ and *Gender Awareness, Prevention of Violence in Kindergartens and Schools*.⁴⁶ The former aims to develop safeguarding systems to protect children who are at increased risk from violence (such as children with disabilities). It is an integrated partnership that provides multi-sectoral responses to violence against children.

The second project is a collaboration between UNICEF and the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development in Serbia.⁴⁷ The project seeks to develop, institutionalise and improve the protection of children from violence through relevant legislation and policies and to strengthen the professional development of schools and education professionals. This includes research on violence prevention in the education system, primarily on digital safety and gender awareness and gender-based violence against women in schools and preschool institutions. Training for teachers included challenging harmful gender stereotypes, violence prevention in and out of the classroom, and identifying appropriate response mechanisms within the education system.

Relationship to prevention of violence: The focus on early childhood intervention and child witnesses of domestic violence represents a promising practice in terms of considering the full range of violence against women and girls. The training for teachers supports the National Gender Equality Strategy which prioritises improving the capacity of education professionals to teach about gender equality.

45. A literature review related to this project is available at www.unicef.org/turkey/media/3656/file/VIOLENCE%20AGAINST%20CHILDREN%20Monitoring%20and%20Indicators%20Literature%20Review.pdf. A thematic study on this topic is available at <http://humanistburo.org/dosyalar/humdosya/Identifying,%20Reporting%20and%20Referring%20Cases%20of%20Violence%20Against%20Children%20-%20Thematic%20Study%20Turkey.pdf>.

46. As discussed on page 4 of T-ES(2017)ICT-RS Council of Europe Convention on the protection of children against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse| Replies to the thematic questionnaire | Serbia, available at <https://rm.coe.int/serbia-replies-to-the-thematic-questionnaire/1680767042>.

47. Ceriman, J. et al (2015), "Research on gender-based violence in schools in Serbia", Center for the Study of Gender and Policy, faculty of Political Science of the University of Belgrade and UNICEF Serbia. Research carried out in the framework of the "Integrated Response to Violence against Women Programme II". Results are available in English at www.slideshare.net/unicefcecis/june-5-gbv-in-schools-presentationv2.

Tailored educational interventions

Educational interventions need to be culturally sensitive and adapted to the local context where they are applied. Gender norms for masculinity and femininity may vary locally somewhat in terms of beliefs, socio-economic status, disability, and/or previous histories of victimisation. For instance, UNESCO recommends adopting comprehensive sexuality education programmes that are culturally relevant and context appropriate. Those should foster “respect and responsibility within relationships, supporting learners as they examine, understand and challenge the ways in which cultural structures, norms and behaviours affect people’s choices and relationships within a specific setting.”⁴⁸

Recognition of the need for culturally sensitive educational interventions was mainly addressed through the provision of bespoke education for immigrant or migrant communities. The emphasis of this provision was on educating cultural and/or religious minorities about gender equality, non-discrimination, non-violent conflict resolution and, in some cases, on honour-based violence and female genital mutilation. However, it is important to ensure that migrant and immigrant communities are not inadequately positioned as a cultural ‘Other’ in these interventions. Notably, some interventions depart from approaches lacking cultural sensitivity. Other rare examples include initiatives that address the need to prevent discrimination and violence towards women and people with disabilities.⁴⁹

The obligation to tap into the potential of informal education

When developing teaching about gender-based violence against women and girls for informal contexts, most member states adopt tertiary prevention initiatives. Much of the education in informal contexts therefore overlaps with the obligations of Article 13 on raising awareness. These initiatives tend to focus on raising awareness of forms of gender-based violence against women, or on referring victims to support services following experiences of violence. These interventions typically do not have changing the values and attitudes underlying gender-based violence against women as their primary goal.

48. See International technical guidance on sexuality education: an evidence-informed approach; 2018, available at <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000260770>.

49. Such as the brochures created by government funded education centre POLIS (see <https://polis.osce.org/home>) in Austria, as discussed in paragraph 71. GREVIO/Inf(2017)4 | Austria | III. B. Education (Article 14).

Interventions have included national campaigns (some of which take place annually) as well as initiatives conducted in youth centres, through the Scouts/Guides networks and in healthcare settings. Using these networks in addition to formal education contexts creates an integrated approach, which may support sustained efforts to prevent gender-based violence against women. Information is disseminated through in-person events such as seminars and workshops, television spots, art exhibitions, and social media, websites, and mobile applications. In some cases, educational materials created by an independent organisation were then used in formal contexts (such as schools and universities). Alternatively, as in Belgium, educational materials developed for formal education settings are being made available to those working in informal contexts, such as in facilities for those with disabilities, in youth organisations, in prisons and at concerts and festivals. The Belgian EVRAS programme⁵⁰ for formal education on Relational, Affective and Sexual Life offers resources and trained staff to support educational programmes in informal learning contexts.

The most frequent approach is to teach about different forms of violence against women, with some interventions providing information on methods of safely intervening in violent situations. Some teaching in informal contexts aims to dispel negatively stereotyped gender roles and emphasise positive masculine role models. The involvement of young men and boys as partners in preventing gender-based violence against women and in challenging negative masculinity stereotypes is recommended by UNESCO (2017)⁵¹ and addressed in Article 12, paragraph 4 of the Istanbul Convention. Some interventions aimed to address non-violent forms of conflict resolution,⁵² whilst one aimed to encourage mutual respect and the right to personal integrity,⁵³ and another initiative specifically addressed FGM,⁵⁴ Including the promotion

50. See www.evras.be.

51. UNESCO (2017), Global guidance on addressing school-related gender-based violence

52. Austrian poster campaign 'My Hands Against Violence', aimed at migrant youth, presented learners with positive non-violent masculine role models. Additionally, a campaign delivered through the informal learning contexts of Girls and Boy Scouts and football teams in Malta, 'Full Cooperation: Zero Violence'.

53. A campaign in the Netherlands organised by independent knowledge centre for social issues *Movisie*, called 'We Can Young', used young volunteers to design and deliver informal education on sexual resilience in 15 municipalities. This reached around 90 000 young people.

54. A campaign in Portugal 'Right to Live Without Female Genital Mutilation', wherein leaflets and posters were placed in the departure lounges of major airports to inform travellers to regions of West Africa of the harms of this practice.

of equality between men and women and non-stereotyped gender roles in informal education initiatives can be a way of challenging harmful stereotypes which underpin genderbased violence against women.

As noted in the Mid-term Horizontal Review of GREVIO baseline evaluation reports, only some of the states parties reviewed by GREVIO have addressed the obligation under Article 14, paragraph 2, to provide education on gender equality in informal contexts such as sports teams and in the media. Interventions focused on informal contexts could extend the progress being made in formal education and provide an integrated approach to violence prevention. These can utilise existing networks such as sports clubs, youth groups or cultural and leisure facilities to reach as many people as possible and offer an integrated approach to violence prevention. Social, digital and traditional media (such as posters and radio advertisements) can be used to raise awareness of informal educational programmes, as well as to transmit information themselves.

Nevertheless, there are some examples of promising practices relating to the framework above which may be used as models for teaching about gender-based violence in informal contexts. It would be important to follow up on informal educational initiatives with evaluative data collection and to use awareness-raising campaigns in conjunction with formal educational programmes.

Equality between men and women, and non-stereotyped gender roles

As shown in the evidence review, it is important that any teaching material aimed at preventing gender-based violence against women acknowledges the importance of non-stereotyped gender roles. Stereotyped gender roles and discourses which position masculine dominance as culturally accepted and desired create a culture in which gender-based violence against women is normalised. In informal education settings, the Focus below considers an example from the independent “knowledge centre” *Rutgers*⁵⁵, which is also the Dutch member association of the International Planned Parenthood Federation. The centre has developed many educational programmes for use in formal and informal education settings. In addition to the adoption of these in approximately 20-30% of schools in the Netherlands, programmes

55. See <https://rutgers.international>.

are also available through informal education and other settings such as regional education centres, healthcare providers and online. These primary interventions are designed to change the attitudes and behaviours of young people through challenging traditional stereotyped gender roles which underpin gender-based violence against women.

Focus on the Netherlands

Intervention: Can You Fix It?⁵⁶ is an evidence-based online educational programme aimed at 14–20-year-olds. The website contains video scenarios which have the potential to become sexually violent or where sensitive issues relating to sexuality are discussed. Learners can interactively respond to questions during the video to ‘fix’ the scenario, which alters the outcome of the video. Learners can also watch each video from the perspective of the different characters portrayed in the video. The scenarios consider aspects of teenage sexuality and risks of abuses such as sexting, grooming and bullying. Participants are shown the outcome of negative behaviours and encouraged to discover ways of responding positively to scenarios.

Since its launch more than 180 000 unique visitors have viewed the website, the majority of whom play the game. The programme was nominated for a 2011 e-learning award for Best Practice. Nonetheless, no long-term evaluative studies of its impact have been conducted.

Relationship to prevention of violence: The video scenarios also addressed online forms of violence against women, including image-based abuse and unwanted sharing of material on the internet. Further unequal power dynamics between characters in the video scenarios were acknowledged. By offering the perspective of multiple actors in each scenario, this programme allowed learners to empathise with the experiences of others, and particularly included boys in the prevention of gender-based violence against women. All of Rutgers’ programmes promote non-stereotyped gender roles and are based on research evidence in the field of gender-based violence against women and sexual health. The programme addressed intersectional discrimination, such as in relation to race, religion, sexual orientation, etc. However, this programme takes an individualistic approach, and would be best supported with additional institutional and systemic interventions.

56. The game and videos are hosted online at <https://canyoufixit.sense.info/#/app/front-page>.

Addressing intersectional discrimination

It is widely recognised that the intersecting structural inequalities facing some women may make them more vulnerable to gender-based violence, or less able to seek support when they have been harmed. Thus, informal education initiatives with the purpose of preventing gender-based violence against women need to acknowledge and address the needs of women and girls facing intersectional discrimination. For example, the French member association of the International Planned Parenthood Federation carries out the intervention “*Disability so what?*”⁵⁷ which created educational resources aimed at young people with disabilities to learn about healthy intimate relationships, their developing bodies, their sexuality, harmful gender stereotypes and the prevention of violence. The intervention can be organised in special education services and collects together learning resources such as videos, classroom games and brochures to offer a range of methods for teaching students with disabilities. One such resource was the brochure ‘My body, me and others’ designed to educate young people with autism on the meaning of consent and sexual violence.⁵⁸

Involvement of boys and young men as partners

Several Council of Europe member states explicitly involved men and boys in their informal education initiatives, such as the Albanian adoption of the United Nations Women’s campaign ‘He for She.’⁵⁹ This campaign aimed to encourage men and boys to pledge their support for women, and their commitment to preventing gender-based violence against women. The ‘He for She’ campaign reached more than 600 000 people from 2015 to 2017 and was supported by the national Football Federation and the National Olympic Committee. This campaign was also coupled with an application aimed at football fans (primarily men and boys) which presented educational materials on gender equality within an interactive football quiz. By reaching men and boys through their interest in sports and inviting them to be active participants in promoting gender equality, this intervention is a promising practice for the prevention of gender-based violence against women. Moreover, the involvement of

57. See www.planning-familial.org/fr/handicap-et-alors-257.

58. See <https://documentation.planning-familial.org/Record.htm?idlist=170&record=19146885124919640679>.

59. See www.heforshe.org/en.

sporting institutions and national ministers, as well as directing information at individual men, means that this programme takes an ecological approach.

The national 'White Ribbon' campaign in the Netherlands⁶⁰ also called upon men and boys to pledge to prevent gender-based violence against women, and to state that they would not commit acts of violence. From 2015 onwards, the Dutch annual campaign has used training sessions, workshops and panels to educate men and boys about harmful masculinity norms and on their role in the prevention of violence against woman and girls. This international campaign has been running since 1991 and has a large following in the United Kingdom⁶¹, where more than 38 000 men and boys have committed to the White Ribbon Promise. The campaign relies on the work of volunteer Ambassadors (who disseminate information about the campaign and call out violent behaviour among peers) and Champions (those who support and fundraise for the campaign) to run awareness-raising events and deliver training to businesses, local government and charities across the nation.

Integrated approach

When developing educational programmes to prevent gender-based violence and promote gender equality, approaches which address the multiple levels of gender inequality will be most effective. An ecological approach (Heise, 1998) to resisting gender inequality must consider gender norms as being constructed within institutions, in discourse (such as media and news), and in subjective practice (Jackson, 2005, 2006). Informal educational initiatives which are aimed at individuals as well as at institutions are therefore recognised as promising practices in preventing gender-based violence.

Examples exist of such an ecological approach involving institutions in the delivery of educational initiatives, in tandem with national media campaigns. In Albania, the awarenessraising campaign 'UNITE' (held during the '16 days of activism') disseminated educational messages on gender equality and the prevention of gender-based violence against women via television spots, photographic exhibitions and printed media. The theme of this campaign was that individuals as well as local communities have a responsibility to prevent gender-based violence against women. Educational materials were therefore

60. See www.emancipator.nl/en/whiteribbon-2.

61. See www.whiteribbon.org.uk.

shared with and distributed by community leaders, such as religious leaders and government institutions.

Focus on Malta

Intervention: Utilising social media (such as image and video posts) and traditional media (such as posters and radio adverts), “The Full Co-operation: Zero Violence Campaign” aimed to reach both victims of violence against women and girls and the general public, by sharing information about available sources of support for victims and to encourage bystander intervention and reporting of violence. As well as raising awareness, this campaign created a multi-sectoral steering group to develop a prevention and response programme to violence against women and girls, which developed a training programme for relevant professionals. The training sought to equip professionals with knowledge about violence against women and methods of supporting victims.

Videos on social media reached a high number of people and garnered many views (for example, more than 150 000 views on one video). In addition, 716 professionals completed the 3-day training course, including NGO staff, guidance counsellors, and healthcare workers. A further 600 of these completed the Stage 2 of this training course and 98 underwent a train-the-trainer programme to enable them to train peers and colleagues.

Relationship to prevention of violence: This campaign utilised local data from a survey carried out by the University of Malta (2017-2018) to tailor awareness-raising and training to the Maltese context. The campaign also relied on expertise from across sectors and aimed to create a common mode of prevention and response to violence against women and girls in Malta. Additionally, the awareness-raising campaign disseminated information to young people through the informal educational contexts of football clubs and local Girl and Boy Scouts groups.

Conclusion

The Istanbul Convention outlines a detailed list of actions aimed at preventing gender-based violence against women under its third chapter which covers articles 12 to 17. In order to engage younger generations in championing gender equality and acting as agents of change in countering violence against women, Article 14 develops such proactive efforts in the education context. Considering that perceptions and beliefs shaped at an early age can pave the way for social acceptance of violence against women, Article 14 stresses that both formal and informal education are central to preventing discrimination and violence against women and girls. With this aim in mind, it requires the inclusion of age-appropriate teaching materials on equality between women and men, non-stereotyped gender roles, mutual respect, nonviolent conflict resolution in interpersonal relationships, gender-based violence against women, and the right of personal integrity in formal education curricula. Article 14 also provides that states parties must take actions to promote such principles among children and youth using informal education facilities (e.g. sports, cultural, and leisure facilities).

The preventive actions encompassed in the Istanbul Convention are based on best practice as evidenced from existing research on the root causes, manifestations and impacts of violence against women, as well as models of good practice within Council of Europe member states and states parties. This paper highlights examples of promising practices in formal and informal education on gender equality, healthy interpersonal relationships including consent and violence prevention, and the review of evidence of necessary factors for prevention. It covers promising practices under three levels of prevention approaches: primary, secondary, and tertiary intervention. It also addresses key cross-cutting issues such as the involvement of boys and men as partners in countering violence against women and girls, the role of digital literacy, NGO-led education initiatives, and the need to consider intersectional discrimination in education. This paper can be used as a template for preventative interventions in formal and informal education alongside the Istanbul Convention. It shows that investment in educational measures to sensitise children and youth remains a significant priority in order to ensure long-term changes in mentalities and attitudes to prevent violence against women.

Checklist

The following checklist is based on the review of evidence, promising practices that already exist in the Council of Europe member states, and recommendations from GREVIO's baseline evaluations of states parties. It can be used as a comprehensive checklist of measures that can help in designing and implementing effective formal and informal educational interventions aimed at preventing violence against women and domestic violence.

Formal education

Formal contexts for educational intervention

- ▶ Do formal education curricula at all levels include age-appropriate teaching materials on equality between women and men, non-stereotyped gender roles, mutual respect, non-violent conflict resolution in interpersonal relationships, gender-based violence against women, and the right to personal integrity?

Equality between men and women, and non-stereotyped gender roles

- ▶ Is inequality between men and women acknowledged as a root cause of violence against women? Are formal education measures taken to increase gender equality, not only through legislation but also through public education or awareness-raising?
- ▶ Is the gendered nature of violence against women and girls emphasised within the context of formal education messages about equality, respect and the prohibition of discrimination?
- ▶ Do formal educational interventions actively involve boys, as well as girls, in changing behaviours and attitudes that justify or trivialise violence against women and girls?
- ▶ Do formal educational interventions address all forms of gender-based violence against women and girls (physical, psychological and sexual violence, stalking, sexual harassment, female genital mutilation and forced marriage, etc.)?

Comprehensive sexuality education

- ▶ Is comprehensive sexuality education a primary site for addressing gender equality, including non-stereotyped gender roles for girls and boys? Where comprehensive sexuality education is in place, does it address mutual respect, consent, personal integrity, discrimination and violence against girls?

Integrated approach to preventing violence against women and girls

- ▶ Is an integrated formal education approach to preventing violence against women and girls taken, including by addressing inequality between men and women and stereotypes at different levels of schooling? This may include addressing non-stereotyped gender roles within the curriculum as well as raising awareness among teachers and school leaders.
- ▶ Are there measures to implement gender mainstreaming in education in line with Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)13?

Addressing intersectional discrimination

- ▶ Do formal educational interventions on the prevention of violence ensure that messages are relevant to a range of groups, including groups experiencing multiple vulnerabilities and discrimination?
- ▶ Are formal educational interventions on the prevention of violence context-appropriate, including initiatives that are culturally-sensitive or accessible to children and youth with disabilities?

Development of indicators and measures to assess knowledge and skills about violence prevention

- ▶ Is data collected on an ongoing basis to measure the effectiveness of interventions to prevent violence against women and girls in education?

Training of teachers and other education professionals

- ▶ Is there consistent and nationally-mandated in-service and initial teacher training on issues of gender-based violence, women's equality with men, negative gender stereotypes, and how to detect violence and respond to it?

Informal education

Informal contexts for educational intervention

- ▶ Are educational initiatives on the prevention of violence against girls and women promoted through youth structures (e.g. sports clubs and youth groups)?

- ▶ Do these settings offer the opportunity to challenge harmful gender stereotypes and promote non-stereotyped gender roles and positive masculinities?

Equality between men and women, and non-stereotyped gender roles

- ▶ Do informal educational interventions and awareness-raising campaigns specifically target risk factors for perpetration (e.g. harmful gender stereotypes)? Do these measures actively involve boys, as well as girls, in changing behaviours and attitudes that justify or trivialise violence against women and girls?
- ▶ Do informal educational interventions address the full continuum of gender-based violence against women and girls, including less prevalent forms, such as female genital mutilation and forced marriage?

Integrated approach to preventing violence against women and girls

- ▶ Do awareness-raising campaigns and informal education offered in conjunction with formal education, as well as changes to legislation, serve to support an integrated approach to preventing gender-based violence against women?
- ▶ Do awareness campaigns on the prevention of violence consider child witnesses of domestic violence as victims themselves?

Addressing intersectional discrimination

- ▶ Do awareness-raising campaigns and informal educational interventions on the prevention of violence ensure that messages are relevant to a range of groups, including groups experiencing multiple vulnerabilities and discrimination?
- ▶ Does the dissemination of informal educational interventions to prevent violence reach women and girls who might not otherwise have access to mainstream media and/or information and communication technologies, including those women at risk of multiple discrimination?
- ▶ Are awareness-raising techniques and informal educational interventions on the prevention of violence age-appropriate and varied (e.g. the use of comic books or online games for addressing issues of gender equality aimed at teenagers)?
- ▶ Are informal educational interventions on the prevention of violence context-appropriate, including initiatives that are culturally-sensitive or accessible to children and youth with disabilities?

Development of indicators and measures to assess knowledge and skills about violence prevention

- ▶ Are awareness-raising campaigns and informal educational initiatives evaluated through the collection of data following interventions?

Key resources

Council of Europe resources

The Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention)

The Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (Lanzarote Convention)

GREVIO's General Recommendation No. 1 on the digital dimension of violence against women, 2021

Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)1 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on preventing and combating sexism

Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)13 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on gender mainstreaming in education,

Recommendation CM/Rec(2009)10 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on integrated national strategies for the protection of children from violence

Recommendation CM/Rec(2008)4 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on strengthening the integration of children of migrants and of immigrant background

Recommendation CM/REC (2009)4 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the education of Roma and Travellers in Europe

The Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2023

The Council of Europe Disability Strategy 2017-2023

The Mid-term Horizontal Review of GREVIO baseline evaluation reports (2021)

Safe at school: Education sector responses to violence based on sexual orientation, gender identity/expression or sex characteristics in Europe (2018)

Gender Matters- a manual on addressing gender-based violence affecting young people (2019)

Other International Organisations resources

[UNESCO Strategy for gender equality in and through education \(2019-2025\)](#)

UNESCO, [International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education: An evidence-informed approach](#) (2018)

UNESCO, [Global guidance on addressing school-related gender-based violence](#), (2017)

UNESCO, [A Guide for gender equality in teacher education policy and practices](#) (2015)

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Article 14 - Education

1. Parties shall take, where appropriate, the necessary steps to include teaching material on issues such as equality between women and men, non-stereotyped gender roles, mutual respect, non-violent conflict resolution in interpersonal relationships, gender-based violence against women and the right to personal integrity, adapted to the evolving capacity of learners, in formal curricula and at all levels of education.

2. Parties shall take the necessary steps to promote the principles referred to in paragraph 1 in informal educational facilities, as well as in sports, cultural and leisure facilities and the media.

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