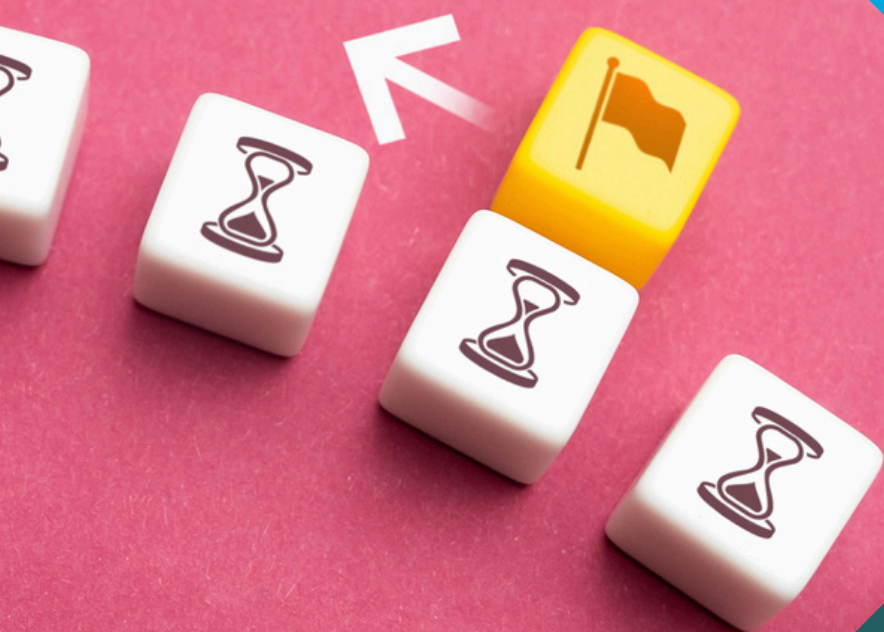
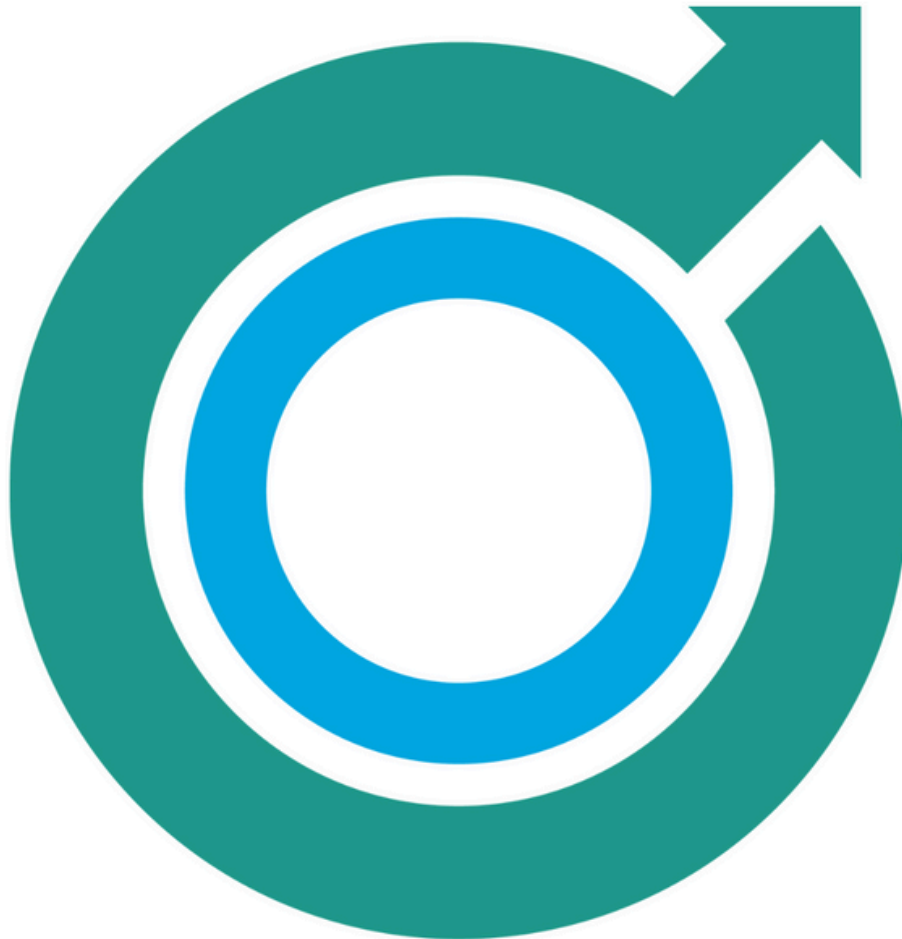


IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ISTANBUL CONVENTION IN ITALY

SHADOW REPORT
June 2024





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ABBREVIATIONS

Association RELIVE - Relationships Free from Violence (Relazioni Libere dalla Violenza)

CAV - Anti Violence Centers (Centri Antiviolenza)

CPD - Continuing professional development

CSE - Comprehensive Sex Education

CUAV - Centers for Male Perpetrators of Violence (Centri per Uomini Autori di Violenza).

SBSE - School-Based Sex Education

SBVP - School-Based Violence Prevention

WHO - World Health Organisation

WWP EN - European Network for the Work with Perpetrators

INTRODUCTION

In Italy work with perpetrators has a very recent history. The first perpetrator programme was set up in 2009 (CAM – Centro di Ascolto Uomini Maltrattanti) on the basis of guidelines developed by the European's Network of the Work with Perpetrators¹ (WWP EN) and since then, the sector has been growing constantly. Following the ratification of the Istanbul Convention in 2013, Italy enacted a law (119/2013, art. 5) recognizing the necessity of and planning the development of guidelines for the work with perpetrators of violence. The national network **RELIVE**² (Relazioni Libere dalle Violenze) was founded in 2013, uniting nine key organizations working with perpetrators. Today, RELIVE includes 34 member associations across Italy, ensuring that perpetrator work is accountable, victim-focused, and gender-informed.

RELIVE is an open, democratic network of associations that have worked with perpetrators for at least three years. For new centers it offers a period of support and participation before being admitted as a member when they fulfill the requirements. Its primary goal is to enhance the safety of women and children in situations of domestic violence by promoting responsible and coordinated work with perpetrators that meets internationally accepted quality standards and adopts a gender perspective.

To achieve its primary objective RELIVE is committed to promoting best practices in line with the Council of Europe's Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention), which mandates all member states to implement programs encouraging perpetrators of domestic violence to adopt non-violent behaviors in interpersonal relationships (Article 16). This commitment has been recognized by the Council of Europe, which has cited RELIVE's work as a "best practice" on multiple occasions.³

RELIVE, a member of the WWP EN since 2016, has adapted the European Guidelines for Perpetrator Programs to define minimum requirements for safe and effective intervention with perpetrators of intimate partner violence. Following the publication of the Standards⁴ in 2023, RELIVE is currently adapting these to national standards for CUAV (centers for male perpetrators of violence). This commitment aims to support the development of existing CUAVs and the

¹ European Network for the Work with Perpetrators: <https://www.work-with-perpetrators.eu/>

² Association RELIVE: <https://www.associazionerelive.it/>

³ See in more detail: <https://human-rights-channel.coe.int/asset-istanbul-convention-in-action-en.html> and page 16 of <https://rm.coe.int/guidance-for-safe-and-effective-perpetrator-programmes-article-16-of-t/1680b00524>

⁴ See in more detail: https://www.work-with-perpetrators.eu/fileadmin/WWP_Network/redakteure/Resources/Standards/European_Standards_for_Perpetrator_Programmes_website.pdf

implementation of new ones, fostering a national accreditation process to enhance the quality of CUAV services.

Objective of this Document

This shadow report is developed by the Italian national network for the work with perpetrators association RELIVE (Relazioni Libere dalle Violenze) to underscore the urgent need to strengthen prevention of domestic violence and programs for perpetrators of gender-based and intimate partner violence in Italy. Gender-based violence represents a severe violation of human rights, with devastating consequences for victims, their families, and society as a whole.

This document is divided in two sections:

Section 1: Identified Issues in the Implementation of Article 14

This section highlights critical issues related to the implementation of Article 14 in Italy, focusing on educational and gender mainstreaming programs. We identify the following critical areas:

- Implementation of gender education activities continues to be optional both for schools and students.
- Variability in school resources and staff commitment further affects program implementation.
- Lack of standardized approach and training leads to inconsistent education access and quality.
- Lack of awareness about the importance of gender-sensitive education within institutions.
- Lack of mandatory training modules on gender-equality and gender-based violence prevention for new and in-service teachers.
- Implementing sex education faces the same resistance as gender mainstreaming and violence prevention in education.
- The inaction in primary and secondary prevention initiatives becomes clear looking at juvenile crime rates that have increased nearly 50% since 2007.

Section 2: Identified Issues in the Implementation of Legislative Reforms for CUAV Work (centers for male perpetrators of violence)

This section highlights the critical issues related to the implementation of Article 16 in Italy, and provides recommendation to enhance both adult and juvenile perpetrator programs, including concrete proposals on how to:

- Ensure free access to recovery programs.

- Adjust program frequency based on individual needs.
- Define objective criteria for evaluating program outcomes.
- Secure structural and adequate funding.
- Strengthen collaboration between Anti-Violence Centers and Perpetrator Programs.
- Establish national standards for programs, staff, and centers.

IDENTIFIED ISSUES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ART. 14

Article 14 of the Istanbul Convention, states that formal curricula at all levels of education must include education on the importance of gender equality, mutual respect in interpersonal relationships, non-stereotyped gender roles, and non-violent conflict resolution, as well as educating pupils about the various forms of gender based violence. Art. 14 also states that parties must promote gender equality and prevent gender-based violence through mainstreaming these principles in informal educational facilities, including sports, cultural and leisure activities, and through the media.

Italy, as a party to the Convention, has committed to taking measures to combat gender-based violence and promote gender equality through education. This section aims to give an overview and evaluate the effectiveness of these efforts.

Critique of “The Good School” Law

In 2015, Italy introduced Law 107/2015⁵ (the so-called "Good School" law), with the aim of promoting equal opportunities and addressing gender-based violence through education. The Good School law mandates that all educational establishments include in their three-year planning the promotion of equal opportunities, gender equality, the prevention of gender-based violence, and the elimination of all forms of discrimination, by educating pupils, their parents and teachers (Art 1, comma 16).

In November 2023, National Guidelines Educating for Respect⁶, and School Initiatives for the Prevention and Combating of Male Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence⁷ were issued. These initiatives aimed to target students in middle and high schools, focusing on mutual respect, gender equality, and the prevention and combating of male violence against women. The goals included:

- Disseminating values of mutual respect and gender equality among young people, especially secondary school students.
- Equipping students with the necessary tools to recognize discrimination and violence against women and girls.

However, initiatives outlined in these protocols remain a generic ‘suggestion’ (optional implementation for schools and voluntary, mostly extracurricular attendance for students), making their intended effectiveness difficult to achieve and measure.

⁵ Read more about Law 13.07.2015, n. 107: <https://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/2015/07/15/15G00122/sg>

⁶ See: <https://www.miur.gov.it/documents/20182/0/Linee+guida+Comma16+finale.pdf/>

⁷ See in more detail: https://www.pariopportunita.gov.it/media/2fhok1yn/m_piaoogabmiatti-del-ministro-r-000002727-11-2023.pdf

The Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO) Evaluation Report of 2019⁸, highlighted the need to develop tools to measure the extent to which students in Italy have acquired skills and knowledge on gender equality and gender-based violence. GREVIO has also recommended allocating adequate financial resources necessary to support these initiatives. These recommendations have not been implemented.

The Good School law gives full liberty to educational institutions to make their own decisions regarding curricular and extracurricular educational activities and states that implementing gender equality principles into curricula depends on available funds of each schools, who may allocate these funds as they believe fit, as long as it is at 'no extra cost to the State'. This bottom-up approach makes it difficult to monitor, evaluate, and ensure the effectiveness of gender education programs, for several reasons:

1. Schools have the discretion to choose whether or not to implement gender education activities by allocating funds and time to gender education. Not all schools have the same level of resources or commitment from staff to implement these programs effectively, which further exacerbates educational disparities.
2. Without a standardized approach and adequate training programs for teachers and staff, the quality of education on these topics varies significantly, potentially leading to misinformation or inadequate coverage.
3. When gender education initiatives are optional and extracurricular, they may be marginalized or overlooked entirely. Unless these programs become integrated into the core curriculum, the students who might need it the most may not see the need to partake.
4. Schools in more conservative communities face resistance from administration, parents or local stakeholders, who might oppose gender-education programs.

This leads to inconsistent and fragmented education on gender equality and non-violence. Early education on gender equality and non-violence is crucial for shaping attitudes and behaviors from a young age, as well as involving parents in the educational initiatives. Without a mandatory and structured approach, there is a missed opportunity to influence young minds early and address patriarchal cultural norms within families effectively.

⁸ GREVIO baseline Evaluation Report, Italy 2019: <https://rm.coe.int/grevio-report-italy-first-baseline-evaluation/168099724e>

What is critically needed is a more structural approach, ensuring that gender equality and non-violence education are embedded within the formal curriculum rather than being optional add-ons. This structural integration would ensure that all students receive comprehensive education on these crucial topics, regardless of their school's individual choices.

To enhance the effectiveness of gender education in Italy, it is essential to combine both top-down and bottom-up approaches. There is a need for developing a standardized curriculum that outlines the mandatory topics, credits, and learning objectives related to gender education, with a minimum number of hours dedicated to covering each critical topic within the national curriculum. This curriculum should be implemented across all schools to ensure consistency and comprehensiveness in the education provided. Once the mandatory requisites are in place, schools should be encouraged to adapt and expand the curriculum to address specific local needs and challenges. This flexibility allows schools to focus on critical areas relevant to their students and communities.

Barriers in School Based Education

The International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education⁹ was developed by UNESCO to help education, health, and other relevant authorities implement comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) programs and materials. CSE is vital to provide accurate age-appropriate information about sex, emphasizing the importance of mutual consent, respect, and the difference between real-life relationships and harmful stereotypes often portrayed in free online pornography. Preventing, recognizing and appropriately reporting sexual violence, cyberviolence and gender based violence should be a key part of comprehensive school-based sexuality education (SBSE) curricula.

In Italy, juvenile cyberviolence (including online harassment, cyberstalking, and non-consensual sharing of intimate images) has increased fivefold since 2017 (see [Juvenile Crime Statistics](#) of this document). The rise in sexual violence and cyberviolence underscores the urgent need for comprehensive school-based violence prevention (SBVP) and CSE programmes. A 2023 study on 29 Italian male sex offenders revealed that 25 (86%) never had the 'sex talk' within their family and 22 (76%) did not confide in parents about sex-related questions or doubts.¹⁰ This finding underscores the importance of integrating CSE into school curricula to fill the gap left by inadequate family discussions.

⁹ See: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000260770>

¹⁰ V. Saladino et al., 2023. [Family Attachment, Sexuality, and Sexual Recidivism in a Sample of Italian Sexual Offenders: Preliminary Results](#)

According to WHO, school-based educational programs are very effective in reducing aggressive and violent behavior¹¹. A systematic review¹² found a 15% reduction in violent behavior among students of all ages and a 29% reduction among secondary school students. School-based prevention and education interventions that focused on relationship and social skill building effectively reduced aggressive behaviour in young people with a history of aggression or at risk of such behavior¹³.

This data is international, as SBVP and SBSE programs have been historically lacking in most Italian schools¹⁴, resulting in an absence of reliable data on their effectiveness within the country. Research shows that in Italy, 8 regions out of 20 (40%) have not implemented any projects on sex education in primary and secondary schools within the timespan from 2006 to 2021¹⁵. This resistance to CSE mirrors the barriers observed in providing accurate and effective SBVP.

Not receiving SBSE and SBVP is not a neutral scenario; it is actively harmful. Students who do not receive this education are equally likely to engage in sexual activity, but less likely to practice consent and safer sex, and more likely to perpetrate and/or experience violence both online and offline. A practical handbook on how to implement SBVP was published by World Health Organization (WHO) in 2019¹⁶.

School based violence prevention (SBVP) and SBSE should be made part of national curricula, as it has been proven to mitigate the harmful effects of early exposure to explicit content, reduce aggressive behaviors, and foster healthier, more respectful relationships. Despite the recommendations in GREVIO's 2019 Evaluation Report urging the finalization and implementation of the "National Guidelines for Education to Affectivity, Sexuality, and Reproductive Health in Schools," these guidelines remain absent. This delay highlights a significant shortfall in recognizing the need for and prioritizing mutual respect, gender equality and informed decision making at all levels of education in Italy.

¹¹ Preventing Youth Violence: Overview of Evidence, WHO.

<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/preventing-youth-violence-an-overview-of-the-evidence>

¹² R. Hahn et al., 2007. [Effectiveness of Universal School-Based Programs to Prevent Violent and Aggressive Behavior](#)

¹³ J. Mytton et al., 2006. [School-based secondary prevention programmes for preventing violence](#)

¹⁴ A. Chinelli, et al., 2022. Sexuality education in Italy 2016-2020: a national survey investigating coverage, content and evaluation of school-based educational activities

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14681811.2022.2134104>

¹⁵ G. La Moro et. al., 2023. Sex Education in Italy: An Overview of 15 Years of Projects in Primary and Secondary Schools <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10508-023-02541-6>

¹⁶ SBVP Practical Handbook, WHO <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/school-based-violence-prevention-a-practical-handbook>

In response to this lack of action, various organizations have stepped up to promote sex education and prevent gender-based violence. A notable initiative is the "Sexual and Affective Education in Primary and Secondary Schools: Intervention Guidelines"¹⁷ created by a collaborative effort between the Order of Psychologists of Lazio and several medical and academic institutions (Provincial Order of Rome of Medical Surgeons and Dentists, the Department of Dynamic, Clinical, and Health Psychology of Sapienza University of Rome, and the Department of Systems Medicine of Tor Vergata University of Rome). This program exemplifies civil society's efforts to address the educational gaps left by the government.

It is no longer a matter of not knowing how and what to implement, as comprehensive guidelines on age-appropriate culturally sensitive teaching material are made available both internationally and by local civil societies. The real challenge lies in the government's resistance to actualizing these guidelines, and reinforcing them with laws and funding.

Funding

Another challenge is allocating adequate funding to these programs. When programs are under-resourced, they cannot be effectively implemented. Currently, Italian schools are unable to hire external experts leading to a reliance on untrained teachers to deliver gender education programs. This not only undermines the program's effectiveness but also places an undue burden on teachers who are already stretched thin with their existing responsibilities.

This lack of investment in preparation of school staff, teachers, students, can have severe consequences, including the perpetuation of misinformation and the inadequate handling of gender-based or cyberviolence incidents in schools. Furthermore, without sufficient funding, there is little room for program evaluation and improvement. This means that ineffective programs may continue without necessary adjustments, and successful programs may not be scaled or replicated.

Adequate funding is the backbone of any successful initiative. In the context of school based gender education and violence prevention, this means ensuring that there are enough resources to develop, implement, and sustain programs that address these critical issues. Without this investment, even the best-designed programmes and national guidelines will fall short of achieving their intended impact.

¹⁷ See in more detail: <https://ordinepsicologilazio.it/post/sessuo-affettiva-manuale>

Stereotypes in Textbooks and Manuals

Another critical area of the Article 14 of the Istanbul Convention focuses on eliminating gender stereotypes from textbooks and school manuals. GREVIO, in its 2019 evaluation report of Italy, found that educational manuals and textbooks were far from ensuring an equitable representation of gender. This issue persists, as evidenced by Irene Biemmi¹⁸ in her manual of Gender Pedagogy published in 2023¹⁹. To date, only two significant studies are available: one conducted by Biemmi in 2010²⁰ on a sample of the fourth grade books published between 1998 and 2002, and the other by Cristiano Corsini and Irene Scierri in 2016²¹ on a sample of primary school textbooks published between 2008 and 2014.

These studies show a concerning trend: unfortunately the situation has worsened over time. The 2016 report by Corsini and Scierri adopted Biemmi's research methodology to ensure comparable results, and found that there were nearly double the number of male protagonists compared to female protagonists. The gender disparity was most evident in the career representation: the sampled textbooks presented 92 different types of professions for men and only 13 for women, and women's professions were still mostly limited to educational and caregiving roles.

The scarcity of recent academic studies reflects a broader issue within the educational system, where national reforms to address gender stereotypes in schools are not a priority. This lack of focus is a result of the limited political will, insufficient funding, and a lack of awareness about the importance of gender-sensitive approach.

There have been some positive developments since 2018 - a few major educational publishers that have initiated projects to promote gender equality in textbooks for elementary school:

- **Fabbri-Erickson of Rizzoli Education:** Launched the "Obiettivo Parità" in 2018, leading the way for other primary school publishers²².

¹⁸ Irene Biemmi is an author, researcher and professor of Pedagogy at the University of Florence. Biemmi has dedicated her career to addressing gender biases in educational content. Her influential publications have revealed the subtle yet pervasive ways in which gender biases are embedded in school textbooks and curricula.

¹⁹ Biemmi Irene, Mapelli Barbara, [Pedagogia di genere. Educare ed educarsi a vivere in un mondo sessuato](#). Mondadori, Milano, 2023.

²⁰ Irene Biemmi, *Educazione sessista. Stereotipi di genere nei libri delle elementari*, Rosenberg & Sellier, Torino 2010.

²¹ See in more detail:

https://flore.unifi.it/retrieve/handle/2158/1234933/592323/Scierri_Stereotipi%20di%20genere%20nei%20sussidjari%20di%20lettura%20per%20la%20scuola%20primaria_2017.pdf

²² See: <https://www.rizzolieducation.it/innovare-insieme/parita-di-genere/materiali-docente/obiettivo-parita/>

- **Pearson:** "Generazione Parità" project²³
- **Giunti Scuola:** "Giunti alla Pari" initiative²⁴
- **Raffaello Scuola:** "Siamo Pari" project²⁵

For secondary school education, projects include:

- **Lattes:** "Millestorie di Parità!"²⁶
- **Loescher Editore:** Provides resources for teaching gender equality and inclusivity²⁷
- **Zanichelli:** Developed 10 Guidelines for gender-equality in publications "Obiettivo 10 in Parità"²⁸

These projects indicate a growing recognition by civil society of the importance of gender equality in educational materials. However, Biemmi highlights two concerns:

1. While the effort made by individual publishing houses is noteworthy, it remains to be verified if the promised effort has also translated into effective elimination of sexist stereotypes from educational material. Research is needed to follow-up and evaluate the results of these projects.
2. Even if their efforts are fruitful, isolated efforts by individual publishers are not enough, there is a clear need to develop and implement national guidelines, and make it mandatory to ensure consistency across publication houses, and quality of textbooks adopted by schools.

The goal is to harness the vast potential of educational material to promote a representation of a diverse, pluralistic, and inclusive social reality, devoid of limiting and humiliating stereotypes.²⁹ To achieve this, the Italian government must collaborate closely with experts, who can help create, enforce and evaluate the effective realization of these standards.

Recommendations:

1. **Develop Comprehensive National Guidelines:** Establish clear, enforceable standards for gender representation in textbooks and

²³ See: <https://it.pearson.com/parita-genere.html>

²⁴ See: www.giuntiscuola.it/giunti-alla-pari

²⁵ See: www.raffaelloscuola.it/siamopari

²⁶ See: www.latteseditori.it/catalogo/millestorie-di-parita-di-genere

²⁷ See: www.loescher.it/parita

²⁸ See: <https://www.zanichelli.it/chi-siamo/obiettivo-dieci-in-parita>

²⁹ See in more detail: Biemmi Irene, Mapelli Barbara, [Pedagogia di genere. Educare ed educarsi a vivere in un mondo sessuato](#). Mondadori, Milano, 2023

educational materials, ensuring they are free from stereotypes and promote diversity and inclusion.

2. **Mandatory Implementation:** Ensure that all regions and schools adhere to these new standards when updating and publishing educational material.
3. **Regular Review and Updating:** Implement ongoing monitoring and evaluation processes to regularly review and update educational materials, reflecting progress and addressing emerging issues in gender representation.

The Role of Teachers

The Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women (GREVIO), in its 2019 evaluation, identified concerns regarding teacher training in Italy. GREVIO specifically highlighted the importance of mandatory training for teachers and pedagogical staff on topics outlined in Article 14 of the Istanbul Convention.

Despite the publication of various guidelines, including [National Strategic Plan on Male Violence Against Women \(2021-2023\)](#) and the National Guidelines Educating for Respect³⁰, which briefly mention the need to include training programmes on male violence against women in university courses for all professionals involved in direct primary and secondary prevention (e.g. psychologists, social workers, teachers), these statements have not been translated into action.

For pre-school and elementary school teachers ("maestra/o", for kids aged 3-10), the current five-year qualifying degree ("Laurea abilitante") lacks any mandatory modules on gender education or gender sensitivity. The curriculum for this degree program is fixed by the Ministry of Education, University, and Research (MIUR), preventing individual universities from modifying course requirements. It is imperative that MIUR incorporates "Gender Pedagogy" or similar courses into the degree program to ensure that all pre-school and elementary school teachers receive gender-sensitive education.

For secondary school teachers, in addition to a master's degree, there was previously a requirement to complete 24 CFU³¹ of training, which recently increased to 60 CFU (DPCM 4 August 2023)³². These credits are divided into various mandatory modules, yet none of them are specifically dedicated to

³⁰ See: <https://www.miur.gov.it/documents/20182/0/Linee+guida+Comma16+finale.pdf/>

³¹ CFU is Italian University Credit, 1 CFU is equivalent to 1 ECTS (European Credit Transfer System).

³² See: <https://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/2023/09/25/23A05274/sg>

Gender Pedagogy or similar training on gender equality and violence prevention in classrooms, even with the increased credit requirement.

Since the mandatory training on promoting mutual respect, non-stereotyped gender roles, and identifying various forms of GBV in the classroom is completely lacking, any training on gender education that any teacher receives is a result of their personal interest and initiative. This gap extends beyond initial teacher training programs, as continuing professional development (CPD) for in-service teachers also does not mandate any training on gender education or the elimination of gender stereotypes.

This lack of in service training is particularly concerning given the demographics of the Italian teaching workforce. More than half of Italian teachers are over the age of 50³³. This suggests that a significant portion of the current teaching staff completed their training before gender equality in education became a matter of interest. Consequently, many teachers are unprepared to:

- Recognize and challenge harmful gender stereotypes in themselves, in the language they use, in the classroom, and in the textbooks.
- Deliver effective education on sexuality, gender equality and GBV prevention.
- Promote gender-equality.

Without specific training, teachers may unknowingly perpetuate biases and stereotypes in the classroom. The gap in initial education and the lack of ongoing mandatory training on these crucial topics creates a system where harmful stereotypes persist in Italian schools, homes, and society³⁴.

Recommendations:

- Incorporate mandatory training on gender education into initial secondary school teacher preparation programs and continuing professional development for in-service teachers.
- Curriculum Revision: MIUR should revise the curriculum for pre-school and elementary school teachers to include comprehensive modules on Gender Pedagogy and gender equality.
- Ongoing Professional Development: Ensure that CPD programs for in-service teachers include mandatory training on promoting mutual respect,

³³ Education and Training Monitor 2023 <https://op.europa.eu/webpub/eac/education-and-training-monitor-2023/it/country-reports/italy.html#1-teaching-profession>

³⁴ See: https://www.istat.it/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/STAT_TODAY_Stereotipi.pdf

non-stereotyped gender roles, and identifying various forms of GBV in the classroom.

Gender Imbalance in Early Education

The issue of "educational segregation" pertains to the underrepresentation of women in STEM, but also underrepresentation of men in educational and caregiving professions. International gender equality policies often overlook this second aspect, focusing predominantly on women's access to traditionally male-dominated fields.

In Italy, the educational system appears divided into "feminine" and "masculine" study paths. This divide becomes evident from choosing a high school (at the age of 13-14), where girls overwhelmingly favor academic paths such as human sciences, linguistics, and arts, whereas boys predominantly opt for technical and vocational tracks. This divide intensifies in higher education, with women significantly outnumbering men in fields like education (over 90% female), psychology (>80%), and arts (>70%), while men dominate in STEM disciplines.

Biemmi (2023)³⁵ highlights that:

There are several reasons why educational and occupational choices made by female and male students are not entirely spontaneous or self-determined but rather influenced by a sexist social bias that imposes gender-appropriate pathways. This social bias is continuously reinforced by family, mass media, and even the school environment itself. (p.156)

Educational institutions themselves may, knowingly or unknowingly, perpetuate these stereotypes through curriculum design, teaching practices, and career guidance that subtly reinforce patriarchal gender norms. The lack of diverse role models within educational settings, particularly in fields where women or men are underrepresented, further limits students' exposure to alternative career paths and diverse perspectives of gender roles.

In preschool and elementary school settings in Italy there is a concern that children, particularly boys, may lack exposure to *caring masculinities*³⁶. In academic year 2022-2023, male teachers make up only 0,79% of preschool and 3,67% of elementary school teachers³⁷. This imbalance not only impacts children's understanding of gender roles but also limits their ability to develop a

³⁵ See more: Irene Biemmi, Barbara Mapelli, [Pedagogia di genere. Educare ed educarsi a vivere in un mondo sessuato](#). Mondadori, Milano, 2023.

³⁶ See Ellior, 2016, [Caring Masculinities: Theorizing an Emerging Concept](#), SAGE

³⁷ Permanent teachers. State school. Distribution for the school year 2022/23
<https://dati.istruzione.it/opendata/opendata/catalogo/elements1/leaf/?datasetId=DS0600DOCTIT>

comprehensive perception of men in roles that involve empathy, caregiving, and emotional intelligence³⁸.

Addressing these issues requires a multi-faceted approach involving curriculum and textbook reforms, teacher training programs focused on gender-sensitive education, and gender mainstreaming to challenge stereotypes and promote not only female presence in STEM, but also male presence in caregiving and education.

ANALYSIS OF THE ACTIONS TAKEN

1.1. National Strategic Plan On Male Violence Against Women 2021-2023

The National Strategic Plan On Male Violence Against Women 2021-2023³⁹ (from here forward: 'NAP 4') sets forth several core principles to combat male violence against women. These principles are aligned with broader national strategies, including the National Strategy for Gender Equality 2021-2026, the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (PNRR), and the Next Generation EU initiative, ensuring consistency with broader gender equality policies.

The NAP 4 includes 123 intervention proposals from which 51 proposals (41.4%) focus on prevention. From these 51 proposals, 18 aim at raising awareness on the causes and consequences of gender-based violence and deconstructing underlying stereotypes, and 11 are dedicated to training professionals in the public and private sectors. NAP 4 also proposes interventions to combat cyberviolence and the illicit dissemination of sexually explicit images or videos, as by Law n. 71/2017 on "Provisions for the protection of minors for the prevention and fight against the phenomenon of cyberbullying".

Despite the comprehensive proposal, the plan exhibits certain gaps and issues. One major drawback is that some intervention proposals are not clearly explained, lack of specific definitions and clarity of intended outcomes of interventions leave room for interpretation, which makes it challenging to implement them accurately and accountability, therefore hindering the execution of proposed items. Another major drawback is the absence of a monitoring system for the proposed interventions and their actualization, and lack of predetermined specific indicators to measure the impact. This makes it difficult to conclude which interventions were most feasible, which were not, and why.

³⁸ See more: Irene Biemmi (a cura di), [La maschilità nei contesti educativi e di cura. Sguardi pedagogici e sociologici](#), Carocci, Roma, 2023.

³⁹ National Strategic Plan on Male Violence Against Women 2021-2023
<https://www.pariopportunita.gov.it/media/2314/national-strategic-plan-on-male-violence-against-women-2021-2023.pdf>

Similar to previous proposals, NAP 4 heavily emphasizes the rationale behind the actions, but lacks specific execution details that translates indications into concrete actionable steps. The plan is incomplete in assigning concrete responsibilities to the administrations and organizations that are vital in the implementation of educational programmes as well as mapping out other institutions and organizations who could contribute. This lack in turn complicates the coordination and execution of the proposed educational and teacher training initiatives.

Another reason that hinders the implementation is that the individual educational institutions and organizations have to come up with an executional plan themselves, on a self-will basis, as there is no follow-up nor consequence for non implementation. This bottom-up system makes the implementation in Italy non-homogeneous between its regions, municipalities and even between different educational establishments within municipalities.

In other words, NAP 4 is a great plan of *what* should be done, but it lacks *how* and *who* should do it. These gaps are also evidenced by VIVA Project, combined of Institute for Research on Population and Social Policies (IRPPS) and National Research Council (CNR), in their interim Evaluation of the NAP 4⁴⁰. The VIVA Project focuses on analyzing and evaluating the interventions aimed at preventing and combating violence against women⁴¹.

1.2. National Strategy for Gender Equality 2021-2026

Since the European Union has promoted a new strategy for Gender Equality for the five-year period 2020-2025, the Italian Government has also adopted a National Strategy for Gender Equality 2021-2026⁴² with a goal to gain 5 points on EIGE Gender Equality Index ranking. The Strategy highlights several intervention proposals to achieve its goals, including "Lectures or classes on gender mainstreaming to be held during school hours by qualified staff, with an assessment of the minimum number of hours/interactions with students." However, the absence of an action plan with SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound) steps hinders the effective realization of these objectives..

The National Strategy for Gender Equality also highlights the need to involve men and boys in social change efforts. Currently, gender-equality mainstreaming and

⁴⁰ Evaluation of NAP 4: <https://viva.cnr.it/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/processo-elaborazione-strategia-nazionale-sulla-violenza-maschile-contro-donne-2021-2023-punti-forza-criticita-ottobre-2023.pdf>

⁴¹ For their reports and deliverables refer to: <https://viva.cnr.it/deliverable-e-rapporti/>

⁴² See <https://www.pariopportunita.gov.it/media/2022/national-strategy-for-gender-equality-2021-26.pdf>

education initiatives are optional and often extracurricular. Resources for educational interventions are provided by the regions and the ministry, but only to schools and universities where administrators or groups of teachers are proactive in creating these opportunities. There is no unified, consistent structural education across regions.

Our experience shows that when educational interventions are optional, men are less likely to participate. Achieving gender equality requires the awareness and involvement of men. Italy should ensure mandatory training for teachers, professors, and pedagogical staff, as well as mandatory formal and informal gender-education in curricula.

1.3. Pact of Municipalities for Equality and Against Gender Violence.

The Pact of Municipalities for Equality and Against Gender Violence (Patto dei Comuni per la Parità e Contro la Violenza di Genere)⁴³ is a document developed in 2018, aimed at all municipalities in Italy, urging them to commit to and implement measures that promote gender equality and prevent violence, aligning with the 4 P-s of the Istanbul Convention. This agreement highlights the commitment of local municipalities to promote gender equality and combat violence through various measures, including through gender mainstreaming and education. However, as of March 2024, out of 7,904 municipalities in Italy, only 259 municipalities (3.3%) have adhered to the pact. This lack of commitment underscores a critical challenge for municipalities to join efforts in ensuring comprehensive and uniform education on gender equality and violence prevention.

Male Violence Against Women Statistics

Data from the criminal analysis⁴⁴ conducted by the Ministry of the Interior's Department of Public Security reveals an increase in reported male violence against women. Between 2020 and 2022 the reports of stalking have increased by 11%, the abuse against family members and cohabitants has increased by 13%, and rates of sexual violence increased by 26%.

In 2019 the 'Code Red' (Law No. 69 of July 19, 2019)⁴⁵ was implemented to strengthen protections for victims of gender-based violence, and implement re-

⁴³ ANCI Patto dei Comuni per la Parità e Contro la Violenza di Genere <https://www.anci.it/8-marzo-i-primi-quattordici-comuni-siglano-il-patto-dei-sindaci-per-la-parita-e-contro-la-violenza-di-genere/>

⁴⁴ Criminal Analysis by the Ministry of the Interior's Department of Public Security https://www.interno.gov.it/sites/default/files/2024-02/elaborato_analisi_viol_gen.pdf

⁴⁵ Code Red <https://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/2019/07/25/19G00076/sg>

education and rehabilitation programs for perpetrators. The Code Red introduced four new offenses:

1. Coercion or inducement to marriage (Art. 558-bis of the Criminal Code),
2. Dissemination of illicit images or sexually explicit videos (so called “revenge porn”) (Art. 612-ter of the Criminal Code).
3. Disfigurement of a person through permanent facial injuries (Article 583-quinquies of the Criminal Code).
4. Violation of restraining orders and prohibition from approaching places frequented by the victim (Article 387-bis of the Criminal Code).

The data from the criminal analysis shows that the number of reported offences in all these areas have significantly increased since 2020.

No data on femicides was presented in this criminal analysis, as this term lacked a specific legal definition in Italian law. In 2022, the National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT), in collaboration with the Ministry of the Interior's Central Directorate for Criminal Police established the "Statistical framework for measuring gender-related killings of women and girls" defining femicide/feminicide. Therefore the data collected in 2022 and prior is considered to be an estimation. In 2022⁴⁶, out of a total 126 women killed, 106 are estimated to have been femicides, a crime rate that has remained consistent in the three years prior (2019-2021).

Florence's Guarantor of Detainee Rights and a key figure in prison reform, Eros Cruccolini⁴⁷ states: *"Femicides are the tip of the iceberg, we have provided interventions to middle and high schools, where there's been reports of men harassing and molesting girls. We have provided interventions to men who molest disabled women and elderly women, so the phenomenon is much more widespread and underreported."*

To combat the increasing rates of male perpetrators of violence and offences against women, the NAP 4 presents specific preventative and educative actions, including but not limited to:

⁴⁶ ISTAT [Le vittime di omicidio – Anno 2022 – Istat](#)

⁴⁷ Eros Cruccolini is Florence's current Guarantor of Detainee Rights, appointed by Mayor Dario Nardella in 2014 and reappointed in 2019. Working on prison reform since 1990, he has held office as a district chair and city council deputy, Cruccolini has established networks to promote training, cultural, and sports activities in prisons for adults as well as juveniles. He has founded and currently represents Comitato Civico “Impariamo A Dire Noi” (Learning to say We) dei circoli ARCI 25 Aprile per il contrasto alla violenza maschile contro le donne- a network working with men and boys to contrast violence against women. With 34 years of experience in the field, he is a key figure in assessing Italy’s implementation of the measures stated in the Istanbul Convention, particularly on the importance of preventative education, detainee education and reintegration.

1. Awareness-raising campaigns and direct support initiatives targeted at complex and at risk contexts.
2. Developing tools and methods of support to minors who are passive victims of male perpetrators of violence, to provide early-intervention and prevent these children from becoming potential future perpetrators.
3. Setting up prevention programmes to encourage juvenile offenders to adopt non-violent behaviour in interpersonal relationships.
4. Establishing standardized technical criteria and required professional experience for operators to perform interventions on perpetrators of violence.

While these actions are well designed to ensure a systematic and structural promotion of gender equality, and prevention of male violence against women, the effective implementation of these items within a three-year timeframe seems unrealistic. This lack of short and long term goals, lack of clarity and prioritization of actions, and lack of concrete executive plan hinders the effective realization of the goals set forth by the NAP 4, making it challenging to achieve the desired outcomes in practice.

Provisions for Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence

An update to Code Red law was introduced with **law nr. 168/2023**⁴⁸ on Provisions for Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence, that came into force on 09 December 2023. The legislative framework, specifically Articles 6 and 18, include critical provisions aimed at addressing and preventing gender-based violence through training initiatives and accreditation of perpetrator programs. These improvements are heading in the right direction, however some issues and shortcomings require attention to ensure their effective implementation.

Article 6 on Training Initiatives mandates the Political Authority delegated for equal opportunities, supported by the Technical-Scientific Committee of the Observatory on the Male Violence Against Women, to prepare national guidelines for training operators who interact with women victims of violence. It also requires specific training initiatives for magistrates on combating violence against women and domestic violence. This training should also include aspects related to perpetrator and perpetrator programs.

Shortcomings:

- **Lack of Consultation:** Leading experts, networks, and stakeholders in gender-based violence have not been consulted in developing these

⁴⁸ See: <https://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/2023/11/24/23G00178/sg>

guidelines. This exclusion may result in less effective training programs that do not fully address the complexities of gender-based violence.

- It is crucial to ensure that comprehensive, standardized, and specific training is provided not only to magistrates but to all relevant operators who come into contact with victims and/or *perpetrators*. Recognizing violence and referring potential victims to support services is as vital as recognizing and referring potential perpetrators to appropriate intervention programs.
- **Continuous Education:** Not only guidelines for initial training, but also regular CPD should be mandatory to ensure operators are up to date on the best practices for handling gender-based violence cases.
- **Mandatory Implementation:** The mandatory nature of these initiatives or whether they are left to individual implementation remains unclear.

Article 18 on Accreditation of Recovery Programs mandates the Minister of Justice and the Political Authority delegated for equal opportunities to adopt an interministerial decree to establish procedures for recognizing and accrediting entities and associations qualified to facilitate resocialization courses for perpetrators of violence against women and domestic violence. Additionally, specific guidelines will regulate the activities of these entities and associations.

The main shortcoming of implementation of national guidelines and accreditation of programs for perpetrators is lack of stakeholder consultation. Relevant stakeholders, NGOs, and field experts have not been included in the development of accreditation procedures. Their input is crucial for creating effective and comprehensive guidelines. Moreover, ensuring the safety and well-being of victims is difficult in the absence of collaboration with CUAVs and women's support services, and guidelines regulating the communication between the two.

The National Network of Programs for Perpetrators RELIVE and the European Network of Programs for Perpetrators WWP EN are developing European standards⁴⁹ and adapting them to national standards for CUAVs. This initiative aims to enhance the consistency and effectiveness of recovery programs for perpetrators, however, it is important to note that these initiatives have not been backed by the state. RELIVE has sent a brief to the Minister of Equal Opportunities with the critical points, but the brief has gone unacknowledged. See [Critical Aspect 6: Lack of National Standards for Programs for Perpetrators of Violence \(CUAV\)](#) of this document.

⁴⁹ See: <https://www.work-with-perpetrators.eu/resources/standards>

While Articles 6 and 18 of law nr. 168/2023 represent significant steps forward in the legislative framework to combat gender-based violence, addressing the identified issues and shortcomings is essential for their successful implementation. The development and adoption of national standards for CUAVs, alongside a rigorous accreditation process and adequate staff training, are key elements in strengthening the intervention system against gender-based violence in Italy, and this cannot be achieved without comprehensive stakeholder inclusion and consultation.

Juvenile Crime Statistics

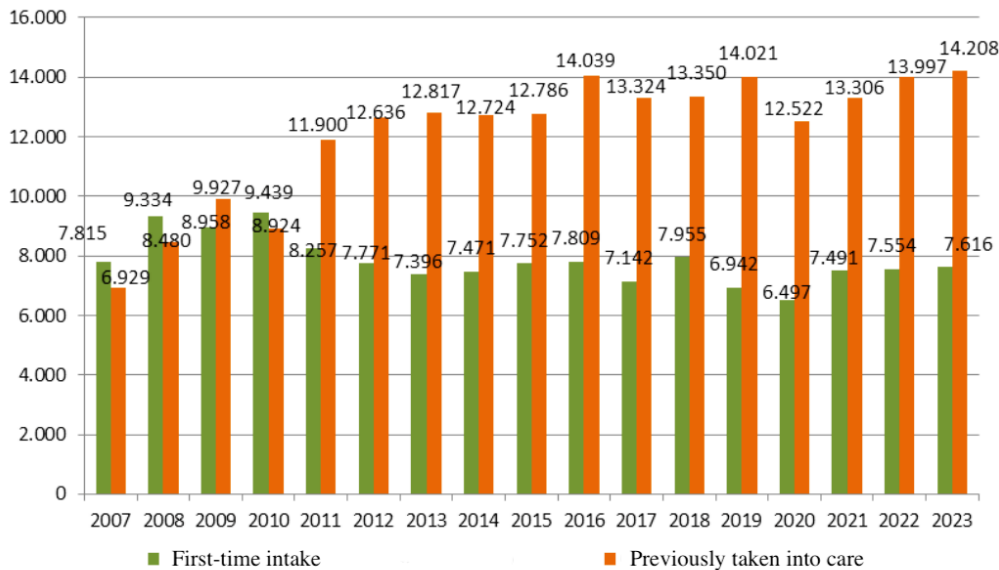
Ministry of Interior conducted a criminal analysis⁵⁰ on juvenile criminal rates between 2010 and 2022, and found that the juvenile crime rate peaked in 2022, with 291 reports of violence. In other words, on average, during every 5-day period 4 minors were reported and/or arrested for violence. Another reason for concern is the rise in juvenile cyberviolence within the last decade. In 2017, there were 58 cyber offences committed by juveniles, a number that has increased nearly fivefold – to 286 juvenile cybercrimes in 2022.

Recent statistical analysis⁵¹ conducted by the Ministry of Justice on juvenile and young adult (under 25) offenders found that the number of crimes committed by juvenile offenders is 49,5% higher in 2023 than it was in 2007. The number of young first-time offenders has remained relatively stable over the years, however the recidivism rates in juvenile offenders has doubled, as evidenced by the graph below from the aforementioned statistical analysis.

⁵⁰ Criminal Analysis by the Ministry of Interior's Department of Public Security
<https://www.poliziadistato.it/statics/10/criminalita-minorile-in-italia-2010-2022.pdf>

⁵¹ Statistical Analysis by the Ministry of Justice
https://www.giustizia.it/giustizia/it/mg_1_14_1.page?contentId=SST467760

Graph 1: Minors and young adults under the care of the Juvenile Social Service Offices from 2007 to 2023 by period of intake.



The same statistical analysis also looked at the age of the first offence, and found that less than 1% of people commit their first crime before the age 14, as shown

Table 1. Minors and young adults under the care of the Social Services Offices for Minors, by age at first intervention, nationality, and gender. Year 2023.

Age at first intervention	Italian			Foreign			Total		
	m	f	mf	m	f	mf	m	f	mf
less than 14 years	136	26	162	26	8	34	162	34	196
14 years	978	106	1.084	261	55	316	1.239	161	1.400
15 years	2.517	318	2.835	684	72	756	3.201	390	3.591
16 years	3.507	414	3.921	1.008	97	1.105	4.515	511	5.026
17 years	3.885	367	4.252	1.278	84	1.362	5.163	451	5.614
Young Adults	4.250	433	4.683	1.213	101	1.314	5.463	534	5.997
Total	15.273	1.664	16.937	4.470	417	4.887	19.743	2.081	21.824

in table 1 below.

This data is alarming and promising at the same time, alarming because of the number of juvenile offenders, but hopeful because it shows the amount of space for positive impact and prevention, if we intervene before the age of first offence.

The juvenile crime rates can be reduced if all parties involved in the education and upbringing of children and adolescents would be included in the implementation of preventive and educational initiatives. The critical age range for providing preventative education is 0-10 years, not only because of the children's developmental stage, but due to the opportunity to work with both children and their parents. At this age, especially in early education settings like nurseries, kindergartens and elementary schools, parents are highly engaged in their

children's education. This engagement provides a valuable opportunity to begin dismantling the patriarchal culture present in many young families in Italy today.

The Criminal Analysis⁵² conducted by the Ministry of Internal's Department of Public Security highlights a recent increase in rates of group sexual violence. Their findings show that a majority of underage victims were assaulted by peers. Based on available data from 2022 and 2023, the perpetrators of group sexual violence of minors were aged between 14 and 17 years (67%), followed by those aged 18 to 24 years (18%).

To effectively prevent incidents like group sexual violence by minors and involving minors, it is crucial to prioritize and diffuse early educational programmes (such as SBVP and CSE) aimed at younger children and teenagers, to challenge and reshape harmful behaviors, gender stereotypes, and biases. On the importance of CSE to prevent sexual violence refer to [Barriers in School Based Education](#) of this section.

Growing Request for Perpetrator Programmes

Since the inclusion of a broader range of crimes (e.g. sexual violence, stalking, and child pornography) under the Law No. 69 of 19 July 2019 ('Code Red'), there has been a dramatic increase in the requests for treatments, an increase in types of offenders referred to perpetrator programs, and an increased demand for programmes for minors.

Perpetrator programs play a vital role in the rehabilitation and reintegration of young offenders, as these programs provide structured environments where young offenders can receive psychological support and education, equipping them with the tools to build a violence-free future. Adult male perpetrators require different approaches due to their distinct psychological, social, and developmental stages compared to juveniles. Age-appropriate interventions are crucial for effectively preventing minors and young adults from committing a crime, as well as reducing recidivism among this group.

Aforementioned statistical data from the Ministry of Justice underscores critical trends in juvenile offending, highlighting the urgent need for early intervention and a more effective systemic approach at all levels of crime prevention. The absence of national standards for gender-equality and gender-based violence prevention in educational curricula (as stipulated by Article 14 of the Istanbul Convention) to prevent minors from committing a crime in the first place, and lack of national standards for domestic and sexual violence perpetrator programs (as

⁵² Ministry of Internal Department of Public Security Criminal Analysis on GbV with a focus on SA <https://www.interno.gov.it/sites/default/files/2023-09/elaborato.pdf>

mandated by Article 16) to prevent re-offending, contributes to significant the disparities across different schools, centers, and regions.

Only through establishing concrete national standards for gender-equality and GBV prevention in educational curricula and for perpetrator programs, and by providing adequate funding for implementation of these programmes, Italy can create a more cohesive and effective approach to reducing juvenile and adult crime rates and fostering a safer society. Concrete recommendations on how to mitigate these gaps are pointed out in the following section of this document, specifically: [Critical Aspect 8: Increase in the Referral to Perpetrator Programs for Sexual Offenders](#) and [Critical aspect 9: Increase of Referrals of Minors for Treatment in GBV \(Strong Incidence of Cyberviolence and Sexual Violence\)](#).

Cost Of Violence

The cost of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in Italy is €49,1 billion, out of which the cost of GBV against women is €38,9 billion (EIGE, 2021)⁵³. In comparison, financial allocations for anti-violence measures in Italy have ranged from €28 mln to €55 mln⁵⁴ annually. Between 2020 and 2023, the state designated a total of €251.8 million to combat male violence against women⁵⁵, out of which €201,3 mln (80%) were allocated for Protection, €33 mln (13%) for Prevention, and €16,6 mln (7%) for research and data collection, monitoring and evaluation of the prevalence of male violence against women.

The finances allocated for Protection (during 2020-2023) were distributed for as follows:

- €13.8 million (41%) for primary prevention actions, out of which, €6 million were allocated by Law No. 178/2020, but had not been committed.
- €36,000 (0.01%) for secondary prevention actions
- €20 million (59%) for tertiary prevention actions

While there has been an increase in allocated funding, these amounts remain a fraction of the overall cost of GBV. It is necessary to state that allocated funds do not mean committed funds - some of these funds allocated have not been disbursed or utilized in any concrete actions or programs.

Of these, only €1 million is stably allocated to perpetrator programs each year - there have been sporadic allocations of higher amounts, but in order for the development to be sustainable the funds need to be given stably. It's clear how a

⁵³ For the Cost of Gender Based Violence in Europe, see: https://eige.europa.eu/gender-based-violence/costs-of-gender-based-violence?language_content_entity=en

⁵⁴ See: <https://www.pariopportunita.gov.it/it/politiche-e-attivita/violenza-di-genere/fondi-ripartiti-alle-regioni/>

⁵⁵ See: https://actionaid-it.imgix.net/uploads/2023/11/Prevenzione-Sottocosto_donne_2023.pdf

€1 million allocation out of €55 million compared to the damage done (€ 38,9 billion) shows the need to increase the stable allocation to prevent and contrast all forms of violence against women and specifically for perpetrator programs to at least € 10 million.

Allocating an additional €5-15 million annually, while an improvement, remains insufficient to tackle the root causes, offer comprehensive victim support, and implement effective preventative measures and policies. A more substantial and sustained investment in primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention is crucial. Not only would this reduce male violence against women, but it would also alleviate the overall economic burden. The reluctance to invest in prevention costs billions, undermining Italy's efforts to address gender-based violence and mitigate its profound social, economic, and human toll.

IDENTIFIED ISSUES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF LEGISLATIVE REFORMS FOR CUAV WORK

Critical Aspect 1: Economic Discrimination in Rehabilitation Programs

Summary: While Law 69/2019 (Code Red) marks progress in combating violence against women, it has notable shortcomings around rehabilitation and programs for perpetrators. The requirement for payment, without the possibility of exemption, creates discrimination and hinders access to justice. Additionally, the lack of a uniform system nationwide and the shortage of specialized personnel to address various needs (such as language difficulties) pose further barriers. A revision of the legislation is needed to ensure free and universally accessible rehabilitation programs, with adequate resources for individualized interventions to ensure the effectiveness of the process.

Key Points:

- **Economic Discrimination:** Requiring payment for treatment excludes those without resources, violating the principle of equality.
- **Territorial Discrimination:** The uneven distribution of CUAV services limits access to rehabilitation in certain areas.
- **Language Barriers:** The lack of specialized personnel prevents adequate support for individuals with language difficulties.
- **Lack of Resources:** The current system lacks sufficient resources for individualized programs that address diverse needs.
- **Compromise of CUAV's Impartiality:** Requiring perpetrators to pay for treatment risks influencing the CUAV's operations, undermining its impartiality and its role in assessment and reporting to authorities in case of danger.

Proposals:

- Ensure free access to rehabilitation programs for all perpetrators of violence.
- Allocate adequate resources for individualized interventions.
- Ensure an even distribution of CUAV services nationwide.
- Train CUAV personnel to address diverse user needs, including language difficulties.
- Make CUAV services completely independent of perpetrator payments, ensuring CUAV impartiality and their protective role for victims of violence.

Conclusion: An effective rehabilitation system for perpetrators of violence must be based on principles of equity, accessibility, individualization, and impartiality. Revising the legislation and investing in adequate resources are essential to guarantee everyone's right to access justice and protect women victims of violence.

Critical Aspect 2: Mandatory Biweekly Frequency of Rehabilitation Programs

- **Lack of scientific evidence** supporting the necessity of biweekly sessions for all cases.
- **Excessive burden** on CUAVs and users.
- **Lack of flexibility** in scheduling.

Recommendations:

- Adjust the frequency based on individual needs to ensure the program's effectiveness.
- Always favor in-person sessions.
- Encourage ongoing monitoring and support for users.
- Base session frequency on scientific evidence and international best practices.
- Reduce the burden on both CUAVs and users.

Critical Aspect 3: Lack of a Unified Definition of "Positive Outcome" for Treatment

- **Absence of objective and documentable criteria** for evaluating treatment outcomes.
- **Impossibility to predict future behavior.**

Proposed Solutions:

- Issue national guidelines with objective criteria for evaluating positive treatment outcomes.
- Define measurable and concrete indicators to assess the perpetrator's progress.
- Exclude future behavior prediction from the evaluation process.
- Prioritize aggregated data from large participant samples for evaluation of program's purpose.
- Provide training for evaluators on the assessment process.
- Conduct regular monitoring and updates of the guidelines and evaluation criteria.

Critical Aspect 4: Irregularities in Funding at Two Levels

- **Scarcity and intermittency** of structural funding from the State.
- **Inconsistent resource management** by the Regions.

Recommendations:

- Increase structural funding from the State.
- Implement monitoring and control systems for resource management by the Regions.
- Establish clearer criteria for resource allocation.
- Enhance collaboration between the State and Regions.
- Develop a more effective monitoring system.
- Promote best practices in resource management.

Critical Aspect 5: Lack of Cohesion and Synergy between Anti-Violence Centers (CAV) and Centers for Male Perpetrators of Violence (CUAV)

- **Absence of standardized methodology** or tools for effective network collaboration.
- **Reluctance in sharing sensitive information.**
- **Skepticism among CAVs** regarding the effectiveness of CUAV programs.
- **Perception of competition for resources.**
- **Concerns** about increased risk.
- **Lack of a coordinating body.**

Example of Best Practice: **ASAP 2.0** Project⁵⁶

- The ASAP 2.0 project has established an effective network between CAVs and CUAVs for the safety of women and minors.
- It has defined a Protocol for a cooperative and systemic working methodology between the two types of centers.

Recommendations:

- Strengthen collaboration between CAVs and CUAVs to enhance the effectiveness of interventions against domestic violence through a concerted effort to develop shared guidelines.
- Prioritize the safety, support, and human rights of victims.
- Ensure a more timely and coordinated response to the phenomenon of violence.

⁵⁶See in more detail: https://www.work-with-perpetrators.eu/fileadmin/WWP_Network/redakteure/Projects/asap2.0/protocol/ASAP2_IT_toolkit_240308_web.pdf

- Formalize collaboration by establishing institutional coordinating bodies at regional and local levels.

Critical Aspect 6: Lack of National Standards for Programs for Perpetrators of Violence (CUAV)

Issues:

1. **Program Heterogeneity:** Lack of methodological and qualitative coherence in interventions offered by different centers. Difficulty for victims and operators in choosing reliable programs suitable for their needs.
2. **Monitoring and Evaluation Challenges:** Inability to assess the overall effectiveness of interventions at a national level. Hindrance to prevention and counteraction of gender-based violence.
3. **Risk of Instrumental Access:** Increased risk that male perpetrators of violence may approach CUAVs for purposes other than genuine change, such as gaining legal advantages or simulating a recovery path.
4. **Lack of Victim Protection:** Difficulty in ensuring the safety and well-being of victims, in the absence of standards regulating communication and collaboration between CUAVs and women's support services.

New Information:

- The National Network of Programs for Perpetrators RELIVE and the European Network of Programs for Perpetrators WWP EN are developing European Standards⁵⁷ and adapting them to national standards for CUAVs.

Proposals:

- **Definition of National Standards:** Minimum requirements for CUAV organization, management, and personnel. Methodological guidelines for interventions. Criteria for program evaluation. Procedures for victim protection.
- **Recognition and Accreditation of CUAVs:** Valuing the State-Regions Agreement 184/CSR/2022 maintaining a definition of violence based on the Istanbul Convention, whereby "violence against women" is understood to designate a violation of human rights and a form of discrimination against women, encompassing all acts of gender-based violence that cause or are likely to cause physical, sexual, psychological, or

⁵⁷ See: <https://www.work-with-perpetrators.eu/resources/standards>

economic harm, including threats to commit such acts, coercion, or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, both in public and private life. This definition recognizes the gender-based nature of violence, and acknowledges the importance of cultural and social context while avoiding dangerous criminological or pathologizing shifts that undermine the accountability of the perpetrator of violence. It is essential that minimum requirements, standards, accreditation, and actionable protocols consider local contexts. It is therefore requested to include the National Network RELIVE in the elaboration of aforementioned content that should be based on WWP EN European Standards, that represent current good practice.

Benefits:

- Ensuring the quality and effectiveness of interventions offered by CUAVs.
- Promoting methodological coherence at the national level.
- Facilitating monitoring and evaluation of programs.
- Protecting the safety and well-being of victims.
- Promoting prevention and counteraction of gender-based violence.

Recommendations:

- Implement national standards and a rigorous accreditation process.
- Promote training of CUAV staff on national standards.
- Ensure dissemination and periodic updating of national standards.
- Foster collaboration between CAVs and CUAVs based on national standards.
- Monitor the impact of national standards on intervention effectiveness and victim protection.

Example of Best Practice: Tuscany Network of Programs for Perpetrators Project: Prevention Paths for Male Violence against Women

- The project aims to create synergy among Centers for Male Perpetrators of Violence operating in the Tuscany region, connecting them with entities and services ensuring the safety of violence victims, in a network perspective as advocated by the Istanbul Convention.
- The project develops a unified and standardized treatment assessment and evaluation system using the IMPACT Protocol developed by the European Network of Programs for Male Perpetrators of Violence (WWP EN).
- IMPACT involves administering and analyzing questionnaires directed at both the victim and the male perpetrator of violence enrolled in the

Program. It is administered in the initial, intermediate, and final phases of the Program and assesses changes in terms of violent behavior enactment and key dimensions related to taking responsibility for one's behavior.⁵⁸

Conclusion: The adoption of national standards for CUAVs, alongside a rigorous accreditation process and adequate staff training, is a key element in strengthening the intervention system against gender-based violence in Italy. Synergy between CAVs and CUAVs, based on shared protocols and common standards, is crucial for the safety and well-being of women and minors victims of violence.

Critical Aspect 7: Implementation of the "Protocollo Zeus" Paths by the Head of Police (Questore)

The "Protocollo Zeus" initiated by the Head of Police (Questore) are preemptive warning measures aimed at addressing potential threats posed by individuals who may commit acts of violence, particularly in domestic settings. These measures allow the police to issue warnings to individuals suspected of posing a risk, with the intention of deterring them from engaging in harmful behaviors. The aim is to intervene early, to prevent escalation and safeguard potential victims. The Questore is required to give information on the possibilities of attending a perpetrator program, but this referral is completely voluntary.

Critical Reflection from the Perspective of Perpetrator Programs:

1. Privacy Law Barriers:

- **Issue:** Perpetrator programs highlight that referrals are often not made due to privacy laws that restrict sharing personal information about individuals.
- **Impact:** This legal constraint hampers the programs' ability to identify and work with at-risk individuals early on. Without access to necessary information, these programs cannot offer timely intervention or support, potentially allowing the risk of violence to persist or escalate.

2. Need for Training and Collaboration:

- **Issue:** There is a need for specialized training for police forces or joint discussions with perpetrator programs on how to effectively motivate men who receive warnings to seek help.

⁵⁸ For a discussion of treatment evaluation results in Italy, see: <https://www.cussoc.it/journal/article/view/310>

- **Impact:** Police officers may lack the skills or knowledge needed to encourage individuals to participate in perpetrator programs. Training and collaborative efforts could equip police with effective strategies to communicate the benefits of these programs, potentially increasing participation and reducing violent behavior.

3. Low Referral Rates:

- **Issue:** Despite the issuance of the Questore's warnings, not enough cases are being referred to perpetrator programs.
- **Impact:** The low referral rate suggests a gap in the system where individuals identified as risks are not being adequately funneled into intervention programs. This lack of follow-through means that the potential for behavioral change through targeted support is not being fully realized, undermining the preventive intent of the warning measures.

Overall Reflection:

The critical reflections underscore the need for systemic improvements to enhance the effectiveness of the Questore's warnings. Addressing privacy law barriers, providing appropriate training for police officers and ensuring better referral processes to perpetrator programs are essential steps. These improvements could lead to more comprehensive and effective early interventions, ultimately contributing to the prevention of violence and better protection for potential victims.

Critical Aspect 8: Increase in the Referral to Perpetrator Programs for Sexual Offenders

The amendment of Article 165 of the penal code through Article 6 of Law 69 of 2019 has indeed introduced significant changes in how the Italian legal system handles perpetrators of gender-based violence and sexual crimes. Here are several critical reflections on the issues and impact of these changes:

Expanded Scope and Increased Pressure on Programs

- **Issue:** The inclusion of a broader range of crimes (such as sexual violence, stalking, and child pornography) that require perpetrators to undergo treatment to benefit from a suspended sentence has dramatically increased the number and types of offenders referred to perpetrator programs.
- **Impact:** This expanded scope places immense pressure on existing perpetrator programs. Traditionally focused on men who commit domestic violence, these programs must now accommodate a wider

range of offenses and offender profiles, including those involved in crimes against children.

Resource and Funding Uncertainty

- **Issue:** The sudden increase in demand for perpetrator programs comes at a time of significant uncertainty regarding funding and resource allocation.
- **Impact:** Without assured and increased funding, perpetrator programs may struggle to scale up their services. This could lead to insufficient treatment for offenders, undermining rehabilitation goals and public safety. Moreover, the lack of financial security can result in a high turnover of qualified staff and inadequate training opportunities, further compromising program effectiveness.

Fairness and Equal Treatment

- **Issue:** The legal amendment raises fairness concerns, as all individuals convicted of similar crimes should have equal access to treatment.
- **Impact:** The current system might unintentionally create disparities in treatment availability and quality. Offenders who can access well-funded and well-managed programs may receive more effective rehabilitation, while others may not, leading to inconsistent outcomes in terms of recidivism and reintegration into society. This disparity can be seen as unjust, particularly when the law mandates treatment as part of the sentencing.

Specialized Treatment for Sexual Crimes Against Minors

- **Issue:** Sexual crimes against minors require specialized treatment programs distinct from those designed for domestic violence offenders.
- **Impact:** Existing perpetrator programs, primarily tailored for domestic violence, may not be equipped to address the specific psychological and rehabilitative needs of offenders committing sexual offenses against children. This necessitates the development of specialized programs with dedicated funding to ensure appropriate training and resources to effectively reduce reoffending risks. Failure to provide specialized treatment could lead to ineffective rehabilitation and higher risks of reoffending, particularly among those who commit severe and complex crimes such as pedophilia and child pornography.

Training and Development Needs

- **Issue:** The broadened range of crimes under the revised law necessitates enhanced training for those running perpetrator programs.
- **Impact:** To effectively address the varied nature of these crimes, program facilitators require comprehensive training encompassing psychological, social, and legal aspects across a wider spectrum of gender-based and sexual offenses. This training must be ongoing and adapted to the evolving understanding of these crimes and their impacts on victims. Without proper training, program facilitators might not be fully equipped to handle the complexities of cases involving different types of gender-based violence, potentially leading to inadequate treatment outcomes.

Systemic and Holistic Approaches

- **Issue:** Addressing the root causes of gender-based violence and sexual crimes requires a systemic and holistic approach.
- **Impact:** The amendment of art. 165 highlights the need for an integrated approach involving not only the criminal justice system but also social services, mental health professionals, and community organizations. Effective perpetrator programs should be part of a broader strategy that includes preventive measures, victim support services, and public awareness campaigns. This holistic approach ensures a more comprehensive response to gender-based violence, addressing both the immediate and long-term needs of victims and society as a whole.

Conclusion

The amendments introduced by Article 6 of Law 69 of 2019 present both opportunities and challenges. While expanding treatment requirements aim to enhance rehabilitation and reduce recidivism, it also exposes significant gaps in the current perpetrator program infrastructure. Addressing these issues requires substantial investment in specialized programs, fair access to treatment, and comprehensive training for facilitators. Additionally, a systemic approach that integrates various stakeholders is essential to effectively combat gender-based violence and sexual crimes in Italy.

Critical aspect 9: Increase of Referrals of Minors for Treatment in GBV (Strong Incidence of Cyberviolence and Sexual Violence)

The recent statistical analysis by the Ministry of Justice underscores critical trends in juvenile and young adult offending ([see previous section](#)) that necessitate a multifaceted approach to crime prevention and intervention. Below, the outline

of the role of perpetrator programs in treating young offenders, the need for differential treatment of adult male perpetrators, and the essential requirements for funding and stability of these programs.

Role of Perpetrator Programs in Treating Young Offenders

Perpetrator programs are crucial in the rehabilitation and reintegration of young offenders. These programs offer structured environments where young offenders can receive psychological support and education. The effectiveness of these programs in reducing recidivism hinges on their ability to address the specific needs of young offenders, providing them with the tools to build a violence free future life.

Need for Differential Treatment of Adult Male Perpetrators

Adult male perpetrators require a different approach due to the different psychological, social, and developmental stages compared to juveniles. Differential treatment ensures that interventions are age-appropriate and more likely to be effective in reducing recidivism.

Funding and Stability for Perpetrator Programs

For perpetrator programs to be successful, consistent funding and stability are essential. Key aspects include:

1. **Sustainable Funding:** Long-term financial support from government and private sectors to ensure continuous operation.
2. **Program Evaluation and Improvement:** Regular assessments to refine and improve program efficacy.
3. **Interagency Collaboration:** Coordination between justice, education, and social services to provide comprehensive support.

Stable funding allows for the development of robust programs that can adapt to changing needs and incorporate best practices.

[Link to Article 14 of the Istanbul Convention](#)

Article 14 of the Istanbul Convention stresses the importance of educational measures to prevent violence and promote gender equality from an early age. This aligns with the need to work with youth in school settings on a preventive level:

1. **Early Education Initiatives:** Programs in nurseries, kindergartens, and elementary schools that promote social and emotional learning, respect, and non-violence.
2. **Parental Involvement:** Encouraging parents to be active participants in these programs to reinforce positive behaviors at home.
3. **Teacher Training:** Equipping educators with the skills to identify and address early signs of problematic behavior and to foster inclusive and respectful classroom environments.

Critical Reflections on Issues and Impact

1. **Intervention Gaps:** Gaps remain in intervention strategies, particularly for at-risk youth who may not be in formal education settings.
2. **Ongoing school education on gender equality and violence prevention:** SBSE and SBVP are implemented on schools own initiative, based on voluntary attendance, and delivered in a patchy way within schools as well as across territories. 40% of regions have not implemented any programs at all between 2006-2021 (refer to [Barriers in School Based Education](#) of this document).
3. **Resource Allocation:** Gaps in ensuring equitable distribution of resources to areas with the highest need, particularly in underserved communities.
4. **Long-term Impact:** The long-term effectiveness of these programs depends on sustained efforts and societal commitment to addressing the root causes of juvenile offending.

By addressing these critical areas, we can work towards a significant reduction in juvenile crime rates, aligned with the preventive goals outlined in the Istanbul Convention. Engaging all stakeholders in the education and upbringing of children and adolescents will be key to creating a safer and more just society.

Critical Aspect 10: Restorative Justice and Perpetrator Programs

The Cartabia reform⁵⁹ (Legislative decree n.150/2022, implementation of law n. 134/2021) marks a significant change in the Italian penal system, emphasizing restorative justice even in cases of violence against women. This approach aims to involve both victims and perpetrators in a process of reconciliation and restitution, promoting the rehabilitation of offenders. However, the implementation of this reform raises critical issues, particularly concerning treatment programs for male perpetrators of violence.

⁵⁹ See in more detail: <https://www.sistemapenale.it/it/documenti/pubblicato-in-gu-il-dlgs-150-2022-attuativo-della-riforma-cartabia>

Main Critical Issues

1. **Inadequate Duration of Restorative Programs:** Restorative justice, as envisaged by the reform, allows for a limited number of sessions (approximately 1 to 10) to complete the process. However, experience from treatment centers for male perpetrators of domestic violence suggests that meaningful change and genuine acceptance of responsibility require a program lasting at least **one year**. The proposed duration by the reform appears insufficient to ensure effective reflection on behaviors and achieving the profound transformation necessary for genuine reparation.
2. **Acceptance of Responsibility:** A brief programme may not provide perpetrators with sufficient time to genuinely accept responsibility. Without a long and in-depth reflection process, their acceptance of responsibility may remain partial. Only through a prolonged process can the potential for making reparative gestures towards the victim or society be assessed, and often this assessment will be negative if the process has been inadequate.
3. **Utilitarian Calculation:** Despite the reform's stipulation that participation in restorative justice does not automatically lead to the extinction of the crime or penalty, there is a risk that perpetrators may view participation in these programs merely as a means to obtain legal leniency or benefits rather than as an opportunity for real personal change. This perception could diminish the effectiveness of restorative justice as a tool for transformation and resocialization.

Positive Aspects

Despite the critical issues, the Cartabia reform also introduces positive elements:

1. **Non-Evasion of Criminal Responsibility:** The reform clarifies that participation in restorative justice programs does not absolve perpetrators of criminal responsibility or the punitive function of the justice system. Instead, reparation becomes an additional way in which the punitive function is manifested, focusing on the resocialization of the convict.
2. **Involvement of the Victim:** Restorative justice promotes collaboration between the perpetrator and the victim, facilitating the reconciliation process and rebuilding the relationship between the offender and society. This approach is particularly valuable in cases of gender-based violence, where the psychological and social harm is often profound.

Conclusions

To effectively implement restorative justice in cases of violence against women, it is essential that perpetrators of domestic violence first undergo an extended period of treatment within specialized programs for perpetrators. This ensures adequate time for genuine acceptance of responsibility and behavioral change. Furthermore, close monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of restorative practices are essential to prevent their misuse as tools for obtaining legal benefits. By doing so, restorative justice can significantly contribute to the resocialization of offenders, healing of victims, and strengthening of social cohesion and trust in the legal system.

CONCLUSIVE CONSIDERATIONS

In the ten years since the ratification of the Istanbul Convention, Italy has made significant steps towards prevention of gender-based violence. However, there are still gaps that need to be addressed to ensure a comprehensive and effective approach to create a safer and more equitable society.

One of the critical issues is the lack of sufficient funding and resources. Even with the best intentions, laws and initiatives cannot be effectively implemented without proper financial support. This is evident in the lack of training for teachers in schools, and the reliance on implementation of these programs without adequate preparation or resources. The Italian government must allocate sufficient funds to ensure that educational programs for all and re-educational programs for juvenile and adult male perpetrators of violence are properly financed and can be effectively and equitably implemented.

Given the rise of juvenile sexual violence, cyberviolence and early access to free online pornography, implementing national guidelines to make SBVP and CSE mandatory is more important than ever. Education on consent and healthy relationships is crucial to equip young people with the knowledge and skills to recognize, prevent and report intimate partner violence, sexual violence and cyberviolence. SBSE and SBVP must be integrated into the core curriculum to ensure that all students receive adequate education, by adequately prepared teachers or external experts.

The discretionary nature of implementing gender education in schools has resulted in uneven resource allocation and varying levels of commitment across regions. Insufficient funding and inadequate teacher training further hinder the effective delivery of essential topics like consent, gender equality and violence prevention. Persistent gender stereotypes in educational materials combined with teachers without any gender-sensitive preparation, continue to reinforce biased gender roles and harmful patriarchal values.

Similarly, there are significant gaps in the implementation of national guidelines for rehabilitation programs for perpetrators of violence. Uneven distribution of CUAV services limits rehabilitation opportunities in certain areas, while the lack of specialized personnel trained to address the intersectional needs of diverse service users creates barriers in accessibility. It is also vital to develop specialized treatment programs for different types of offenses, including domestic violence, sexual offenses, and crimes against children.

RECOMMENDATIONS for Article 14:

- Provide early education (ages 0-10) to shape attitudes and behaviors from a young age and involve parents in educational initiatives to address patriarchal norms within families.
- Develop a standardized curriculum with mandatory topics and minimum required hours to be implemented in all primary and secondary school levels. Embed SBSE and SBVP within the core curriculum.
- Allocate sufficient financial resources to develop, implement, and sustain gender education and violence prevention programs with competent staff, both in short and long-term.
- Ensure consistency through national mandates while allowing local adaptation to address specific needs in communities where the current situation is more critical.
- Train teachers to identify and address problematic behavior.
- Make training on gender sensitivity and violence prevention mandatory for all teachers and staff that comes into contact with minors, and establish concrete requirements for continuous education and professional development.
- Use a standardized methodological longitudinal approach to measure and compare the effectiveness of SBSE and SBVP programs in time.
- Implement a monitoring system for proposed interventions to ensure accountability and track progress.

RECOMMENDATION for Article 16:

- Define national standards for CUAVs, including organization, management, and personnel. Recognize and accredit CUAVs based on these standards.
- Issue national guidelines with objective criteria for evaluating positive outcomes of perpetrator programs.
- Secure long-term financial support from the government to ensure continuous operation and stability of perpetrator programs. This includes funding for staff training, program evaluation, and ongoing support.
- Mandate comprehensive training for CUAV personnel. Emphasize continuous professional development to enhance skills and knowledge.
- Establish robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks for both types of programs to ensure accountability, track progress, and inform evidence-based improvements.
- Strengthen CAV-CUAV collaboration with shared guidelines, and establish coordinating bodies at regional and local levels to ensure victim safety.
- Improve referral processes to perpetrator programs.

- Foster collaboration between justice, education, social services, and community organizations to provide comprehensive support and a holistic prevention approach to addressing GBV.