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<b>Specifically for Aruba and Netherlands Antilles (now Aruba, Curacao, St Maarten with the islands of Bonaire St Eustatius and Saba forming part of the Netherlands)</b>			
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# ANNEX II – Genderscan The Netherlands

## SUMMARY

### Introduction

Gender-related factors play a key role in the occurrence and perpetuation of domestic violence. Any strategy that aims to tackle domestic violence will therefore have to take gender-related factors into account in order to be effective. The Dutch government has been upbraided by the United Nations, amongst others, for failing to formulate this explicitly in its approach. Accordingly, this approach seems to be insufficiently *gender-sensitive*. The criticism prompted the Dutch government to seek deeper insight into the gender-sensitivity of its approach. Research commissioned for this purpose resulted in a report entitled *Genderscan aanpak huiselijk geweld*<sup>1</sup> (Gender Scan Approach to Domestic Violence). The research only covered partner violence, this being the most common form of violence within the overall category of domestic violence. More than two thirds of domestic violence cases involve partners or ex-partners.

The research sought to answer the following questions:

*How far does the Dutch approach to partner violence in both policy and practice take account of relevant gender-related factors and the effects of policy and practice on these factors? And how could the approach be improved?*

The research consisted of five components:

- A meeting of experts at the outset;
- A literature search/document study;
- Eight interviews at national and regional level;
- Five focus groups consisting of practitioners at regional level;
- A discussion of the provisional findings with the practitioners in six interviews and with experts in a second meeting.

### Gender-sensitivity

Within the context of this gender scan the term *gender-sensitive* is applied to government policy and implementation efforts that take sufficient account of the role of gender-related factors in domestic violence<sup>2</sup>. A gender-sensitive approach does not mean that all interventions must target men or women specifically. What it does mean is that:

- 1) gender-related factors are considered in the development and implementation of policy and that they are taken into account where necessary;
- 2) policy and implementation are adjusted where necessary to preclude negative outcomes and encourage positive outcomes.

As stated in the introduction, a gender-sensitive approach to partner violence is not only necessitated by the problem itself; it has also been prompted by the terms of international treaties to which the Netherlands is signatory. Although

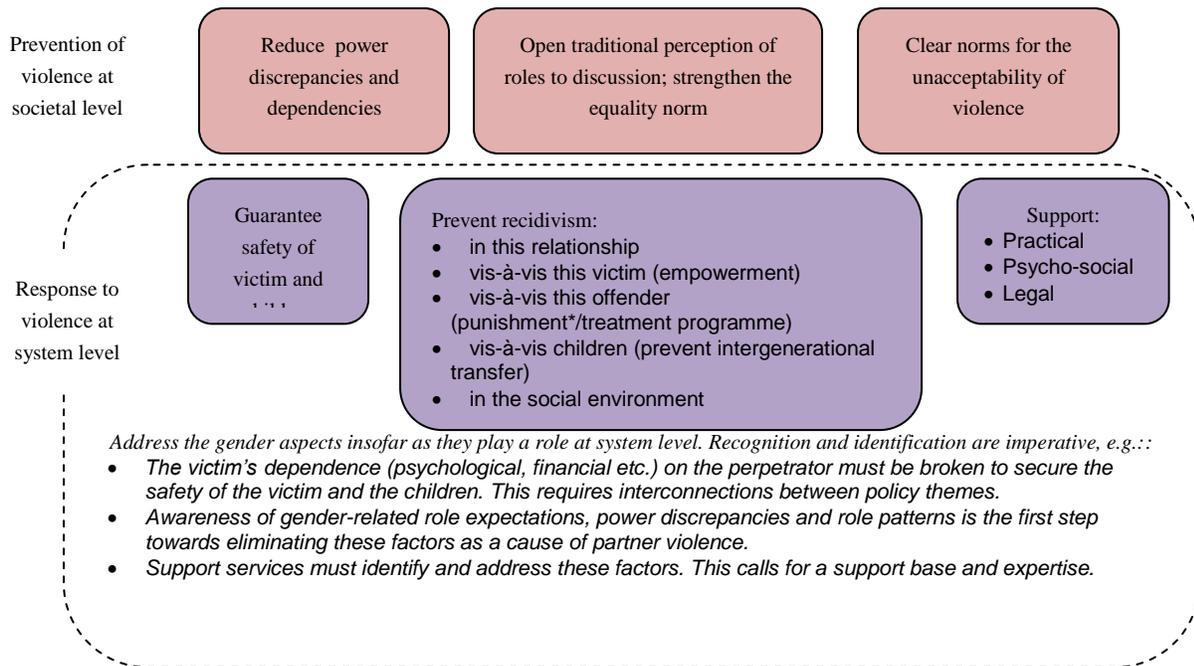
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<sup>1</sup> K.B.M. de Vaan, M.M. de Boer and M.C. Vanoni (2013) *Genderscan aanpak huiselijk geweld* (Amsterdam: Regioplan).

<sup>2</sup> Different manifestations of power discrepancies between men and women, stereotypical role patterns and expectations about the behaviour of men and women that can lead to the occurrence and perpetuation of domestic violence.

the letter of such treaties often results in a *sex-specific*<sup>3</sup> policy on domestic violence, the spirit pleads above all for a *gender-sensitive* policy. It is, after all, important that efforts to combat domestic violence also take account of the underlying causes: the gender-related factors that reinforce and perpetuate power discrepancies and stereotypical male and female role expectations (and hence discrimination against women). These factors should figure seriously in the policy, the policy instruments and the implementation. A gender-sensitive approach is outlined in Figure 1.

**Figure 1 Gender-sensitive approach**



## Prevalence of partner violence: relevant gender differences

Women are more likely to be the victim of partner violence than men. In all manifestations of domestic violence 60% of the victims are women and 40% are men. When we look at *evident* violence (repeated and serious incidents and strongly controlling behaviour and sexual abuse) committed by the *partner*, the victim rates are significantly higher for women (78%) than for men (59%), while men are more often the victim of violence committed by other family members or friends of the family (40% versus 28%). Women are more often the victim of serious physical and sexual violence than men.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Sex-specific policy is policy that focuses specifically on men or women, without considering the relationship with gender.

<sup>4</sup> H.C.J. van der Veen en S.Bogaerts (2011) *Huiselijk geweld in Nederland. Overkoepelend syntheserapport van het vangst-hervangst-, slachtoffer- en daderonderzoek 2007-2010* (Den Haag: WODC). These figures are not uncontested. They are called into question by, amongst others, the gender-neutral approach. Police records show a distribution of 75% female and 25% male victims of domestic violence: H. Ferwerda and M. Hardeman (2013) *Kijk...dan zie je het! Huiselijk geweld geteld en verdiept* (Arnhem: Bureau Beke).

## Gender-sensitivity in policy, policy instruments, and practice

Research indicates that it is possible to act in a gender-sensitive manner within a gender-neutral policy that targets all perpetrators and all victims. To achieve this, however, policymakers, developers of instruments, and practitioners must be fully aware of the relevance of gender-related factors and take them on board. This does not always happen in the Netherlands, so there is room for targeted improvements in the approach. This conclusion is explained below.

### Policy

The policy is sex-neutral. In other words, it relates to the persons involved in violence in dependence relationships in a general sense and not to men or women specifically. Though a number of policy papers issued by the Dutch government observe that there are differences between men and women in the role of victim and perpetrator and that gender-related factors could play a role in the policy, they do not link this observation to an approach aimed at eliminating gender-related causes. Policy papers at local government level pay virtually no attention to gender differences or gender-related factors in partner violence.

### Policy instruments

The instruments for dealing with partner violence<sup>5</sup> are not designed specifically for men or women. Most of them do, however, assume (sometimes explicitly, usually implicitly) that the perpetrators are men and the victims are women.

Most of the interventions and methods ignore gender-related factors. Some are, however, clearly gender-sensitive or, at least, they could be (depending on how they are applied) because they do actually pay attention to gender-related factors. Take, for example:

- the emphasis on *empowerment* in women's shelters and the programme *Uit de schaduw van de ander*, which aims to strengthen the resolve of female victims to free themselves from abusive relationships and avoid repeat situations;
- the system-oriented approach by Bos et al. (2012), intended for the women's shelters, which focuses on the dynamics in the system of the perpetrator, the victim, and those directly involved, and therefore also pays attention to the relevance of gender;
- the *B-Safer* tool, which is used by the probation service for screening sexual abuse amongst other things, the attitude of perpetrator to the violence, the relationship between the perpetrator and the victim and the attitude of the victim to the perpetrator;
- *Caring Dads*, which reminds the perpetrators of partner violence and child abuse of their role and responsibilities as a father and a parent;
- the *WE CAN Young* campaign, which homes in on the problem of sexual inequality as the cause of violence between men and women.

These interventions qualify as potential good practices within the context of this gender scan.

Although the prevention of intergenerational transfer is one of the three key priorities in the approach to violence in dependence relationships, the researchers encountered no methods which are specifically committed to this aim.

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<sup>5</sup> This research project incorporated the interventions in the databank for effective interventions at [www.huiselijkgeweld.nl](http://www.huiselijkgeweld.nl). Only some of these were examined in depth. A few regional interventions were also examined.

## **In practice**

The practitioners we spoke to in this project drew a distinction between mutual violence and controlling violence and intimate terrorism. In both cases they discerned differences between men and women as victims and perpetrators. They did not connect these differences primarily with gender, except in cases of ‘intimate terrorism’, partner violence in relationships where the persons involved were of non-western origin, and/or sexual violence.

Individual cases are judged on their merits – which leaves plenty of scope for gender-sensitivity. However, whether power discrepancies and role expectations are actually addressed- depends heavily on the individual case and the practitioner. Practitioners must be fully aware of the relevance of gender-related factors in order to incorporate them in the approach. This awareness turned out to be limited in the focus groups.

The practitioners also appeared to cherish implicit stereotypes and judgements that could influence their ability to take gender-sensitivity on board. Take, for example, the stereotype of *mutual violence*, in which the woman nags and carps and the man lashes out from exasperation. This image is so strong that it could conceivably be applied in situations where the violence is not ‘mutual’.

The limited awareness of the relevance of gender and the application of implicit stereotypes leaves the impression that, although the system-oriented approach lends itself perfectly for a gender-sensitive perspective, only modest attention is actually paid to gender in practice.

In effect, the support for perpetrators is directed primarily at men and the support for victims is directed primarily at women. The system-oriented approach and the desire among practitioners to think less in terms of victims and perpetrators have not broken this pattern so far. There is very little support for male victims and female perpetrators; the nature and extent of the demand are unclear. The child support services draw no distinction between boys and girls and generally pay no heed to gender-related factors. When a parent is involved in the support for children who have witnessed violence it is usually the mother.

## **Causes**

The research found various explanations for the limited levels of gender sensitivity in policy, policy instruments and practice – all connected with a lack of knowledge and management and a flimsy support base:

- Practitioners and regional policymakers are insufficiently alert to gender as a relevant factor in the occurrence and perpetuation of partner violence. They have not yet fully realized that a gender-sensitive approach is different from paying one-sided attention to the woman as the victim or that a system-oriented approach which seeks to detect underlying patterns will be more effective when gender-related factors are taken into account.
- The general perception is that Dutch women are now fully emancipated and that power discrepancies and stereotyped role expectations are off-limits, i.e., they belong in another time, so violence is more readily perceived as mutual violence.
- The knowledge base about the role of gender in partner violence is limited in the Netherlands. The sparse research that does exist merely creates confusion about the roles of men and women in partner violence because of the sex-neutral approach.
- No attention is paid within the framework set by the government to the connection between gender-related factors and the occurrence and perpetuation of partner violence. The same applies to policy at local government level. As a result, there is no policy-based steering towards a gender-sensitive approach in the instruments or the implementation efforts.

## **Recommendations for improvements**

The recommendations are designed to eliminate the above causes:

- Central government should play a more active role and push for more attention to gender-related factors in partner violence. It should also connect the approach to partner violence with other policies.
- More knowledge needs to be collected about the role of gender in the occurrence and perpetuation of partner violence in the Netherlands through research, registration, and monitoring.
- This knowledge should be used for the realization of political and societal recognition of the relevance of emancipation issues in the approach to partner violence and the removal of the misconception that gender-sensitivity and the system-oriented approach are incompatible.
- Where relevant, gender should be accorded a place in the policy and instruments for the approach to partner violence. The responsibilities of central and local government in this area must be clearly defined.
- It would be worthwhile to engage in dialogue with the treaty committees and to try to shift the perspective of the discussion. It is not about whether the policy is expressed in gender-neutral formulations but whether the policy and the approach are sufficiently gender-sensitive.

### Annex III: Women in high-level positions in Curaçao

Employed population by occupation, income and sex, 2011 Census															
Major occupation groups	15-24			25-44			45-65			65+			Totals		
	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total
Armed forces: professionals and trainees	39	0	39	119	17	136	80	3	83	1	0	1	239	20	259
Managers and legislators	30	23	53	1,118	896	2,014	1,696	967	2,663	167	63	230	3,011 (61%)	1,949 (39%)	4,960
Professionals	38	81	119	1,077	2,136	3,213	1,423	1,826	3,249	163	73	236	2,701 (40%)	4,116 (60%)	6,817
Technicians and associated professionals	177	144	321	1,952	2,104	4,056	2,164	1,738	3,902	113	51	164	4,406	4,037	8,443
Clerical support workers	213	471	684	974	3,613	4,587	866	2,843	3,709	66	130	196	2,119	7,057	9,176