FACILITATING BUSINESS ENVIRONMENTS FOR VICTIMS OF GENDER VIOLENCE

GUIDE



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Companies must be bridges and not barriers so that a break woman can the relationship with her abuser life. and start а new Companies must know the basic concepts and tools to collaborate in the creation of a safe, proactive and protective environment for victims, at the same time that they must contribute to the creation of an indubitable and collective global feeling against gender violence that protects victims and isolate abusers.

Employers have to provide a safe and helpful work environment that responds employees' needs. It's



important for everyone to do what they can to help to create safe and welcoming space for GBV victims when they anter labour market.

Women who experience violence don't know who to turn to or have had bad experiences reaching out for help. Willingness to help is the first step.





CONCEPT

The Declaration of the General Assembly of the United Nations Organization, approved on December 20, 1993, already defined "gender violence or violence against women as any act of violence based on belonging to the female sex that has or may result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to the woman, as well as threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether they occur in public or private life.

Of all the GBV that can be exerted on women, this Guide aims to act against violence that, as a manifestation of discrimination, the situation of inequality and the power relations of men over women, is exercised on them by part of those who are or have been their spouses or of those who are or have been linked to them by similar affective relationships, even without cohabitation.

GBV occurs in different ways that are not always noticeable at first glance:

- Physical violence. Examples: shoving, hitting, wounds, fractures, attacks with weapons, bites, burns, strangulation, mutilation.
- **Psychological violence**. Examples: threats, insults, humiliation or harassment, demand for obedience, aggression of an intellectual or moral nature, isolation social, contempt, intimidation, insults in public, etc.
- Sexual violence. Examples: exhibitionism, force to see material, pornographic, obscene email or phone messages, insults sexists, sexual harassment, non-consensual sexting,...
- Economic violence. Example: misappropriation of economic resources, denying access to money, delivering insufficient amounts for the maintenance of family needs, prevent access to a position work or to carry out actions in the business field, hinder professional development,...

It is important to take into account violence against women that occurs specifically in work environments.

impacted by GBV including Women around the world are sexual harassment and assault work. at Millions of female workers are forced to work in an hostile, intimidating, or humiliating environment. It is harsh reality that women are asked for sexual favors, are exposed to inappropriate jokes, comments, and unwanted physical contact that can amount to assault. Despite its massive scale globally, women avoid to report sexual harassment because of their fear of blame, disbelief, social or professional retaliation, or criminal charges.

Abusive working conditions such as poor health and safety (including building and equipment safety). Inadequate or inappropriate sanitary facilities and rules about their use.

Involuntary excessive long working hours and unpredictable or late demands to work overtime.

Gender-based violence in the world of work includes:	Bullying, physical and verbal abuse from work colleagues, supervisors or managers.	Sexual harassment and unwanted sexual advances.
Sexual abuse and violence, including 'coercive' or transactional sex, rape and sexual assault.	Abuse and harassment around pregnancy.	Psychological abuse and intimidation.
Threats and acts of physical and sexual violence.	Abusive working conditions such as poor health and safety (including building and equipment safety).	Involuntary excessive long working hours and unpredictable or late demands to work overtime.





AROUND

Companies that create egalitarian environments, that show zero tolerance towards gender violence, are key to detecting a case of gender violence in their organization, helping the victims and having a message that helps to eradicate this social problem.

How to make safe and reliable environments for workers who are victims of GBV:

- Incorporation of items on gender violence in work environment surveys.
- Section on the Intranet or bulletin boards with updated information on campaigns against gender violence and resources to protect victims.
- Incorporation of the gender perspective in the company's occupational risk policy.
- Special attention to psychosocial risks.
- Implementation of Plans and/or Equality Measures in the management of people within the organization.
- Public commitment of the management of the company against gender violence (attend rallies, demonstrations, conferences,..).
- Incorporation of information on the rights of women victims of gender violence in the welcome manual.
- Increase permits and/or flexible working hours above the regulations for women in case of being victims of gender violence.
- Establish some type of labor consequence for those workers who are convicted of gender violence.
- Work on good treatment and respect between people in all relationships established within the company and with interest groups, with special attention to eliminating sexist behaviour.

Businesses Can Take the Lead in Combatting Gender-Based Violence

1.Prevent Violence by Identifying Potential Risks.

It's important to understand where problems in companies are occurring and what are the reasons for that. There are many tools designed to help companies with complex structures identify where the problems are and how to tackle them. The tools enable companyies to self-assess how effectively their existing policies, programs, culture, leadership, and strategy are tackling violence and harassment.

2. Commit to Gender Equality and Diversity.

Leadership commitments to diverse, equal workplaces— backed by resources and action—create a necessary foundation for addressing gender-based violence. It tackles the root of the problem that is gender inequality. It also creates trust amongst teams. Without this foundation efforts to 'raise awareness' about gender-based violence can lack legitimacy.

3. Protect Employees With Supportive Policies.

Clear policies and procedures—including reporting—not only empower staff to take appropriate action when needed, but also reassure survivors, accused perpetrators that the company will handle cases effectively.

4. Monitor action and progress.

Companies taking action to tackle gender-based violence have to monitor whether actions are benefitting employees or is the situation changing - do women feel safe to report, how their reports are met, and what actions are following.





RESPONS TO THE VICTIMIS. PROTOCOLS

This section contains advice on how to address a specific case that may occur in the company. It is not a guide for the incorporation of victims of gender violence, a guide to know how to act correctly when the woman victim is a person from the organization. It is about giving you the greatest coverage and support and minimizing the fear of losing your job.

IT IS NECESSARY:

- Attend and receive the woman alone.
- Convey interest, confidence, security by insisting on confidentiality
- Listen patiently, attentively and actively.
- Believe what he tells and respect the order of his story.
- Convey security regarding their situation in the company. Move labor issues to another time. Prioritize your current situation.
- .Inform of all available resources and put in contact with specialized care resources in the territory.
- Help the woman to assess alternatives, but do not impose a road map on her. She must make the decisions and they do not have to be immediate.
- Do not question her if she does not immediately abandon the abuser. This decision is complex and is usually not automatic. The so-called Cycle of Gender Violence comes into play.



ON THE CONTRARY, YOU MUST AVOID:

- Do not give quick and hasty answers. Active listening and accompaniment are needed. Empathy with women must be total and not prejudge her from our point of view.
- Intellectualize, diagnose, pathologize. Do not tell him what is happening to him. We are not professionals in the field and we cannot know what she feels internally.
- Do not judge her, give her advice or victimize her with comments or expressions. Never compare her with other cases or women who may have gone through your situation, each woman reacts differently.
- Do not fall for myths and stereotypes about gender violence or about the victims. she is not one more.
- Do not make decisions that the woman should make, nor tell her what to do at all times.
- Demonstrate the support of the company at all times to collaborate in what the woman wants to do with her situation.

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- Offer help. Offer specific forms of help and information, such as providing child care, driving them to appointments or assisting with pets.
- Listen to what they say to you. Avoid making judgments or giving advice. They will let you know what they need.
- Validate feelings. It is common for victims to have conflicting feelings love and fear, guilt and anger, hope and sadness. Let them know that these feelings are normal.
- Challenge false attitudes that you may have about domestic or sexual violence, learn about GBV, avoid victim blaming.
- Build on their strengths. Point out the ways in which they developed coping skills, solved problems, and showed courage and determination.
- Express your concerns and support. Tell them you are concerned by simply saying, "Your situation looks dangerous and I'm concerned about your safety."
- Encourage to take control. Support their decisions about what steps to take, what types of support they need.
- Support and respect their decisions. If you really want to be helpful, be patient and respect their decisions, even if you don't agree with them.
- Refer them to a service provider who can helpt them with support network.



SOCIAL RESPOST

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) refers to sustainability strategies businesses employ to ensure that the company is carried out ethically. Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) are criteria used to measure a company's overall sustainability and we can add that there is a natural transition from one to the other.

CSR can also be seen as the precursor to ESG. Companies self-regulate and commit to sustainable practices with the aim of making a positive impact on society. Then, the efforts undertaken in a CSR strategy can be refined and fit into ESG metrics.

Companies can, within their CSR, develop actions with their interest groups against gender violence and support for victims or entities in the sector. November 25, the International Day against Violence against Women, is a good time to join the different existing initiatives, although the focus against gender violence can also be incorporated into business management on a day-to-day basis. and example:

- Support to associations/projects to support victims from CSR -Priority hiring of victims of gender violence.
- Training and awareness of the staff in the matter.
- Incorporation of equality and non-discrimination practices into the supplier policy.
- Zero tolerance in the company for comments, content on social networks or sexist behavior or attacks against the dignity of women.
- Develop the 2030 Agenda and especially Sustainable Development Goal 5, Gender Equality.







ADVANTAGES

GBV cases in a company can adversely affect profitability, for example through operational disruptions, reduced productivity. For example, sexual harassment can have negative business outcomes - affecting its brand image, restricting business productivity and profitability. Evidence shows that profitability improves when working conditions improve. Also better management practices and human resources policies and practices supporting gender equality, have proven to be creating better business outcomes and higher profitability.

Any action carried out by a company in relation to the fight against gender violence produces positive outputs for itself, for its interest groups and for society as a whole. Gender violence generates economically guantifiable damage to



women, companies and society; therefore, preventing it and/or acting quickly and efficiently when it happens minimizes the damage caused and favors the restoration of the situation preceding the episode of violence.

- Addressing gender-based violence and protecting victim workers:
- Reduces the loss of talent if it is possible for the woman to remain in her job
- Savings in replacement cost if the woman is forced to leave the company.
- Reduces the drop in productivity that the company will have if the victim leaves or this situation is not managed correctly.
- Decrease in work absenteeism caused by gender violence and the impacts on the health of the worker victim
- Reduction of risk of accidents at work.
- Improvement of the company's reputation.



TOOLS

CONCEPT

Campaña, La Violencia que no Ves

https://violenciagenero.igualdad.gob.es/sensibilizacionConcienciacion/campannas/violenciaGobierno/LaViolenciaQueNoVes/home. htm

Pocket Guide

https://gbvguidelines.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/GBV_PocketGuide021718.pdf

Barriers to employment for vulnerable groups in the Nordic Countries

AROUND

Campaña Buenos Tratos

https://violenciagenero.igualdad.gob.es/sensibilizacionConcienciacion/campannas/violenciaGobierno/BuenosTratos/vgenero.htm

Pacto Social contra la Violencia de Género de Asturias http://www.asturiasparticipa.es/entidades-adheridas/?id_proceso=50#

Laboratorio Bagó. Chile.

https://www.pactoglobal.cl/mailing/mailing2016/documentos/mayo/Presentacion_Comision_Relaciones_Laborales_10-05-16 Laboratorios Bago.pdf

RESPOST TO THE VICTIM

Derechos laborales de las mujeres víctimas de violencia de género. Protocolo del Servicio Público de Empleo https://www.sepe.es/HomeSepe/Personas/distributiva-prestaciones/quiero-cobrar-el-paro/soy-victima-de-violencia-de-genero-odomestica

SOCIAL RESPOST

Pinta el mundo de naranja.

https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-09/UNiTE-campaign-2022-concept-note-en.pdf https://www.flickr.com/photos/unwomen/51732371551/in/album-72157720219611166/

16 días de activismo. UN Women

https://trello.com/b/r98ukL1H/16-days-of-activism-2022

Iniciativa Empresas por una sociedad libre de violencia de género https://violenciagenero.igualdad.gob.es/sensibilizacionConcienciacion/inicitativaEmpresas/home.htm

Addressing Ge nder – Based Violence and Harassment Good Practice Note for the Private Sector https://www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/a808686a-2d10-45b1-86f4-448dcad6125a/191219+GBVH+GPN+V6+CLEAN for+online+consultation.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CVID=mYAOadf

POLICY TEMPLATE for Gender based violence

https://www.weps.org/sites/default/files/2021-03/POLICY_TEMPLATE_Gender_based_violence.pdf

ADVANTAGES

Why should employers support an ILO standard on GBV? www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/stop_gender_based_violence_at_work_en_final.pdf

How can business respond to an increase in gender-based violence

www.linkedin.com/pulse/how-can-business-respond-increase-gender-based-violence-chiara-condi/





Globally, one third of all women are estimated to be exposed to physical or sexual intimate partner violence against women (IPVAW) during their lifetime (World Health Organization [WHO], 2019). Contributing to mortality as well as morbidity and injury, this is a serious public health (WHO, 2013) and human rights (European Commission, 2010) issue. As gender inequality is typically assumed to be associated with and function as a predictor of IPVAW rates (e.g., European Institute for Gender Equality [EIGE], 2017; United Nations [UN], 2018), countries with low levels of gender equality are expected to show a high prevalence of IPVAW, and vice versa.

Nordic countries are considered the most advanced in terms of gender equality and are taken as an example. At the same time, they present alarming high rates of intimate partner violence (IPV) against women. This contradiction is the so-called "Nordic Paradox" (Gracia & Merlo, 2016).

An EU-wide survey conducted in 2012 found that 28% of women in Sweden reported having experienced physical or sexual violence from a partner (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights [FRA], 2014), and in 2018, 22 women were killed through intimate partner homicide (IPH; Brottsförebyggande rådet, 2019).

How can we understand the "Nordic Paradox"?

Research to date has proposed two possible explanations: an information bias or a backlash effect. The first of the explanations considers that these high levels of IPV in the Nordic countries are the result of high levels of reporting; women live in societies where it is normalised and acceptable to talk and report any kind of abuse they may suffer. Considering that the levels of gender equality are significantly high, they feel safer pointing out their perpetrator. Lucas Gottzen, a researcher at Linköping University, in a <u>Harvard Politics Review article in 2017</u>, pointed out that high rates of IPV are explained by a higher awareness in societies such as Sweden. This is the result for example of gender equality education policies.

...the "Nordic Paradox" might not be easy but whether there is a higher awareness or not, high rates of IPV in the Nordic countries are a reality.

The second explanation is the so-called backlash effect. This effect suggests that in countries with high levels of gender equality, there is a breakup with traditional gender roles and women no longer consider partners as an authority. The backlash effect implies that conflicts can

arise or increase in cases where partners try to claim control over the relationship. Therefore, violence is used by partners as a negative response to women's empowerment and progress in society. This last hypothesis has been the object of study for researcher Enrique Gracia, publishing the studies <u>"Intimate partner violence against women and the Nordic paradox" (2016)</u> and <u>"Prevalence of intimate partner violence against women in Sweden and Spain: A psychometric study of the 'Nordic paradox'' (2019)</u>. The last one found out higher IPV rates in Sweden when removing potential information bias. These two different assumptions have created a disagreement between academics since explaining the phenomena is a complex task.

In the 2014 survey, FRA provided data regarding the rates of IPV victims who had reported the abuse suffered to the police authorities. We would expect high reporting rates in the Nordic countries if we consider the information bias hypothesis as the main cause of high IPV rates, however, whereas the EU average was 20%, rates for Denmark (10%), Finland (10%) and Sweden (17%) were significantly lower. In March 2019, <u>Amnesty International</u> released an alarming report warning about the existing rape culture in Denmark, where gender equality cohabits with weak legislation and gender stereotypes that result in clear impunity for rapists. Data from the study showed that of the women who experienced rape or attempted rape (according to the Danish Ministry of Justice 5.100 but according to a study from the <u>University of Southern Denmark</u>, 24.000) in 2017, only 890 rapes were reported to the police. From the cases reported, 535 were prosecuted and only 94 convicted. Lack of trust and the fear of not being believed were some of the reasons that led to under-reporting.

Still a long way ahead

Finding the right answer to the "Nordic Paradox" might not be easy but whether there is a higher awareness or not, high rates of IPV in the Nordic countries are a reality. Countries that have been in the lead on gender equality progress still suffer the scourge of gender-based violence. This case demonstrates that there is a lot left to do to and that ongoing changes and policies are needed to completely transform our countries into truly feminist, equal, fair and safe communities.

LOWERING THE THRESHOLD FOR SEEKING HELP – FREEDOM FROM NEGATIVE SOCIAL CONTROL AND HONOR BASED VIOLANCE – THE NORWEGIAN APPROACH





Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research

Action Plan

Freedom from Negative Social Control and Honour Based Violence The Norwegian Government's strategy for implementing of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention) has been to follow up – step-by-step on different priorities (i) "Escalation Plan against Violence and Abuse" (2017–2021), "Nordic Countries Overview of Work with Perpetrators of Intimate Partner Violence" (2017:513), "Integration through Knowledge" (2019–2022), "Freedom from Violence and "Combating negative social control and honour based violence" (2021–2024). These actions all together summarize the Norwegian Government's Action Plan against discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and gender characteristics and when defining the priorities of civil society in the field of integration during the years 2021–2024.

In Norwegian, the term consistently used is "vold i nære relasjoner", which can be translated to "**violence in close relationships**". The term is translated variously to "domestic violence", "family violence", "partner abuse", "battering", etc, mainly to distinguish this violence from more random violence perpetrated by attackers with whom the abused has no established or lasting relationship.

In Norway seven ministries and their subordinate agencies are collaborating on the action plan. Voluntary organisations also play an important role locally and nationally by providing information and dialoguing with parents and young people.

The Istanbul Convention recognizes that violence against women is a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between women and men and recognizing the structural nature of violence against women as gender-based violence. Moreover, it also recognizes that violence affects women disproportionately, and that men may also be victims of domestic violence.

According to the above mentioned key actors the responsibility for the necessary activities formulated in the Action Plan for Implementation of the Istanbul Convention is primarily the task of national/regional/local public organizations.

In connection with the 1st Baseline Evaluation Report of Norway of the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women, the socalled GREVIO Report, we strongly recommend for all interested parties, researchers and institutions involved to read both the Report and the answers submitted by Norway to have a correct and detailed understanding of the state of the art.

The report highlights a number of positive legal and policy measures in place in Norway and praises Norway's long history in promoting equality between women and men. GREVIO values the long history of the Norwegian authorities in addressing violence against women through national action plans and other targeted measures and duly recognises the presence of a well-established network of general and specialist services throughout the country. In addition, GREVIO notes the inclusive and comprehensive process of preparing recent legislative and policy documents in the area of violence against women. For example, the Sami Parliament was involved in the development of the National Action Plan on domestic violence with a view to better identifying and addressing the specific needs of the Sami population.

As regards legal developments, the National Action Plan on rape stated that the Ministry of Justice and Public Security shall consider the adoption of a consent-based definition of the criminal offence of rape, which will hopefully lead towards more stringent compliance with Article 36 of the Istanbul Convention in the future.

At the same time, the report observes a low level of recognition for women's specific experiences of violence against women as genderbased violence and the need for responses informed by gendered differences in victimisation. For example, certain support services offer counselling and support to female and male victims of violence and consequently fewer women-only specialist support services exist. There is a thus a great need to continue to address the different forms of violence against women, including domestic violence, as a gendered phenomenon. Moreover, sexual violence and rape, stalking, especially ex-partner stalking, sexual harassment but also intimate-partner violence are forms of violence that affect women disproportionately. The same applies to forced marriage, female genital mutilation and forced abortion/forced sterilisation.

The GREVIO Report stresses, that despite the availability of a large variety of social and specialist services for victims of domestic violence, they fall short of addressing the increased vulnerability of some women, in particular those belonging to an indigenous population such as the Sami, women with addiction issues and women with disabilities. Specific action must be taken to make services more accessible in every way to all groups of women.

The GREVIO Report stresses also the need for continued efforts to collect sex-disaggregated data in Norway in relation to all forms of violence covered by the Istanbul Convention, disaggregated by sex, age, type of violence as well as the relationship of the victim to the perpetrator.

Finally it is important for us to pinpoint that the latest specific phenomenon of the Nordic approach is a strong desire to identify Barriers to employment for vulnerable groups in the Nordic. The RESEARCH carried out and the REPORT released by

the Nordic Council of Ministers (2023:513) is the second report in a research project examining how to increase labour market participation among vulnerable groups in the Nordic countries. The report presents a framework over employment barriers that vulnerable groups face in the Nordic countries, based on an extensive targeted literature review. The purpose of the framework is twofold.

First, to function as a tool for practitioners to identify and address the broad range of barriers to employment that vulnerable groups potentially face. Second, to help to operationalise and measure the prevalence of the barriers among vulnerable groups in the Nordic countries and analyse relevant and promising policies to help individuals with certain set of barriers.

The joint Nordic approach prioritizes four categories from the perspective of labour market inclusion of vulnerable groups:

- Young people
- Seniors
- Immigrants
- People with health issues and disabilities

In regard to how to increase labour market participation among vulnerable groups in the Nordic countries the four categories of barriers identified as the framework for the future Nordic actions:



Based on the four categories 24 unique barriers have been identified, which according to the research team, should be regarded as indications rather than definitive conclusions:

BIC

BIC₁: Mental health issues BIC₂: Physical health issues BIC₃: Lack of relevant education BIC₄: Joint retirement BIC₅: Lack of language skills BIC₆: Lack of knowledge about the labour market BIC₇: Lack of work experience and skills BIC₈: Care responsibilities

BPS

BPS₁: Low effectiveness of public services BPS₂: Collision between public services BPS₃: Lack of participation in public employment services BPS₄: Insufficient support for groups to overcome other barriers BPS₅: Lack of resources BPS₆: Regional differences in service provision and access to services

BIM

BIM₁: Insufficient economic incentive to find education/ employment BIM₂: Retirement and pension benefits, incl. early retirement and sick pay BIM₃: Mismatch between job content and personal values BIM₄: Lack of motivation

BEL

BEL₁: Costs associated with low productivity
BEL₂: Information gaps and risks related to
hiring employees
BEL₃: Discrimination
BEL₄: Working econditions
BEL₅: Lack of local employment opportunitites
BEL6: State of the economy





NORWAY

About Norway – Facts and Figures

- Size: 385 252 km2
- **Population:** 5.488.984 million (estimated 2023)
- Ranking in the World Economic Global Gender Gap Report: 3 (84.5% in 2022)
- Ranking in the United Nations Gender Inequality Index: 1 (0.85 - 2022)
- Women's Suffrage: 1913
- Employment rate: 67.4 % women and 73.1 % men
- Women in the Norwegian Parliament (Stortinget):

45 % (2022) 76 Key figures relating to violence against women and domestic violence: The Norwegian Centre for Violence and Traumatic Stress (NKVTS) find that women and men are equally subject to violence, but that the abuse of women tends to be graver and more often of a sexual nature.

33,6 % of women and 11,3 % of men had experienced some form of sexual assault during their lifetime. 8,2 % of women and 1,9 % of men report serious partner violence, and 14.4 % of women and 16.3 % of men reported less serious partner violence during their lifetime. 25-30 % of all homicides are committed by an intimate partner.

Status for ratification of the Istanbul convention.

The Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence was ratified by the Norwegian Parliament in July 2017, and entered into force 1st of November 2017. Norway's first GREVIO Report GREVIO/Inf(2022)30 was adopted by GREVIO on 13 October 2022 and published on 25 November 2022.



SPAIN

About Spain – Facts and Figures

- Size: 505.990 km2
- Population: 47,615,034 million (estimated 2023)
- Ranking in the World Economic Global Gender Gap Report: 17 (78,8% in 2022)
- Ranking in the United Nations Gender Inequality Index: 14 (0.57 - 2022)
- Women's Suffrage: 1931
- Employment rate: 54,18 % women and 63,18 % men
- Women in the Spanish Parliament (Cortes Generales): 39,4 % (2019)



- Key figures relating to violence against women and domestic violence: 1,206 women have been murdered since there are records (1-01-2003). 176,380 women victims of violence by their male partners in 2022. According to the latest annual data, which the Observatory against Domestic and Gender Violence has made public, sexist violence left a daily average of almost half a thousand victims (483) and of complaints (499).
- Status for ratification of the Istanbul convention:

The Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence was ratified by the Spain in 12 of April of 2014.