

PRACTICE: The Integrated Domestic Violence Programme

Organisation: City of Malmö

Status: Municipality

Area: Malmö, Sweden

Main Funding: Municipality funds

Website: www.malmo.se

Mission and Objectives

The executive board of the local authority in Malmö gave the Southern Central district administrative board the task of formulating an action programme for the whole local authority on the prevention of violence against women. It was emphasised that the relevant agencies were to develop a collaborative operation based on the situation and needs of women and children exposed to violence. The most important objectives are to make visible the violence that occurs in intimate relationships and to provide the support women need in order to feel safe in reporting this violence.

General Activities

To achieve this main objective and in order to support victims, information and awareness-raising activities are organised jointly by the different partners. Information on the problem and on the existence of specialist initiatives are given to both the victimised women and children and to the perpetrators.

The media played a major role in circulating this information. Knowledge on the problem has been disseminated to a number of groups by means of visits to schools, clubs and associations and also to various workplaces, conducted by representatives of the police and social services, among others. Since 26% of the population of Malmö comes from a country outside of Sweden, informational brochures are available in eight languages.

Strategies for Victim Support

The Integrated Domestic Violence Programme has been designed on the basis of a concrete picture of what a woman needs when she has been subjected to assault. Women who have been the victims of assault need treatment for their injuries (from the healthcare sector), they need to report the assault (to the police) and they need support in the form of counselling (provided by the local authority) to enable them to break off the abusive relationship.

The action programme has the support of decision makers and practitioners at several levels: at the political level, among the relevant managers and among those dealing with individual cases. The programme has its own steering group comprised of executives from the social services, the police, the healthcare sector and the prison and probation service, and a coordination group comprised of representatives from relevant agencies.

Partnership and Networks

The main partners of the Malmö Integrated Domestic Violence Programme are the local authority, the police authority and the healthcare sector.

Outcomes and Challenges

Since the project began in 1996, the number of cases where a woman has reported having been assaulted by a male acquaintance has increased by 50%. A larger proportion of these cases lead to a prosecution than before the start of the project.