



MÄN's new process training courses for violence prevention

From specific measures and projects to long-term, sustainable processes

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The significance of that there are so many of us working on violence prevention cannot be underestimated. Municipalities, government agencies, and organisations: we all inspire and learn from one another, working to advance violence prevention and ensure its sustainability.

ABOUT THE REPORT

Editor: **Inkaliisa Voionmaa Moring**
English translation: **Charlotte Merton**
English copy-editing: **Lena Wallquist**
Fact-checking: **Dennis Nyström, Sofie Kindahl och Sara Aarnivaara**
Layout: **Mika Kastner Johnson**
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CONTACT

MÄN
Hammarby Allé 93
120 63 Stockholm
info@mfj.se
08-17 82 00
www.män.se



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Introduction

In this report, you can read about our work with two new violence prevention courses: process training and process management training. Designed to help municipalities and regions embarking on long-term, sustainable violence prevention work, they draw on MÄN's long experience of working with violence prevention, both operationally and strategically.

The training courses are part of our work within the LifeCycle Project, an EU-funded project on violence prevention, which is part of a European initiative against gender-based violence. In the project, we have developed our existing approaches, working methods, and materials for violence prevention, resulting in new training concepts. We have also explored where in people's lives we can best have an effect in order to bring a greater systematics and sustainability to violence prevention work. The project funding enables us to pool experiences and communication initiatives, and thus to share lessons learnt from our work in Sweden with other countries in Europe.

The lifecycle approach makes it possible to build on shared experiences in a municipal context, combined with our knowledge of likely routes to success when municipalities, businesses, or communities embark on an active programme of violence prevention. There are three strands to the lifecycle approach – a municipality-wide approach, a socio-ecological approach, and an intergenerational approach – which are informed by key evidence-based theories of change: a gender-transformative approach, increased awareness of violence, bystander perspectives, empathy-building, and caring skills. Common to all these theories of change is the centrality of discussion and self-reflection to promoting gender equality and reducing violence.

Universal violence prevention, as it is known, is relatively new to Sweden. The focus of universal violence prevention is the general public or age groups determined by general risk and protective factors. This contrasts with selective violence prevention, which targets specific groups at greater risk of committing violence or being the victims of violence. Without much tradition of universal violence prevention in Sweden, it is especially important that those working with violence prevention at the municipal level can discuss and reflect on what violence is. An awareness of how it affects them, both professionally and privately, will equip them better to work with sustainable violence prevention. With our new process training courses, the working groups responsible for implementing the work in the municipalities can build on their knowledge, creating a joint picture of what they want to change and how.

Another central element in the LifeCycle Project is network-building, bringing together various actors

and key figures at the local, regional, and national levels. At MÄN, we have used our network of municipalities. This network offers the opportunity to share practical examples, hear from others who have come further, and learn from one another's successes and mistakes. Then there is the simple but powerful realisation that violence prevention work is possible in a municipal context. Initially, the emphasis is on improving the basic understanding of violence, prevention, change, and norms, which is as much about creating the right conditions for violence prevention work as it is about taking the first steps in bringing all actors on board. This, as we have noted, is often the 'new' basis of sustainable violence prevention. For those at the sharp end, perseverance is key. Implementing wholesale change across an entire municipality takes years. What was impossible in the first couple of years can be self-evident in the fourth year— by which point everyone is asking why things had not started sooner.

We recommend reading the LifeCycle Project's thematic reports. In *Working for change with a lifelong violence prevention perspective* and *Working with violence prevention with the school as a hub*, we summarise the practical experiences and lessons from our work within the LifeCycle Project, along with the detail of the underlying theories and approaches we have used when designing our process training courses. In a report (*Ett steg på vägen*, available only in Swedish) produced with our project partner Unizon¹, we chart the progress of violence prevention work at the municipal level, and the requirements, conditions, and challenges noted by the municipalities themselves in relation to their work. There is also a separate report on our violence prevention work with fathers, *Father groups for equal parenting*. All the reports are available at mfj.se.

¹ Unizon is an organization that represents over 130 Swedish women's shelters, young women's empowerment centres and other support services which work together for a gender equal society free from violence.

Violence prevention in theory and practice

Introducing Dennis Nyström, who helped develop MÄN's new process training courses

In 2019, MÄN began the work to recruit municipalities for our new process training courses for violence prevention. Interest was so great we ultimately had to turn away several municipalities interested in participating. But what are the new courses about? Dennis Nyström, educator and developer at MÄN, explains.

— The courses are designed to give municipalities the competence to conduct knowledge-based violence prevention work across the board, says Dennis.

It is about helping municipalities work systematically and in a structured manner with violence prevention, and ensuring they learn what they need to take the work forward unassisted once the course is over.

Dennis has worked on violence prevention at MÄN since 2012, and has seen how things have progressed from one-off initiatives at individual schools to structured, sustainable processes. MÄN today works with violence prevention the length and breadth of Sweden, in municipalities of all sizes, in cities and in rural areas.

— We can see big differences in the possibilities





for effective violence prevention work. When MÄN produced a handbook with Unizon and the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society in 2015 (*Inget att vänta på*), there was a shortage of material on knowledge-based work preventing men's violence against women, Dennis explains.

Working on the handbook was the inspiration for a municipal project (En kommun fri från våld), where the goal was to see how the handbook worked in reality in municipalities. This eventually led to our new process management training.

— The handbook didn't explain 'how' we do this work. It said what to do, but not how. That was what we wanted to test with the municipalities project. The starting point was different in every municipality that participated. We began with schools' coordinators in one municipality, while in another it could be the police or a social services strategist. What was missing in most municipalities, though, was broad support from management, says Dennis.

After a few years, MÄN could see the municipalities participating in the project— Västerås, Gävle, and Borås, for example— were adopting policies and action plans to work in a more systematic and structured way with violence prevention. That was when the work had reached the level of politicians and decision-makers. When it came to process management, which MÄN has worked on in col-

laboration with the county administrative board of Västerbotten and four municipalities, we started at that level instead, with the politicians, decision-makers, and managers.

— What took Västerås four years, took Sorsele municipality one year, Dennis explains. That's what's new and impressive.

Collaboration between civil society, government agencies, and municipalities

Over the years, MÄN has learnt a great deal about the complexities of the reality for municipalities. That understanding is needed for this type of work, says Dennis.

— I think in terms of very different time horizons these days. If we launch a process in a municipality today, we can expect to see results in perhaps 3–5 years, instead of me meeting a school class in Gnesta to talk about gender and seeing what happens right there and then. The municipal perspective is different. It is humbling to see how difficult and complex a job it is to create change in the long term, knowing how important it is to collaborate and share knowledge with other actors working on violence prevention.

— I feel I'm learning so much all the time, Dennis stresses. And that I'm learning with others. It might sound like a cliché, but if we at MÄN had

been doing this on our own we'd never have managed. We're getting somewhere thanks to determined individuals in the county administrative boards and municipalities. First it was us at MÄN who got the municipal ball rolling, then Västerbotten Board took over, then Kalmar Board, and next it could be Gävleborg Board when they step up their violence prevention work. The different county administrative boards, municipalities, and individuals are all pulling together to move things forward.

Municipalities exchanging experiences

MÄN's process management training courses bring together participants from various municipalities and regions, meaning that participants also can learn from others' experience.

— It's inspiring, municipalities getting to meet and tell one another how they've solved things. It's extremely interesting for those of us holding the course too. It can mean them taking their knowledge of how others have done things back to their own municipality, and saying, 'Hang on, Eslöv municipality did it this way! So we can do that in Klippan too, because we're in exactly the same position', says Dennis.

Space to grow as a person

Another important element in MÄN's work on violence prevention is its holism, seeing the whole person. As an NGO, MÄN can contribute by carrying learning over from theory into practice. Exercises, skills training, and self-reflection: they are all lessons learnt to take to heart. As an organisation, we don't only work at a strategic level; we also work face-to-face operationally on violence prevention in, say, schools with our training materials (*MVP*, *Agera tillsammans*, and *Machofabriken*). We have a breadth that's there in all our violence prevention work.

Even though the people who attend our process training courses are from contexts where they're often expected to be formal and extremely professional, the more personal parts of the course are well received. It comes down to making sure there's space for their personal experiences, as it increases their motivation to work on violence prevention. There have been times when someone, for example a high-ranking manager, says they grew up with violence and how tough it was. Of course, their municipality should work preventively so that no child should have to grow up like that. Self-reflection like this creates an understanding that violence is not

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somewhere else, it's right here, right now. Many of us share those kinds of experiences.

— Two municipalities can have the same mission, mandate, and background, but the outcome of their violence prevention work may depend on one individual. Their skills and willingness to do something. Their own reflection. We are our own tools, says Dennis.

— It's hard, talking about men's violence. Standing up in front of a whole group and saying 'Now we're going to talk about the male violence here.' It's a brave thing to do, especially in a municipal context.

Skills training, personal reflection, and various discussion methods will be crucial in creating the necessary space for the whole person. Dennis adds how important it is that MÄN is clear about the purpose with, for example, the discussion exercises.

— I think those of us giving the courses are more confident that the exercises are important. We can say to participants, 'Of course we shall do this'. When you want to get other people to talk about violence, you have to know and recognise what it means, so you know what expectations you're placing on them.

In what ways has Dennis developed personally by working with the process management training?

— Well, I'm no longer afraid of managers, he laughs. It was hard going when I started, talking to managers and government agencies. These days I'm used to talking and leading people in positions of all sorts, which is fun and has helped me grow as a person.



MÄN's new process training courses for violence prevention

From specific measures and projects to long-term, sustainable processes

All people should be able to live in an equal world without violence. Men's violence can be prevented— it is not wishful thinking, it is a fact. But for violence prevention to be sustainable in the long term, it will require more than specific initiatives and short term projects. That is why we at MÄN have created two new courses to help municipalities and regions to get started with their systematic, sustainable violence prevention work.

What both training courses have in common is that they focus on processes. Instead of us as an organisation coming in and giving one-off talks or workshops, we help municipalities get started with interdepartmental work covering the entire municipality. In this section you can read about the ideas behind the courses.

In our process training, MÄN has a large role on the ground in municipalities. We lead the process and support municipalities in doing the hands-on work to develop their own activities. In the process management training we take things a step further,

” We have steadily accumulated the exercises, format, and approaches that we know work.



and focus on equipping participants for the role of process manager— so they have the tools and knowledge to manage working groups and develop violence prevention in their own municipalities. The process management training course is particularly suitable for municipalities that already begun this work, but which want a number of key people to have the opportunity to The background to the courses acquire the skills to continue the municipality’s violence prevention work independently.

The background to the courses

The courses are part of the EU-funded LifeCycle Project. The lifecycle perspective is a way of working where children and adults encounter violence prevention measures in a systematic, coherent, and structured manner, regardless of their status or stage in life—from cradle to grave. It calls for a range of violence prevention initiatives, targeting different groups throughout life in various arenas, and includes strategies, action plans, and policies to create the conditions for long-term, sustainable work.

The aim of the courses has been to design and test a concept that resulted from several years of detailed work on violence prevention. With our process management training, the ambition has been to compile all MÄN’s knowledge and experience accrued over the last ten years, and this has been realised with the help of the EU-funded LifeCycle Project. We have adopted an educational approach designed to answer the question ‘What works when creating change?’ on several levels. The process training courses result from MÄN’s development of methods, mapping, and theories, and our experience of practical coaching, collaboration, and training. We have held thousands of talks and courses over the years, and have learnt which exercises, formats, and approaches work.

Jens Karberg is one of the project managers of

MÄN’s LifeCycle Project.

— Our work on violence prevention has been running for the past ten years, after all, and over the years we’ve seen various ways of working on violence prevention crystallise which work well. We began with the MVP material, holding the taught sessions ourselves. Then we trained teachers to run MVP programmes themselves, and then to train others, so that they could do the job of training MVP leaders at a school or in a whole municipality.

We know from the research it is not enough to do this in individual schools or municipalities, however, so in 2015 we joined forces with the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society and Unizon to bring out a handbook on how to work with violence prevention on a large scale (*Inget att vänta på*), for example across an entire municipality. The handbook is now maintained by MÄN, Unizon, and the Swedish Gender Equality Agency, which has taken over from the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society.

The practical approaches to working with a municipality-wide approach were then tested in a separate project (*En kommun fri från våld*), where six municipalities worked with MÄN to develop a model for sustainable violence prevention for children and young people in a local community. We have implemented what we learnt in our new courses.

— And that’s the work we’re now building on in our process training courses and our work within the LifeCycle Project, says Jens.

The courses offer practical skills for violence prevention

The theories behind our violence prevention work are described in the handbook and our thematic reports (there is a list at the end of this report), but it is enough here to note that theories of violence prevention are often abstract. For that reason, the



Jens Karberg, one of the project managers of MÄN’s LifeCycle Project

” The combination of theory, practice, and self-reflection speaks to participants and gives them the drive to forge ahead when they are back in their own municipalities.

process training courses focus on implementation and how to work with violence prevention in practice, whether at an operational level (for example, in schools, leisure-time centres, and family centres) or at a strategic level (how best to draw up plans of action). The course suggests how to proceed at different levels in a municipality, and offers inspiration from other municipalities’ work. Municipality representatives meet and, in listening to one another, hear how things have been solved elsewhere.

In the LifeCycle Project, MÄN has continued to develop the national network for municipalities working on violence prevention which they started in 2015. The network allows municipalities to share

experiences and discuss progress and challenges. Our goal at MÄN is to communicate the skills and knowledge required for long-term, sustainable success, so others can continue independently. It is a way of ensuring continuity in violence prevention work, rather than it being dependent on individual actors and initiatives.

A dynamic course is a motivating course

At MÄN we not only work on violence prevention at the strategic, municipality-wide level, we are also involved operationally and practically. Our process training courses can thus offer specific practical examples drawn from our operations. For instance, for

many years we have worked in schools with a variety of programmes and materials (*MVP, Agera tillsammans, Machofabriken*). We also offer several forms of support, such as father groups and a support chat for boys and young men, killar.se. In our operations we meet both male victims and male perpetrators, and have extensive experience pursuing broad-based violence prevention and developing methods of violence prevention.

With skills, statistics, and theories rooted in practical examples, self-reflection, and personal narratives, we can create a better learning environment, and with it every opportunity to motivate participants. Violence prevention work can be demanding, requiring commitment and enthusiasm to operationalise it in a municipal context. Our years of experience tell us it is a combination of theory, practice, and self-reflection that speaks to participants and gives them the drive to pursue and advance the work in their own municipalities.

Course sessions alternated with individual coaching

Between training course sessions, the participating municipalities are coached on course assignments and local process development. Since those attending the course represent different municipal departments, coaching can also make it easier for them to arrange interdepartmental meetings, as they are an integral part of the course.

Participants practise their skills

It is one thing to read about managing a process and quite another to set up and run a process yourself. Skills training is thus central to the course. This can be anything from something straightforward, such as a Small Room exercise (see below), to coaching the entire course group through a development exercise, step by step, following a predetermined model, identifying what it will do to promote violence prevention and what can be done to advance it further. It is a chance to practise skills analysing what makes a method effective in preventing violence, and which risk factors that particular method addresses.

We work with discussion methods such as Small Room

One technique we work with on the course is a method we call the Small Room. In brief, it centres on speaking from personal experience; one's own thoughts, feelings, and experiences. It is also an exercise in active listening—and being listened to. Participants are divided into small groups, where they share their personal experiences without comment from the others. They might speak about their own experience of violence, for example, or being

limited by norms. This requires a safe context, so the person who has the floor is not questioned by the other participants during the discussion. The Small Room method is a way to bring home to people that violence is something most of us have experienced, and that it affects everyone.

We believe change occurs when we can reflect on our own behaviour. It is not about 'being clever' or 'woke', but rather about trying to pay attention to what we are feeling. An important part of the method is being present, actively listening to the others. This is how we learn more about what we feel and think ourselves—and how we can change. It also makes it easier for others to open up and dare to share.

Preparatory work is crucial

For the courses to be rewarding, participants have preparatory work to do in their own municipalities. The municipalities involved in the 2020 courses had all done extensive preparatory work in selecting those to send and preparing the various departments, ensuring the course got off to the best possible start.

When we at MÄN were working on the municipal project (*En kommun fri från våld*) which preceded the LifeCycle Project, we worked with the participating municipalities to find new modes of long-term, strategic violence prevention work, because no one had attempted to do this before in Sweden. It is obvious that the municipalities now participating in the process training courses and process management training courses start from a

” Participants from municipalities not only attend the course with a clear mandate to work with these questions, but they arrive having secured the support of the key municipal departments and armed with the necessary political decisions.



very different position: they have learnt from other municipalities' reports and experiences, have attended conferences, and have begun work on systematic violence prevention. The issue is on their agenda in a way not seen before, thanks to a national strategy to prevent and combat men's violence against women that came into force in 2017, clearer directives to government agencies, and greater support from, for example, the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SKR). Over the years, many actors, including MÄN and the municipalities themselves, have done cutting edge work in the field.

Thus, those attending the course from the municipalities arrive not only with a clear mandate to work on these issues, but supported by several departments and the necessary political decisions. Their prior knowledge of violence prevention, like their appreciation of its importance, is evident, as is their motivation. There is a general understanding that municipality-wide work will be needed, spanning all departments.

The municipalities have thus done a tremendous job with the preparatory work. Those attending the course from the municipalities have held strategic positions, being politicians, local councillors, senior coordinators, and heads of department.

The course highlights the importance of networking

In both process management training and process training, networking is a key component, whether among municipalities or between municipal departments. When you get to know one another the chances of a future collaboration increase—and many participants have noted the value of having time together in this type of meeting. Ordinarily, municipalities staff rarely meet across departmental boundaries to work closely together—and that is exactly what is needed to achieve sustainable violence prevention in the long term.

Many working on violence prevention

A great deal of work has been done on violence prevention in Sweden since 2013, when MÄN, Unizon, and the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society held the first national conference on violence prevention. Reports have been written, government directives issued, and a national strategy has been agreed to prevent men's violence against women. Together, municipalities, non-profit organisations, and government agencies have taken forward the work of

violence prevention in Sweden.

It is evident this knowledge is circulating at the local level. The participating municipalities from our earlier project and the LifeCycle Project have actively shared their knowledge and experience, which was noted among those attending our process training courses. Many participants were already aware of MÄN's violence prevention work with municipalities, and had been inspired to attend the course after communicating with other participating municipalities, having heard them speak at various conferences, read their publications, attended the initial project's final conferences, and met with municipalities and schools already using the MVP method. The county administrative boards have also shared their experiences of violence prevention.

The significance of the fact there are so many working on violence prevention in Sweden cannot be underestimated. Thanks to the MÄN network of municipalities working on violence prevention and numerous guiding examples (communicated in reports and publications from MÄN, Unizon, the Swedish Gender Equality Agency, the county administrative boards, SKR, and others) we can see that momentum is building. Municipalities inspire and learn from one another, and we have now reached the critical mass needed for long-term, sustainable violence prevention.



” Together, municipalities, non-profit organisations, and government agencies have taken forward the work of violence prevention in Sweden.

Spread the word!

Interview with Sara Nylander, participant in the process management training course

One of the participants was Sara Nylander, process and development manager for a municipal project called Klippan fritt från våld. We talked about her work in the municipality of Klippan and her participation in the process management training course.

Sara is a sociologist by training and has been a social worker—which soon opened her eyes to how common violence is.

— My colleague and I were on at our managers for several years to improve our work against violence in close relationships, Sara says. In 2016, the first development position was created. My colleague and I jobshared that 25 per cent position to come up with an action plan for the social services department. That was how it started.

Today, Sara and her colleague, Clara Svensson, work full-time on violence prevention for Klippan municipality. They jobshare two positions as process and development manager of the violence prevention project and coordinator of the social services' action group on violence in close relationships, with a development remit.

The Klippan project is now in its second year. In the first year, they focused on producing a full survey of the situation, with a special emphasis on vulnerable children and young people.

— It's conspicuous that children don't see violence as something unusual, Sara says. There is considerable exposure to violence in upper secondary schools. And of course Klippan has numerous underlying risk factors, as it is a fairly socio-economically

vulnerable municipality. The survey revealed many norms that promote violence, while gender-based violence stands out among children, young people, and adults.

What were your expectations of the process management training course? And how did it turn out?

— It couldn't have come at a better time for us, because we had just obtained funding for the Klippan project. I had expected the course would give us a bit of support; it can be pretty lonely working on these issues. One of the most positive things has been us forming a new group of people from different departments who haven't worked together before. In our previous jobs, Clara and I only worked with social services, but now it's become a Klippan-wide project.

Is there anything specific that MÄN as an organization contributes to violence prevention?

— Yes, knowledge-based training centred on the linkage between violence and gender, says Sara. Without that knowledge, we can't work effectively on violence prevention. That's one of MÄN's strengths: you really know your field. That in combination with a real understanding of how to initiate processes is something that MÄN offers where others can't. The course has given us far greater competence so we can set the processes in motion faster, as more people in the municipality can tap into the knowledge base.

” With the help of this course we'll have far greater competence in the field and can move faster to start the process.

What makes the methods successful, do you think?

— The methods were easy to take in and easy to pass on, especially the ones from the first course session, says Sara. Then purely personally I found the Small Room exercise excellent. It made us reflect on ourselves as victims and perpetrators of violence. Even I saw things with fresh eyes, and I've worked with violence for some time. I've seen the violence statistics thousands of times, but doing these exercises I realised I've been exposed to violence and have been violent.

In the Small Room exercise, participants speak from experience about a topic. In this instance, violence.

— I've worked with abused women, says Sara, and I don't identify as a woman who's been in a violent relationship. But I have experienced other forms of violence—and that's something we all carry with us. It really got me thinking. We've used the exercises in our Klippan social services network group since, and they went down well. It made everyone start reflecting about themselves and their professional roles.

Between course sessions, Klippan municipality has been coached by Dennis Nyström, an educator and developer at MÄN. Sara says there has been specific advice—for example, how best to approach things organisationally—and coaching on the violence prevention process.

What's it like being coached between course sessions?

— The coaching has helped us when we've needed to tackle the processes specifically in relation to violence prevention, says Sara. We've discussed how best to talk about the issues, because it's a topic that



comes up against considerable resistance. You need support doing it.

Sara stresses that resistance is not necessarily explicit; for example, it can turn on notions of masculinity and femininity, or the idea that violence is limited to a given culture. That is when it can be useful to bounce ideas around with someone knowledgeable.

Finally, what is your advice for municipalities yet to start work on violence prevention?

— Join forces! We're not doing this because politicians or managers have told us to; it's us on the front line who've done it by banding together. And read up on it! Knowledge is everything. And then spread the word. If you can spread ideas about violence on a broad front, the ripple effect guarantees everyone will talk about violence. That's what's happened here with Klippan social services: everyone is talking about violence. It's become self-evident. The goal now is to get the whole municipality talking about working with knowledge-based violence prevention.

‘There are lots of us working in the same direction’

Four questions for Sofie Kindahl, process manager and former coordinator for MÄN’s violence prevention work

What has been the most exciting thing about working with the process training courses?

— It’s been exhilarating to put together and pilot a concept we believe in, which is the result of ten years of hard work on violence prevention. To be able to distil all our knowledge and experience into one course, now that is exciting! We tried to pick a framework and a systematics which can include all the pieces of the puzzle: methods, mapping, theory, practical coaching, collaboration, and training. The challenge—and it’s been fascinating—has been packing it all into just seven days spread over a year.

What is new about the courses, would you say?

— It’s super to have the chance to take a broader, more systematic approach to an issue in the way we’ve done for our process management training course! Research shows it’s essential to be systematic if change is to be sustained in the long term. For many municipalities and regions it’s a unique chance to appoint an entire working group from across several departments, and give them the mandate and the time to work on developing one issue for an entire year. It’s far more usual to send a couple of peo-

ple off to a short course or a conference. When they get back, yes, they’re inspired, but it rarely leads to any real change in the organisation. Too many times they’re throwing good money after bad! The whole point of our work is knowledge implementation—in other words, what’s needed for new approaches and working methods to make real inroads.

What does MÄN as an organisation contribute to the municipalities’ violence prevention?

— Thanks to our extraordinary wealth of experience, we at MÄN have a unique take on how to support municipalities in their violence prevention work. Our work is credible because of our direct, practical approach to developing and testing violence prevention methods, and all we do is anchored in the research in the field. All our work shows our command of the theories of prevention, violence, and gender, and our almost thirty years’ experience of practical work with discussions, methods, and collaborations. Don’t forget, working with municipalities is a branch of knowledge in itself, and over several years we’ve built up a broad experience of working hands-on to provide strategic and practical support for municipal frontline staff, strategists, and managers. It means



” I have enormous respect for all the hardworking frontline staff and officials working day in, day out despite limited resources, reorganisations, and other challenges.

we have a grasp of best practice and real insight into the challenges and opportunities of working at the municipal level. Together, it means we’re able to offer municipalities a unique smorgasbord of tools, methods, theories, practical experiences, best practices, and network forums.

What does the work mean to you personally?

— Working strategically with municipalities in this way is so rewarding. Above all, it makes me immensely hopeful to see there are lots of us working in the same direction! I’ve learnt so much from the par-

ticipants we meet who are doing the actual work of putting the theoretical knowledge and methods into action. I have enormous respect for all the hardworking frontline staff and officials working day in, day out despite limited resources, reorganisations, and other challenges. The theory is often simple; it’s when it’s put into practice that the hard work’s done!



The Courses

What follows is a summary of our process management training course and separate process training course, with the details of the structure, purpose, and participants. It is thanks to EU funding we have been able to develop these process training concepts. The format may be altered for future courses.

The process training course

The process training course is based on the handbook produced by Unizon, the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society, and MÄN (*Inget att vänta på*) and MÄN's long experience supporting municipalities across the country in their violence prevention work. We apply a gender perspective to violence and a public health perspective to prevention. The course offers participants the opportunity to listen to guest speakers with in-depth knowledge of a variety of themes or areas. The focus is on training the people who are going to lead or otherwise effect change in their municipalities. As part of the course, participants have the chance to plan and lead a prevention measure for the others in the group.

They also have assignments between course sessions to test holding exercises and giving presentations in their own municipalities.

Meta-reflection is encouraged to ensure participants can discuss the difficulties, challenges, and opportunities of the exercises and the requirement to pass on what they have learnt from the course. We study several models in detail to gauge what they help us see and what their limitations are. Taught elements are interspersed with exercises, self-reflection, sharing experiences, and group work based on the participants' own municipality's work.

Purpose

The purpose of the course is to promote violence prevention in a municipal context with a variety of knowledge-based approaches and tools. During the course, participants are offered continuous support in starting or developing a sustainable, structured process in their own municipalities. The long-term goal is to create the conditions at the municipal level for systematic, knowledge-based work to prevent violence in general and men's violence against women specifically.

Format

- Seven days, spread across three course sessions in one year. MÄN acts as a sounding board for participants and provides coaching for the municipality.
- *Optional:* A day or half-day of talks for a broader group of municipal managers and staff.
- *Optional:* Outreach to introduce municipal managers, strategists, and politicians to violence prevention work.

Coaching

Over the course of the year, there will be five shorter coaching sessions with each municipality (via phone, email, or videoconference). This provides participants with a further opportunity for support with their assignments and local development work.

Choice of participants

The process training course is primarily intended for those going to lead or otherwise promote violence prevention and gender equality. In the first instance it is aimed at municipalities about to start work on violence prevention or which have made some progress. Participants are generally managers, strategists, or frontline staff, although the course is also suitable for staff of government agencies or bodies active at the municipal level (for example, county administrative boards or the police).

We welcome a broad spectrum of representatives from a variety of departments and levels, and preferably 3–6 participants per municipality. We also welcome participants with prior knowledge of areas such as process management, implementation, and violence prevention.

Suitable participants at the municipal level include:

- **politicians and decision-makers:** representatives from decision-making bodies
- **managers:** operational or departmental managers from, for example, the local education authority, the municipality's individual, family, and children's services (IFO), and the culture and recreation services department
- **strategists, developers or coordinators:** for example, those working on gender equality, crime prevention, intimate partner violence prevention, ANDT, public health, and education.
- **frontline staff:** for example, from schools, leisure-time centres, field teams, health services, social services, or civil society stakeholders.

Participants' work with their employers

The process training course is intended to support ongoing or planned local processes to develop violence prevention. On completion of the course, participants are expected to have:

- begun implementing violence prevention in their local context
- formulated a detailed plan of action for the municipality's continued violence prevention work at both strategic and operational levels.

Between the course sessions, participants will have assignments linked to their own municipality, for example group exercises, preliminary mapping exercises, drafting a mission statement, identifying working methods, outreach, or organising training for staff and management.

The process management training course

The process management training course is based on the handbook produced by Unizon, the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society, and MÄN (*Inget att vänta på*) and MÄN's long experience supporting municipalities across the country in their violence prevention work. We apply a gender perspective to violence and a public health perspective to prevention. The course offers participants the opportunity to hear guest speakers with in-depth knowledge of a variety of themes or areas.

The focus of the process management training is on broadening the municipalities' knowledge of violence, gender, and violence prevention, and how to apply that knowledge in their own work promoting sustainable development across the municipality or in individual departments.

The municipalities are offered hands-on process management and support in working on violence prevention. There are one-year or eighteen-month courses, with assignments for participants between course sessions. MÄN provides the knowledge content and support and process management. The county administrative board will act as the municipalities' coordinator for the process training, and it is the county administrative board's responsibility to follow up with municipalities monthly and provide support for municipalities wishing to concentrate on specific areas such as methods of working with schools or municipal management and governance. This format is also a way of coordinating efforts at the county administrative board level, while supporting municipalities' work on gender equality, violence prevention, and crime prevention.

Purpose

The purpose of the initiative is to promote local prevention measures and to create a knowledge base and sustainable, strategic process in preventing men's violence against women and violence in general. The initiative will contribute to the knowledge base and to developing strategic violence prevention at the municipal level.

Format

- Eight days, spread across four course sessions in 1 year or 18 months.
- MÄN acts as a sounding board for participants and provides coaching for the municipalities.
- Coordination with the county administrative board.
- Participation in an inspiration conference.
- *Optional:* A day or half-day of talks for a broader group of municipal managers and staff.
- *Optional:* Outreach to introduce municipal managers, strategists, and politicians to violence prevention (from one hour to a full day).
- *Optional:* MÄN acts as a sounding board in developing structures for systematic, sustainable violence prevention at a regional or county level.

Selection of participants

We recommend 7–10 participants per municipality, and welcome political and management decision-makers and representatives from the operational levels of municipalities.

We would suggest these officials should be included:

- deputy mayor
- opposition leader
- municipal chief executive
- women's safety coordinator
- crime prevention coordinator
- gender equality coordinator
- representatives from schools and leisure-time centres
- representatives from individual, family, and children's services (IFO)
- integration coordinator and/or un-accompanied minors coordinator

Gender equality and crime prevention coordinators from the county administrative board should attend all meetings.

Violence prevention is a priority

Interview with Pär Eriksson, participant in the process management training course

Our vision is an Örnköldsvik free of violence, and the municipality and the local branch of the Coordination Agency have worked towards that end for a long time. Pär Eriksson, head of the Coordination Agency in Örnköldsvik municipality, talks about the agency's work and participation in MÄN's process management training course.

The Coordination Agency is an umbrella organisation for the Swedish Social Insurance Agency, the Swedish Public Employment Service, the municipalities, and the regions, where they collaborate to improve welfare and public health. Having been head of the local branch of the Coordination Agency in Örnköldsvik for fifteen years, Pär is well placed to watch the progress in violence prevention.

— There is a strong mobilisation at all levels of government to prevent men's violence against women, says Pär. In Örnköldsvik, the county administrative board arranged for us to attend MÄN's process management training course to prepare for violence prevention work over the long term.

He says it is noticeable that violence prevention is now a priority for many of the government agencies the Coordination Agency works with. He can see there is a rapid mobilisation underway, and a recognition that violence is a very real public health problem.

— When I began work in Örnköldsvik in 2003, it was my impression there was nothing like today's

level of understanding about the question of violence. Today, there is a completely different understanding of who will encounter victims of violence in their work. At that stage, for example, the Social Insurance Agency said women who were victims of violence were not one of its target groups, as it did not come across them.

— But they do today! he says with a kind laugh.

The Social Insurance Agency has been working hard with the question for several years now.

— I also hope that the outcome of #metoo is that more men speak out against violence against women, Pär continues. I recognise how important it is for men to take responsibility for the issue and to acknowledge that men perpetrate the vast majority of violence against women. Men must take a stand against violence as part of the attempt to change attitudes and raise awareness. Men need to say publicly that macho talk is damaging, and we can all work preventively in the workplace by refusing to let sexist or demeaning language pass.

What were your expectations of the process management training course? And how did it turn out?

— I hoped to learn more about the question of violence and above all prevention, is Pär's response. As in many other areas, I realised during the course that the more I learnt, the less I knew. Violence is a complex issue. It is not just about physical violence,

” Today, there is a completely different understanding of who will encounter victims of violence in their work.



as there are so many other types of violence. Violence is multifaceted. I also learnt more about the art of managing a group process, and came away with a toolbox of exercises to use.

— One significant insight I took from the process management training course is the importance of anchoring your position, Pär continues. You need to have a great many people involved in the work if it is to be sustainable. You don't have to have everyone on board at once, but it has to be properly rooted in the organisation. There must be several people actively involved for it to work.

Would you say you personally benefited from the course?

— Yes, says Pär. I choose my words and my actions with greater care now. It's important for me to practise what I preach, and the focus of the process management training course resonates far beyond my professional life. Take language and humour. I think humour is such an important part of our lives, both at home and at work. We need to laugh, we need fun.

But there are lines and they should not be crossed, not only so everyone can feel good about themselves, but also as part of the business of violence prevention. I think it's important to start with yourself, and learn to deal with the fact people might take it badly or look askance when you call out something that's wrong. That's how we can bring about change and make a better society.

Further reading



Working with violence prevention with the school as a hub

(available in English and Swedish)

This report focuses on the role schools can play in violence prevention, and initiatives taken to reflect local circumstances.



Working for change with a lifelong violence prevention perspective

(available in English and Swedish)

A summary of the lessons learnt in one phase of the LifeCycle project. It concentrates on prevention on the large scale, the implications of a lifecycle perspective, and factors for successfully implementing violence prevention at the municipal level.



Father groups for equal parenting

(available in English, Spanish and Swedish)

I denna rapport kan du läsa om vårt arbete med pappagrupper, där pappor träffas för att stärka varandra i att vara omtänksamma, lyhörda föräldrar och partners.

Do you want to know more about violence prevention? One place to start is with these reports, which you will find at mfj.se, or the handbook *Inget att vänta på*, which is available from the Swedish Gender Equality Agency at jamstalldhetsmyndigheten.se.



Ett steg på vägen

(available in Swedish)

A study of actions taken by municipalities to prevent men's violence against women, in which 191 municipalities across Sweden detail their work. The report is by Unizon and MÄN.



Inget att vänta på

(available in Swedish)

A handbook on violence, gender, and prevention, providing guidance on the five-step process to implementing systematic, knowledge-based violence prevention. The handbook is produced by Unizon, the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society, MÄN, and the Swedish Gender Equality Agency.



Want to know more?

For information about MÄN's activities, competences, and methods, please contact us at info@mfj.se

If you are interested in MÄN's talks or process training courses, please contact us at utbildning@mfj.se.

At mfj.se you can read about our current projects, our courses, and our mission.

CONTACT

MÄN
Hammarby Allé 93
120 63 Stockholm
info@mfj.se
08-17 82 00
www.man.se





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