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# UNDERSTANDING CONCEPTS OF VIOLENCE

A key to the work processes on the new qualitative target

*A summary of the report *The higher education institutions' educational needs in matters of men's violence against women and domestic violence* (2020)*

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Men's violence against women is a serious public health and gender equality issue.

# PREFACE

Men's violence against women and domestic violence are a serious gender-equality problem and the prevailing political consensus is that it must end. Sweden ratified the Istanbul Convention from 2014, *The Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combatting Violence against Women and Domestic Violence*, and in 2017, as a part of its commitment, the government adopted a ten-year national strategy to prevent and combat men's violence against women (SKR 2016/17:10). The national strategy includes efforts to combat domestic violence, violence in LGBTI relationships, honour-related violence and oppression, as well as prostitution and human trafficking for sexual purposes.

The qualitative target encompasses both Sweden's commitments within the framework of the Istanbul Convention and the national strategy to prevent and combat men's violence against women.

Knowledge is critical to those who are exposed to violence and those who perpetrate violence should have adequate treatment and support to change their life circumstances. Consequently, the Swedish government has resolved that knowledge about combat men's violence against women and domestic violence shall constitute a qualitative target in eight tertiary level education.

The Swedish Gender Equality Agency has established that there is a considerable need for lecturers and staff with overarching educational responsibilities to be further educated on the subject. In particular, this pertains to understanding the scope and context of

what is included in the qualitative target. To improve dissemination of the study and abridged version in the English language has been prepared, *Higher-Education Institutions' Education Requirements on the Issue of Men's Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence*. The Swedish Gender Equality Agency has prepared this abridged version, results and recommendations is the responsibility of the researcher independently.



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While domestic violence had implications as the overarching umbrella term, men's violence against women was interpreted literally and presented as specific, simplified and exclusive.

# SUMMARY

Work is underway at Sweden's higher-education institutions to educate students about men's violence against women and domestic violence. Commissioned by the Swedish Gender Equality Agency, Ninni Carlsson, researcher at the Department of Social Work at University of Gothenburg conducted a study on the individual educational needs of university lecturers and education officers in this field. This publication is an abridged version of the study. The study concludes that higher education institutions require comprehensive and long-term support in competency development to understand the concept and field of men's violence against women and domestic violence.

The survey was conducted as a component of the Swedish Gender Equality Agency's government assignment to offer further education and knowledge at higher-education institutions on men's violence against women and domestic violence. The assignment encompasses eight professional academic programmes for professions with a high probability of encountering women and children victims of violence to recognize and respond, a knowledge area for which a new qualitative target was recently introduced. Professionals with overarching educational responsibilities at 69 out of all 84 institutions concerned participated in the study. The overall conclusion is that the understanding of the concept and field men's violence against women and domestic violence, and Swedish and European gender equality policies, is key to fully educating students in this field. The results indicate that the level of understanding has to increase,

which is aligned with Sweden's commitments within the framework of the Istanbul Convention and Sweden's National Strategy to Prevent and Combat Men's Violence against Women.

### **CONTRADICTORY EDUCATIONAL NEEDS**

Despite the generally substantial need for improved knowledge, surprisingly few individuals considered it urgent to gain further knowledge about any form of violence. The educational needs were justified in a manner that indicated a lack of knowledge on the subject matter, even among those who indicated that they possessed such knowledge.

### **UNEQUAL CONDITIONS**

The process of introducing the qualitative target to professional education and training programmes, and providing courses on the subject, is fraught with unequal conditions. Course providers comprised a highly heterogeneous group with respect to familiarity with the assignment, educational experience, teaching resources and expertise in the subject.

### **CHALLENGES TO THE WORK PROCESS**

A range of different challenges and difficulties in the work process – pedagogical, organisational, time constraints and personnel challenges – interacted and were defined by the economic scope.

### **QUALITATIVE TARGET, A CHALLENGE IN ITSELF**

There is a prevailing ambivalence and criticism of how the qualitative target was formulated. The criticism utilised interpretations of both concepts of violence in a manner that was not consistent with international conventions. While domestic violence has implications as the overarching umbrella term, men's violence against women was interpreted literally and presented as specific, simplified and exclusive. These interpretations appeared to be dominant and socially accepted, across various universities and professional training courses, and had consequences for the abilities to conduct the assignment.

### **NEW OPPORTUNITIES IN EFFORTS WITH THE QUALITATIVE TARGET**

The work processes on the qualitative target contributed to the professional development of some course providers, bringing awareness that the field of knowledge and expertise was already existing at the institution and in the curricula. Others had found support from a centre of excellence.

# A GENDER-EQUALITY AND PUBLIC-HEALTH ISSUE

Men's violence against women is a widespread problem in society. Sweden's first population survey on men's violence against women with a representative selection of women (aged 18–64 years) was published in 2001 (Lundgren, Heimer, Westerstrand & Kalliokoski 2001). The survey showed that 67 per cent of women had experienced sexual, psychological and/or physical violence and threats of violence by men after their 15th birthday.

A subsequent population survey on violence and health in Sweden (NCK 2014) conducted with both women and men (aged 18–74 years), showed that exposure to violence was a very common life experience, regardless of gender. Some 81 per cent of the women and 80 per cent of the men had experienced some form of sexual, physical or psychological violence or threat of violence. However, there were distinct differences between the genders. Exposure to sexual violence was greatest among women, while exposure to violence or threats of physical violence were dominant among men.

Those who perpetrated violence against women/girls and men/boys were frequently a man or boy. Few of the individuals who were victims of violence had talked about it with family and friends. Even fewer had received professional help by, for example, doctors, psychologists and social workers, or ever made a police report.

- Women were victims of sexual violence to a significantly higher degree than men, while men were victims of physical violence or threats of physical violence to a significantly higher degree than women.
- Women and men were victims of psychological violence to approximately the same extent.
- Women were, to a significantly higher degree than men, victims of what is deemed gross sexual assault and psychological assault.
- Women were, to a significantly higher degree than men, victims of systematic and repeated psychological and physical violence and threats of violence by partners or former partners.
- Physical violence to men was primarily perpetrated by unknown men.

A recently conducted population survey on sexual and reproductive health in Sweden (Public Health Agency 2017) on the age group of 16 to 84 years old, also indicated that women, to a significantly higher extent than men, had been victims of all forms of sexual violence. Lesbian and bisexual women and transgender persons were victimised to a higher degree than the population in general. The frequency was greatest among the younger population (16–29 years old).

Several international conventions to which Sweden is a party describe violence against women and children as a serious violation of human rights that impedes opportunities for living a life with equality and equal opportunities (RES 34/180 1979; RES 44/25 1989; A/RES/48/104 1993; Europe 2011). For the UN, violence against women and girls is an umbrella term for violence within families and society as a whole. The UN's Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women includes all forms of gender-based physical, psychological and sexual violence, as well as threats of violence (A/RES/48/104 1993).

Violence against women and girls is regarded as one of the world's most widespread, constant and devastating violations of human rights, which largely eludes the awareness of authorities due to a culture of silence, the stigma and the impunity that continues to prevail (UN 2021). Violence is also internationally recognised as a serious public health issue (WHO 1996, 2002, 2005, 2021). Swedish research indicates a clear link between exposure to violence and psychological and physical ill health later in life (NCK 2014).

# EDUCATION AIMED AT VIOLENCE PREVENTION

In Sweden, gender equality has been a policy area in its own right since 1972 and in the past 20 years, education about human rights in higher education has been emphasised as a means of attaining and securing gender equality (UKÄ 2015). At the same time, the manner in which men's violence against women and violence against children are being considered in higher education is attracting ever-greater attention. Surveys indicate that education initiatives were pursued to various degrees (National Agency for Higher Education 2004; NCK 2010; UKÄ 2015). The most recent survey of 2015 showed that just over half of the relevant professional education programmes provided courses on men's violence against women and eight out of ten about violence against children (UKÄ 2015).

The lack of mandatory course components on men's violence against women in undergraduate educational programmes for professions that entail meetings with victims of violence (frequently women and children) was also a key component of the government's gender equality policy, *Power, Goals and Agency – A Feminist Policy for a Gender-Equal Future* (Govt. Comm. 2016/17:10). The communication comprises a 10-year national strategy to prevent and combat men's violence against women (ibid, Chap. 5). The strategy indicates four objectives to guide the government's steering of resources to the field, one of which comprises improved knowledge and methods development. The national strategy entered into force

on January 2017 and is a part of Sweden's legal commitment to the Istanbul Convention.

Education is also one of several preventative measures in the Istanbul Convention. Article 15 stipulates that the Parties shall arrange or strengthen education for professions that come into contact with victims or perpetrators of violence. Such education shall encompass knowledge about gender equality, how violence can be prevented and detected, and the needs and rights of victims of crime. Professional education and training programmes shall also include knowledge about how secondary victimisation (revictimisation) can be prevented, meaning additional violation and trauma as a result of how people react when someone reveals that they were a victim of violence (Williams 1984). This pertains to, among other issues, not being believed, called into question or blamed for what has happened.

# NEW QUALITATIVE TARGET FOR SPECIFIC PROFESSIONS

As a component of implementing the Istanbul Convention and the National Strategy, the Government has resolved to introduce a new qualitative target to ‘highlight knowledge about men’s violence against women and domestic violence in the Higher Education Ordinance’s degree ordinance (1993:100). The qualitative target encompasses eight professions with the greatest probability of encountering victims and perpetrators of violence.

## NEW QUALITATIVE TARGET

In 2018, a new qualitative target was introduced in the *Higher Education Ordinance*, to highlight knowledge about men’s violence against women and domestic violence. This includes knowledge on preventing and detecting violence, as well as initiatives to support victims and perpetrators of violence.

The following eight academic programmes at the foundational-level are encompassed by the target:

- Degree of Bachelor of Science in Physiotherapy
- Degree of Master of Laws
- Degree of Master of Science in Medicine
- Degree of Master of Science in Psychology
- Degree of Bachelor of Science in Nursing
- Degree of Bachelor of Science in Social Work
- Degree of Master of Science in Dental Surgery
- Higher Education Diploma in Dental Hygiene (added in 2019)

In 2018, the Swedish Gender Equality Agency was assigned to offer further education and capacity development to universities and higher education institutions in its work with the new qualitative target (S2018/01831/JÄM partial). To be able to provide relevant and useful support, the Swedish Gender Equality Agency commissioned the Department of Social Work at the University of Gothenburg to conduct a study of the institutions' educational requirements.

## HOW THE STUDY WAS CONDUCTED

The study was aimed at identifying the specific requirements of the institutions concerned with respect to education initiatives and knowledge bases, in an effort to integrate the new qualitative target in their professional education and training programmes, and the specific contexts, conditions, opportunities and difficulties encountered in undertaking education in this field.

Material for the survey was collected between February and June 2019. The survey was sent to all 84 course providers at 27 higher-education institutions which at the time of the survey, had degree-awarding powers for any of the eight degree programmes concerned. Of these, 69 responded, corresponding to a response rate of 82 per cent.

In the autumn of 2019, 15 follow-up interviews were conducted with 19 professionals who had overarching education responsibilities for the programme at a higher-education institution/education districts in Central and Southern Sweden. The interviewees represented two education districts from each professional education programme, with the exception of the Dental Hygienist programme, which was represented by one district (Carlsson 2020).



SVERIGES  
RIKES  
LAG



The qualitative target is also included in the degree of Master of Laws

# COMPREHENSIVE NEED FOR SUPPORT

The study indicated that the reported requirement for education within the field men's violence against women and domestic violence was considerable for both faculties (68 per cent) and staff with overarching education responsibilities (70 per cent). This was true for all professional education and training programmes, with the exception of the Social Work programme, where conversely, a minority responded that the faculty (38 per cent) and staff with overarching education responsibilities (31 per cent) had such education qualifications.

The education requirements diverged, both within and between programmes and learning institutions:

- For disciplinary domains, between "old" and "new" disciplines/professions, i.e. whether or not the field of knowledge existed previously in professional education and training programmes.
- Between lecturers within the faculty and between education officers within one and the same educational institution.
- Between various knowledge components regarding the subject area of violence.

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In the free-text responses, educational needs were justified in a manner that indicated a lack of knowledge of the subject, even among those who indicated that they possessed such knowledge.

Some of the participants of the study deemed the differences in the faculty's level of knowledge and the lack of expertise regarding aspects of knowledge on violence, as a deficiency in their own department, which could thus be due to external visiting lecturers. Their request was to broaden the expertise and create the same pedagogical conditions for the lecturers. Others attested to lecturers having such knowledge, along with visiting lecturers, as an obvious and sufficient resource.

The interviews indicated a similar pattern, with requirements for either strengthened expertise for the entire faculty, broader expertise within the qualitative target for knowledge in the field of violence, additional employees with expertise in the field or visiting lecturers as resources.

The study further revealed that institutions generally provided education within far too few sub-areas of the field of violence. The course components most frequently pertained to various forms of violence within relationships, domestic violence and particularly in relation to vulnerable life conditions, while few provided components about forms of sexual violence outside of intimate partner relationships. This lack of understanding of the comprehensive nature of the scope of the qualitative target is interpreted as a weakness.

## **ISTANBUL CONVENTION**

In 2014, the *Council of Europe's Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence* entered into force in Sweden. Known as the Istanbul Convention, it was the first legally binding regional instrument about violence against women and domestic violence in Europe. The convention states that violence against women is gender-based at a structural level, and that violence is one of the main reasons that women are subordinate to men.

The Istanbul Convention indicates that the signatory parties shall, when appropriate, take measures to include educational material in formal curriculums at all levels of education. The parties are to arrange or reinforce appropriate education for occupational groups that come into contact with victims or perpetrators of all forms of violence, within the scope of the convention.

## **NATIONAL STRATEGY TO PREVENT AND COMBAT MEN'S VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**

On 1 Jan 2017, the government's 10-year National Strategy to Prevent and Combat Men's Violence against Women came into force. The strategy is a part of Sweden's efforts to live up to its commitment to the Istanbul Convention.

The National Strategy places a focus on efforts to prevent violence and men's participation and responsibilities for stopping violence. The fields of application include all forms of physical, psychological and sexual violence, as well as threats of violence directed at women and girls, including honour-related violence and oppression, prostitution and human trafficking for sexual purposes such as the commercialisation and exploitation of the female body in advertising, media and pornography, aimed at reproducing conceptions of women's subordination. With respect to domestic violence, honour-related violence and oppression, and prostitution and human trafficking for sexual purposes, the Strategy's initiatives are also aimed at counteracting the exposure of LGBT persons, men and boys to violence, and women and girls' perpetrators of violence.



Interaction with the health care services provides many opportunities to identify victims of violence.

# COMPARISON OF EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

In regard to the educational needs for specific components of the field of violence there was an urgency to obtain in-depth knowledge, as the level of knowledge proved to be low. Surprisingly few individuals, between 19 and 45 per cent, considered it urgent to gain further knowledge about any form of violence.

For a closer interpretation of this seemingly contradictory result, a comparative analysis was performed to determine how common it was to have course components about other forms of violence in relation to the expressed education needs of the different forms of violence. The result is presented in tables 1–4.

Not having any course components about violence is defined in the analysis as an interpreted or expected education requirement. The relationship between expected and stated education requirements are found in the rightmost column of the table. The comparison indicates that education needs for the various forms of violence were either higher, approximately equal, lower or much lower than expected.

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The stated need was higher for three forms of violence that were usually already included in course components: children’s exposure to domestic violence and domestic, including in particularly vulnerable life conditions. The requirement was much lower for forms of sexual violence beyond intimate partner relationships, which was also the least included in course components.

## HIGHER THAN EXPECTED EDUCATION NEEDS

Those with an indicated need for course components outnumbered those who lacked components for the following sub areas of violence within close relationships and particularly vulnerable life conditions. Consequently, those who had hitherto provided courses on the subject also appreciated the urgency of in-depth knowledge.

Table 1. The relationship between expected and stated education requirements.

Forms of violence	Course components exist, percentage and total	Expected education requirements (lack of course components) percentage	Indicated education requirement	Relationship between stated and expected education requirement
N=69				
Children's exposure to violence in the family (physical, psychological, sexual)	74 % (n=51)	26 %	Lecturer/ education officer	Greater requirement
Violence in close heterosexual relationships (physical, psychological, sexual)	72 % (n= 50)	28 %	per cent	Greater requirement
Particularly vulnerable life conditions based on age, disability, sexual orientation, transgender identity or expression, ethnicity, religion or other profession of faith	61 % (n=42)	39 %	43 % / 42 %	Greater requirement

## CORRELATING EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

Those who indicated a need for education in the following sub areas of violence within close relationships were roughly as many as those who lacked course components, which was as expected.

Table 2. The relationship between expected and stated education requirements.

Forms of violence	Course components exist, percentage and total	Expected education requirements (lack of course components) percentage	Indicated education requirement lecturer/ education officer percentage	Relationship between stated and expected education requirement
N=69				
Children who witness/ live with violence in close relationships	67 % (n=46)	33 %	33 % / 30 %	Roughly equal requirements

## LOWER THAN EXPECTED EDUCATION REQUIREMENT

Those who indicated a need for education in the area of men’s violence against women were fewer than those who lacked course components. In other words, those who had not provided courses on the subject did not feel any urgency for further in-depth knowledge.

Table 3. The relationship between expected and stated education requirements.

Forms of violence  N=69	Course components exist, percentage and total	Expected education requirements (lack of course components) percentage	Indicated education requirement lecturer/ education officer percentage	Relationship between stated and expected education requirement
Violence in the close relationships of in LGBT persons (physical, psychological, sexual)	49 % (n=34)	51 %	45 % / 41 %	Lower requirement
Violence in the close relationships of young persons (physical, psychological, sexual)	48 % (n=33)	52 %	41 % / 32 %	Lower requirement
Honour-related violence and oppression, genital mutilation of girls and women, forced and child marriages	43 % (n=30)	57 %	43 % / 38 %	Lower requirement

## MUCH LOWER THAN EXPECTED EDUCATION REQUIREMENT

Those who indicated a need for education in the following sub areas of sexual violence beyond close relationships were far fewer than those who lacked course components. Few to very few provided courses on the subject and did not feel any urgency to provide in-depth knowledge.

Table 4. The relationship between expected and stated education requirements.

Forms of violence  N=69	Course components exist, percentage and total	Expected education requirements (lack of course components) percentage	Indicated education requirement Lecturer/ education officer percentage	Relationship between stated and expected education requirement
Sexual assault beyond close relationships	38 % (n=26)	62 %	26 % / 23 %	Far lower requirement
Sexual assault against children outside of close relationships	36 % (n=25)	64 %	25 % / 25 %	Far lower requirement
Sexual harassment at the workplace and/or school environments	29 % (n=20)	71 %	30 % / 26 %	Far lower requirement
Prostitution and human trafficking for sexual purposes	20 % (n=14)	80 %	25 % / 17 %	Far lower requirement
Commercialization and exploitation of women in advertising, media and pornography	13 % (n=9)	87 %	20 % / 19 %	Far lower requirement

In summary, the indicated education requirement was higher for three forms of violence that were usually already included in course components: children’s exposure to violence in the family and violence in intimate heterosexual relationships – both within close relationships – as well as particularly vulnerable life conditions. The requirement was indicated as being far lower for forms of sexual violence beyond close relationships, which was also the least included in course components. Consequently, instead of broadening their competence in the subject area, violence, requests were for more already-existing knowledge.

## UNEQUAL CONDITIONS

The result of both sub-studies indicated that those who were encompassed by education reform comprised a highly heterogeneous group and that their work processes to integrate the qualitative tar-

get was dominated by unequal conditions from the onset. It pertained to how and when they became familiar with the assignment, their educational experience, teaching resources and expertise on the subject matter.

Various points of reference influenced the interviewees' approach to the assignment. All of them described the qualitative target as being important to professionals, but those who were not invited to a dialogue during the preparatory period and felt they had not been aware of the qualitative target in good time before it came into force, expressed ambivalence about the assignment. They lacked knowledge about what the assignment encompasses, which would have provided better prerequisites for taking on the assignment.

Courses and examinations regarding men's violence against women and domestic violence were introduced in some programmes as early as the 1990s. Barely half (46 per cent) of the course providers had any course syllabi intended for education in the subject before the qualitative target came into force. The majority (74 per cent) had provided instructions and more than half had provided course examinations that included all of the students (55 per cent).

The majority (87 per cent) had education and examinations by lecturers employed within the branch of knowledge. Nevertheless, visiting lecturers were engaged to a relatively high degree. The total number of lecturers also varied considerably (0-30 individuals). Most (70 per cent) indicated they had lecturers who worked with issues within the subject in the course of the profession for which the course is designed; slightly more than half (59 per cent) had lecturers who had conducted research in the subject matter; barely half (48 per cent) had lecturers who participated in courses/training in the subject matter.

- The course providers also varied in their progress to introduce the qualitative target and provide education in the subject.
- 87 per cent had introduced the qualitative target in their programme syllabus
- 59 per cent had introduced the qualitative target into the intended learning outcomes of their course syllabi
- 84 per cent had introduced the qualitative target to their courses
- 61 per cent provided examinations on all intended learning outcomes of the qualitative target



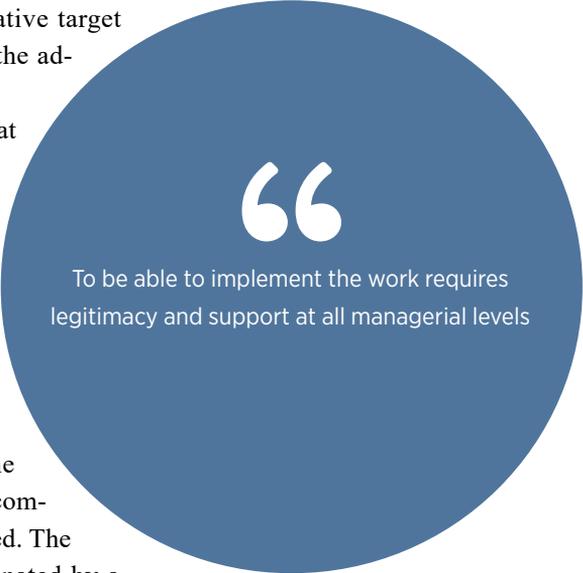
The new qualitative target has its challenges but also provides great opportunities.

# CHALLENGES IN THE WORK PROCESS

Both sub-studies investigated the pedagogical and other challenges in their work on the qualitative target. Various challenges were also indicated as interactive and defined by the economic scope.

- To prioritise between various qualitative targets and where in the programme the qualitative target would best be integrated to enable the advancement of knowledge
- To break down the qualitative target at a course level, into intended learning outcomes, instructions and examinations
- To manage and react to the tight economic, organisational, time-constrained and personnel framework of the courses

The prerequisites for introducing the qualitative target and participating in competence-developing courses were limited. The work situation was considerably dominated by a lack of time and the interviewees described strained economic conditions. For example, participation was not possible for courses that were announced too late, since course scheduling and service planning for other assignments are implemented on



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To be able to implement the work requires legitimacy and support at all managerial levels

a semester or annual basis and thus require considerable forward planning.

One requirement that was expressed in interviews was for stronger support from the management for the work with the qualitative target that higher-education institutions and course providers have undertaken. Implementing the work requires legitimacy and support at all managerial levels, organisational responsibility, reasonable conditions and a national-level follow-up of the work's progress.

# CRITICISM OF THE QUALITATIVE TARGET

The wording of the qualitative target was the subject of comments in both sub-studies. The interviewees voiced a general criticism at the faculty level and among students.

Singling out men's violence against women has aroused reactions. The wording, 'domestic violence' would have been sufficient. Violence occurs in a range of contexts and to especially single out men's violence against women fails to describe the complexity. *(Excerpts of study's free-text responses)*

A more general wording would have better captured the complexity and issues surrounding violence within close relationships, particularly in same-sex relationships and children who live in violent environments. The causes of violence can be numerous and multi-layered, and perpetrators may comprise more than just men. *(Excerpts of study's free-text responses)*

While the term men's violence against women was interpreted literally and presented as specific, simplified and exclusive, conversely, the term domestic violence was interpreted as general, complex, multi-layered and inclusive. Domestic violence thus carried implications of being the overarching umbrella term, which describes many forms of violence and victimisation. Conversely, men's violence against women became the subordinate term that did not broadly include spheres of society, vulnerable situations, categories and power structures such as gender, age, sexuality and functionality.

The literal and tightly limited understanding of the term, men's violence against women, emerged as dominant and socially accepted, across various universities and professional training courses.

The push to include all forms of violence in close relationships along with a lack of familiarity with the qualitative target's purpose and content, resulted in a paradoxical situation which had consequences on the opportunities to implement the assignment.

Misunderstandings about the concept of violence or uncertainties about how the qualitative target should be interpreted had led to either irritation and expressed difficulties with the work to integrate the courses, or a simplified view of what the qualitative target is intended to encompass.

## **THE TERMS, VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN, DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE**

The Istanbul Convention regards *violence against women* as every incident of violence or a threat against women and girls in private or in public, which leads to physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm or suffering, and which is an expression of historically unequal power relationships between women and men. Preventing violence against women and children is considered to be of critical significance for achieving de jure and de facto gender equality. The convention is also applicable to *domestic violence* against men and boys.

In Sweden's national strategy, the scope was further expanded regarding the subject area, violence. *Intimate partner violence* for girls, women, boys, men and LGBTI individuals is to be counteracted. The term encompasses a further circle of close relationships than domestic violence and honour-related violence and oppression. Victimization in the form of prostitution and human trafficking for sexual purposes, as well as the commercialisation and exploitation of women in advertising, media and pornography also fall under the strategy's subject area, violence. Domestic violence falls under the overarching umbrella term, men's violence against women.

Domestic violence refers to the perpetration by someone in a close and trusting relationship (Prop. 2006/07:38, p. 31 & 46). Under the Social Services Act (2001:453), women and children who are or have been exposed to violence or other assault within a close relationship are specially entitled to protection and support. The assessment of whether it pertains to a close and trusting relationship shall be made based on family and living conditions in each individual case (Prop. 2006/07:38, p. 31 & 46).

A deeper understanding of the comprehensive nature of the new qualitative target is required in order to provide students with adequate competencies.



# REQUESTS FOR KNOWLEDGE SUPPORT

Both sub-studies revealed a positive attitude to the qualitative target and to a broad education about violence. Survey responses showed that some did not find any problem with the work to complete the assignment, that much of the knowledge content in the qualitative target was already available in their course content and that they had competent lecturers with an interest in the subject. Thoughts were also expressed about developing the work with the qualitative target and the need for more lecturers with expertise in the subject matter.

The requested training initiatives consist of further knowledge about the content and guidelines of the qualitative target, the different forms of violence and professional skills for discovery, protection and support, the formulation of course materials and examinations for the qualitative target, as well as skills in programme and course development.

Proposal for knowledge support:

- Web-based national undergraduate education and digital course materials for both students and lecturers aimed at all professions
- Web-based profession-specific advanced courses
- Expert pool in the form of a lecturer pool with visiting lecturers
- Employees with expertise for developing competencies among colleagues
- Website with continuously updated references to reading lists and up-to-date research
- A higher-education pedagogical bank with examples of how the qualitative target can be explicitly broken down into intended learning outcomes and formulated in courses and examinations

Support to higher-education institutions should be multi-year and comprehensive, pursuant to the study's recommendations (Carlsson 2020). Most course providers are deemed to need some form of training initiatives and knowledge support. For all lecturers and education officers to manage the assignment on their own in the long-term, it is necessary to broaden everyone's competencies. This is also deemed to be urgent, as the faculties would otherwise not fulfil the same qualitative target as expected by students and a future graduated professional labour force.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY**

Training initiatives and knowledge bases need to provide scope for and adapt to the existing levels of professional education and training courses concerned, in terms of prior knowledge and work processes with the assignment, and to their prerequisites for participating in competence development.

However, heterogeneous groups, such as the course providers concerned, are not regarded as a problem in pedagogical contexts. On the contrary, course participants from various professions learn from and with each other through faculty meetings and exchanges between lecturers from various institutions and faculties.

With the study's results in mind, one key assessment is that course coordinators, in dialogue with the Swedish Gender Equality Agency, are gaining familiarity with gender equality policies and the bases of knowledge for the qualitative target, along with its purpose, content and guidelines.

Training initiatives are proposed within three areas:

1. The government's intention with the qualitative target
2. Other in-depth knowledge and skills within programmes and course development on the subject area, violence
3. Knowledge about violence and professional skills included in the national strategy (Skr. 2016/17:10)

In terms of both research and politics, men's violence against women and intimate partner violence encompass numerous forms of violence frequently perpetrated by men, both in private and in public. It is a well-defined remedial area for professionals: to prevent men's violence against women, including intimate partner violence. This further includes the detection, protection and support of victims of violence, as well as identifying those who perpetrate violence and offering resources to bring about change. For relevant higher-education institutions to provide students with adequate competence, an in-depth understanding of the scope of the new qualitative target is required.

# CONCLUSION

The Swedish government has extended the Gender Equality Agency's assignment to offer education initiatives and a knowledge base to lecturers and other education officers at universities, on the issue of male-on-female violence and intimate-partner violence up to and including 2023 (S2018/01831). This is also to encompass issues of honour-related violence and oppression, including child marriage, forced marriage and the genital mutilation of girls and women, and violence against children, as well as prostitution and human trafficking for sexual purposes and the exposure of LGBTI individuals to intimate-partner violence.

Moving forward, the Swedish Gender Equality Agency deems that initiatives should be aimed at the senior management of higher-education institutions and programme coordinators. Support to universities should be developed so that this is sustainable over time, and digitally accessible.

Since the first students concerned with the qualitative target are graduating in the next few years, the agency will investigate the possibility of following up on these matters, in order to observe the impact of the qualitative target.

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