

Final report Project Bystanders

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Introduction

Sexual harassment (SH) has been denounced as the most prevalent form of violence against women and girls (FRA 2014) and has been acknowledged as a widespread tolerated form of violent sexism and misogyny towards adolescents provoking harm in their physical, psychological, sexual and social development. Moreover, SH is also recognized as an important form of VAWG by the Istanbul Convention (2014).

The Project “Bystanders: Developing bystanders’ responses to sexual harassment among young people” elicited to work with young people in order to produce social change in that culture of tolerance of violence against women and girls (VAWG).

In this report, the main activities and results of the Project will be described as a means of evaluation as well as reflection about what was and can be effective in changing the cultural basis of VAWG. First we present the main objectives of the Project with a short description of the implemented activities. Following, we describe the key results achieved by the work of the teams from the four countries. Third, we present the long-term impact of the Project Bystanders on the targeted groups. This Project was developed in 4 European Countries: Portugal, Malta, Slovenia and UK.

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1. Main objectives of the project

The main objectives of the Project “Bystanders: Bystanders: Developing bystander responses to sexual harassment among young people” were:

- increase knowledge and awareness of SH in students and staff;
- develop, pilot and deliver a training program for students and school staff to enable them to intervene in situations of SH;
- increase the motivation of bystanders to stop SH in high schools;
- develop a manual and materials adapted to each country;
- develop school policies and protocols on SH;
- compare the implementation and effectiveness of the program in the four countries.

2. Short description of the implemented activities

All the foreseen activities were implemented in the four countries. Many of them were crucial for the achievement of the results.

The activities related to the audit of current approaches on SH were crucial as a foundation for the creation of a training programme with young people in schools. The activities were: a) Literature review of bystander approaches; b) Background research on policy and practice in each country; c) Undertaking two focus groups to explore the students’ SH views and actions; d) Team meeting to discuss the audit; and e) Development of the draft training programmes.

All were carried out and the knowledge produced used for the following activities.

Pilot of the training programmes were implemented, such as: a) Team meeting to finalise the draft programmes; b) Pilot the training programmes with students and school staff; c) Team meeting to discuss the results of the pilots; and d) Adapting the programmes for implementation.

These activities were crucial to have information for adapting the Programme to the four countries’ educational systems. As the four countries of the Project Bystanders are diverse, and the intervention methodology is based in participative and active



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pedagogy, we are confident that the final Speak Up/Speak Out Training Programme can be used in the various European countries.

Implementation of the programmes and work with the schools both with young people and the school staff were implemented, such as: a) Undertaking preparatory work with staff; b) Implementing the 2 programmes in two classes in each school; c) Assisting students and staff in developing school policies on SH; d) Evaluate the implementation after three months (follow-up sessions); e) Team meeting to discuss the results; and f) Revision of the programme materials.

All the foreseen activities for dissemination were implemented: a) Creating a website and a facebook page; b) Creating a video production and uploading it online; c) Writing papers on the implementation; d) Team meeting to discuss the findings and develop a comparative analysis; d) Writing a comparative paper; and e) Presenting the results at national seminars in the four countries.

3. Key results of the Project Bystanders

Following, we describe the main results of the intervention of the Project across the four countries.

a. One of the main results of the Project Bystanders is **the increasing knowledge and motivation to stop and prevent sexual harassment (SH) in schools.**

The primary objective for this Project was to increase knowledge about SH and the bystanders' motivation to stop and prevent sexual harassment (SH) in schools. This was a significant result in the Project in all the countries. The increase of awareness and knowledge on SH and how to prevent it in schools was also considerably achieved. In all the countries, there was a substantial advance in the consciousness and changing attitudes of young boys and young girls. These advances were more considerable for the countries that were not so engaged in debating sexual harassment in schools. This Project brought prevention of sexual harassment to the public and political debate in some countries. This specific call for projects on sexual harassment was an essential contribution to the openness to talking about one of the most prevalent and normalized form of sexual harassment. In all the involved countries there were



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political and social advances (particularly with young people) on recognizing and making harassment something unacceptable in our society.

b. The second key result of the Project is the **Speak Up/ Speak Out Training**

Programme:

The design and creation of a Training Programme to intervene in schools, the *Speak Up/Speak Out Training Programme* (<http://www.bystanders.eu/bystanders-programme/>), adapted to the four countries, is another key result. The Speak Up/Speak Out programme was created with the contributions of all the partners and associate partners of the Project, based upon the Literature Review, background country researches and Focus Group carried out with young people and staff in all the countries. This was considered by the team an important milestone because it would influence the whole Project. For the drafting of the Programme, all the Partners gathered in a meeting in Porto (FPCEUP, Portugal), so that discussion could be more productive. In this meeting, ideas and activities were debated through a brainstorm technique, and the draft of the Programme was created.

Despite the additional difficulties some countries encountered when entering schools, it was possible to develop the Project in all four countries similarly. The implementation of a European project in four countries with the same objectives, tasks and deadlines was an achievement. This same methodology and outputs were only possible to concretise due to shared responsibilities anticipated from the beginning. This distribution of responsibilities between the different Partners and sharing of all the activities of the Project increased the awareness of the teams and empowered them to participate equally from the beginning to the end.

Regarding the methodology of Speak Up/Speak Out Training Programme it is important to point out its innovative features. First, it was a Programme created from the actual needs and ideas of young people and school staff, given through focus groups in different countries. This was important to understand not only their knowledge and social representations about SH, but also internal contradictions in



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youth representations. This understanding allowed us to include these “rupture topics” for social change in the Programme resources.

Second, this programme uses a participative and active methodology, which means that participants take an active part of the process contributing to their changes. This was important because an active methodology implies that students needed to position themselves in the situation and decide what they think about a topic. This is what they do when they face a SH situation as a bystander. So, this active methodology was considered relevant, because they make sense of what they learn in the sessions and this will contribute to the willingness to change (as students wrote after the implementation of the project). This active methodology also enabled the deconstruction of some patriarchal norms of tolerance of violence against women, harassment normalisation and, construction of a new culture. This active approach, that can also be considered a long term learning pedagogical methodology, contradicts standard approaches of transmission of knowledge. This involvement of participants eased the process of change of behaviour and attitudes, since learning something new and meaningful through these experiences, allowed for a prompter action in real life. This change is known to be much more permanent and life-long than those created by simple knowledge transmission.

c. The third key result is the production **manual and materials which can be adapter to European countries and abroad:**

The international team accomplished the production of the **Manual and didactic resources**, including **evaluation tools** such as pre- and post-questionnaires and follow-up sessions, adapted to the four countries, that are available online for further use. Some innovative pedagogical activities were created, for example, the use of concept maps to gather the ideas of young people and discuss them afterwards (with them and with the staff). Role-play and other activities are more often used, but concept maps were an innovative idea.

It was possible to create outstanding and innovative materials about Sexual Harassment and Bystanders’ intervention that can be disseminated through media



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easily, for instance an animation video that can be used in sessions in schools with young people.

d. The fourth key result is the **political impact of the Bystanders Project**:

The Project had a great political impact because it had an intense dissemination through social media, through websites and even through other forms of media (such as newspapers and television). Hence, the Project brought prevention of sexual harassment to the public and political debate in some countries.

Political impact and importance of the Project also stood out with the participation of several political decision makers and state representatives in the activities. The Minister of Education in Malta participated in Malta National Conference and the Secretary of State for Citizenship and Equality from Portugal also participated in the International Conference on Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment, organized in October, in Portugal.

The Speak Up/Speak Out programme also contributed to the production of knowledge with the publication and dissemination of a Manual with didactic resources, with the promotion of several national and international conferences and with participation in other events. Oral communications about the results were presented in seminars, conferences and networks (including countries and cities outside of the Project domain). This work also enabled to further public and political debate in our four countries.

Regarding local educational policies, in some countries, the Project achieved a commitment by School boards and local authorities to implement policies to prevent gender violence and SH in schools.

e. The fifth key result of the Project is the **comparative analysis of the implementation and effectiveness of the program in the four countries**.

The team accomplished a comparative analysis of the work of the Project that can be found in both websites (<http://www.bystanders.eu/>; https://www.fpce.up.pt/love_fear_power/bystanders/publications.html).



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Taking into consideration that the comparability between intervention activities in such different country contexts is limited, the international team produced a comparative analysis on the implementation in the four countries, which is a key result for further research and intervention with young people and school staff on preventing SH in schools.

In spite of the school context diversity among the four countries, the Bystanders project also had a great achievement in handling different timings: schools' schedules and timing and the proposed Project timeline. Implementation in schools took up most part of the Project, and these institutions have specific calendars and school years (that are different from country to country). School years have specific rhythms and there are timings in which it is not possible to intervene due to the characteristics of schools as institutions (for example during the examination periods). This was a constraint to our intervention because, when the pilot Programme was ready for implementation, schools were on holiday break. Nevertheless, the team managed to comply with all the activities proposed in schools.

4. Impact on the target groups and Project's sustainability

The Project Bystanders notably contributed to motivating young people and adults to take action in a bystander's situation, along with increasing knowledge about SH and its consequences, and contributed to the political and public discussion about sexual harassment as well as to knowledge production on sexual harassment among youth. As the primary objective for this Project was to increase the bystanders' motivation to stop and prevent sexual harassment (SH) in schools, this was a significant achievement in the project in all the countries. The increase of awareness and knowledge on SH and how to prevent it in schools was also evident. In all the countries, there was a substantial advance in the awareness and perspectives of young women and young men. These advances were greater in the countries where there has been limited debate on sexual harassment in schools. This project brought prevention sexual harassment to the public and political debate in some countries. This specific call for projects on sexual harassment was an essential contribution to the openness to talking



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about one of the most prevalent and normalised forms of gender based violence. In all the involved countries there were political and social advances (particularly with young people) on making harassment less socially acceptable.

Despite some countries having more difficulties entering in the schools than others, it was possible to develop the Project in all the four countries. The implementation of a European project in four countries with the same objectives, tasks and deadlines was an achievement. This same methodology and outputs were only possible to concretise due to shared responsibilities among the country teams. This distribution of responsibilities and sharing of all the activities of the project increased the awareness of everyone on the whole project and empowered the teams to participate equally throughout.

The Speak Up/Speak Out intervention was created with the contributions of all the partners and associate partners of the Project, based upon the Literature Review, country context papers and focus groups done with young people and staff in all the countries. The development of the intervention was explored by all the Partners at a meeting in Porto (FPCEUP, Portugal), in order that all were able to think together about what exercises and approaches would work in their national context. An outline of the intervention was agreed at this meeting, which was worked up into a manual by one of the partners.

The Speak Up/Speak Out program was innovative in a number of ways. Firstly, it was created drawing on the needs and perspectives of young people and staff, as articulated in the focus groups – a form of co-production. We worked not only with how SH was understood, but also the confusions and contradictions which the focus groups illuminated: we included these rupture topics in the programme materials. Secondly, the intervention used a participative and active methodology, which means that participants were able to take charge of the process of creating change in their own schools. An active methodology requires students position themselves in the situation and decide what they think about and are willing to do in relation to a topic. This is what they do when they faced with a SH situation as a bystander. They were



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also asked to make sense of what they learnt in the sessions, which a number of students saw as empowerment, and reinforcing their interest in change. The methodology also invited them to deconstruct gender norms which tolerate and normalise violence against women and to imagine creating a different culture. This active approach that can also be considered a long term learning pedagogical methodology in contrast to standard approaches of transmission of knowledge. The involvement of participants in creating new learning that makes sense to them and their peers, longer term change in attitudes and behaviour are more likely and sustainable.

Thirdly, innovative pedagogical activities were created, for example the use of concept maps to gather the ideas of young people and discuss them afterwards (with them and with staff). Role-play and other activities are more often used, but concept maps were an innovative approach used in this project.

Finally, it was possible to create outstanding, innovative and tested materials about sexual harassment and active bystander intervention that can be disseminated through easily.

With the pre and post questionnaires and feedback during sessions, it was possible to understand that all countries had positive results regarding the objectives. These positive results were most obvious when young people after the sessions talked of becoming active bystanders as a result of what they learnt in the project. Changes were not so evident with staff changes were not so significant, but the main focus the project were the young people. Some of the teams also found that teachers were over worked and under-resourced, and this influences the way they approach new projects and activities. Many of the student groups had strong ideas for school policies and changing responses, much more could have been done on this if the teachers and staff had been equally motivated. Despite this, in all the countries SH was put on the school agendas through various activities after the intervention, and some had begun to explore developing new policies.

There were a number of challenges with respect to school years, different lengths of lessons across schools and countries and the project timeline. The framework required



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implementation in schools, and the school year calendars of terms and holidays varied from country to country. Moreover, working with older age cohorts who are in exam streams means there are additional rhythms and timings which we had to fit the intervention sessions around. A specific delay was that the pilot programme was finalised just before school summer holidays. Nonetheless, the pilot and implementation in three schools was completed by all teams.

Speak Up/Speak Out contributed to the production of knowledge with the publication and dissemination of a Manual with didactic materials, with the promotion of several national and international conferences and with the participation in other events. Oral communications about the results were presented in seminars, conferences and networks, including outside cities and countries in which program took place. The project had a great political impact in several of the countries because it had great dissemination through social media, thought websites and other forms of media (newspapers and television). The political impact and importance of the project was also clear through the participation of several key political decision makers and state representatives in project activities. The Minister of Education in Malta participated in Malta National Conference and the Secretary of State for Citizenship and Equality from Portugal participated in International Conference on Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment, organized in October 2018 in Portugal¹.

Regarding the sustainability of the program, it is relevant to mention that this Speak Up/Speak Out program can be used by any country, and the revised manual will be available open access on the project website. Its international audience is assured since it was created, and tested, through the realities of four different countries. Didactic and pedagogical tools were specifically created in order that they can be adapted in different languages, and the resources are offered in formats which require minimal adaption. Whilst one of conclusions is that the programme would be more effective if additional time is given to working with staff and students, there was an impact in using it with the original number of sessions.

¹ <http://www.bystanders.eu/news-and-dissemination/>



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The quality of the overall intervention and its materials can be seen in the interest of academics, practitioners and investigators of other countries to implement it. The teams received several proposals to replicate the program in other countries and have begun this co-operation in some of them: for example, Speak Up/Speak Out program is being implemented currently in Brazil. Importantly, there was an interest in all the schools for more sessions, and more activities. It was clear that the project was a significant contribution to schools. Young people and staff in most of the countries have participated in National Conferences, which shows their investment in this project.

After the funding period, the team continued to meet through Skype because the post-project plan includes continued contact to explore new ideas and debates that might emerge in each country. All the representatives and staff of the different countries' teams are engaged in this topic and motivated to continue to work against sexual harassment. Specifically, in Portugal, the partners will seek for new funding to extend the intervention to other schools that are interested in participating on the Speak Up/Speak Out Programme. In England there is a network of teachers and trainers, through the Feminism in Schools network who are interested in using the materials in other schools and the project partner will continue to offer the intervention in their prevention in schools' work.

To conclude, this Project contributed to the political and public discussion about sexual harassment, produced new knowledge on sexual harassment in schools, created a viable intervention model that can motivate young people and adults to become active bystanders.

5. European added value

As far as the international Bystanders team is aware, until the Bystanders project began, there were no other (SH prevention) programmes targeting high school students which means that Speak Up/Speak Out Training Programme is an added value for European countries intervention on prevention SH with young people based on a whole school approach and a participative and active pedagogy. The Whole School



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Approach was an effective methodology to discuss these topics with all educational actors. It is important to focus the prevention in students, but not forgetting they are involved in different environments that can give them contradictory messages. It is, then, fundamental for prevention programmes, especially the ones tackling violence against women and children, that they include not only students but also teachers, school staff, parents and other members of the surrounding communities.

The audit research with the single-sex sessions focus group (FG) was of the utmost importance to understand the students' social representations on SH. The FG analysis revealed, not only internal contradictions in the young people's perceptions, but also specific aspects in which we could focus to promote a more effective change. In our opinion, this is also another added value with European dimension due to the fact that the qualitative research methodology was applied in four diverse European countries with high school students. As far as we know there are no European qualitative research on high school students' social representations on SH.

The evaluation process the international team employed along the implementation, namely the pre- and post-questionnaires with students, teachers and other staff, as well as the designed follow-up sessions is also an added value for other European countries for evaluating intervention programmes to combat and prevent SH.

We also point out as an added value the Bystanders dissemination strategy as an added value with European dimension because of the contribution of the Project for public debate and public awareness on SH. The strategy combined international and national conferences with the participation of policy makers (Portugal and Malta) and educational networks on preventing GBV against women (UK) with social media (facebook and websites) as well as the connections with journalists and TV and media professionals. This triple strategy was very effective for the Project political impact.

6. Dissemination and mainstreaming of gender equality



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In this section, we describe the dissemination strategy and respective activities and products, as well as how gender equality was developed as mainstream issue in the Project.

The Bystanders dissemination strategy combined international and national conferences with the participation of policy makers (Portugal and Malta) and educational networks on preventing GBV against women (UK) with social media (facebook and websites) as well as the connections with journalists and TV and media professionals. This triple strategy was very effective for the Project political impact. Activities and outputs are described, and respective outputs will be in the appendix of this report.

The target groups of dissemination activities were the following, always with the explicit mention of the EC funding: a) high school students; b) teachers and other professionals; c) policy makers; d) university students; e) academic professionals/researchers; f) public audiences and g) wider public.

- a) High school students were target of dissemination activities of the Project Bystanders insofar the Programme Speak Up/Speak Out foresee the organization of school activities by the classes-group participating in the Programme implementation with the support of the teachers; those activities were organized for all the school population and proved to be a very effective strategy both to ensure active participation of the students involved and reaching other students and other teachers. In the International and National Seminars, we received very positive feedback about this method.
- b) Teachers and other professionals in education and social work were also targeted both in school activities organized by the partnerships student-teachers and in the public seminars of the Project. For instance, in PT, there happen a municipal seminar in one of the cities where the Project was implemented and an International Seminar; in the other countries, MT, UK and SL, national seminars also have those professionals in the audience. Namely, Seminar “Gaia for the Prevention of Harassment and Gender Violence (20th September 2018), Seminar Empower you Project Braga, in Braga (19th October



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2018), Seminar Empower you Project Porto – gender based violence, in Porto (17th October 2018);

- c) Policy makers were also involved and informed about the Project both in close meetings with the Project team and in the International and National Seminar, for instance, the Ministry of Education of Malta and the Secretary of State for Citizenship and Gender Equality of Portugal. Both asked for the Final report and other relevant public documents produced by the Project, including the Manual Speak Up/Speak Out Training Programme, which will be sent.
- d) University students were also targeted insofar that in all countries university classes were taught about the Project Bystanders, as follows:
 - i) One class of 3 hours in MSc of Education Sciences at FPCEUP – Faculty of Psychology and Education Sciences, UP, PT;
 - ii) One class of 3 hours in MSc of Criminology, ISMAI, University Institute of Maia, PT;
 - iii) Yes one-hour lecture on sexual violence prevention on our MA Woman and Child Abuse programme, UK;
 - iv) One-hour class including discussion of the Concept Maps on our Researching Violence and Evaluating Interventions module, UK;
 - v) Discussed as part of lectures for undergrad modules on: Violence against Women; and ‘Gender’ in inclusive education, MT;
 - vi) one hour in a MA seminar on *Nationalism, racism and the politics of gender* at the Department of Sociology at the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana, Ljubljana, SL.

Moreover, the PT team participated in a wider event (called *Mostra of UP* for all the Faculties) of the University of Porto with a Forum Theatre about the Project Bystanders, reaching a wider university audience (see for instance a brief description of the activity https://www.fpce.up.pt/love_fear_power/bystanders/news.html).

- e) Academic professionals, namely researchers, were also target by our team when papers were presented in Scientific events, such as the 19th WAVE Conference, in Budapest (30th October 2017), International Congress of



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Psychiatrics and Psychology of Justice (SPPPJ), Porto 2017), VIII International Congress of Psychiatry and Psychology of Justice, in Porto (2-3rd November 2017), 2018 Annual Conference of the European Network on Gender and Violence (ECGV), in Bristol (27-29th June 2018), Seminar on Prevention of Sexualized Violence in School and University, in Lisbon (26th November 2018), International Conference Women, Worlds of Work and Citizenship – Different looks, Other Perspectives, in Lisbon (6-7th December 2018); Feminism in Schools Conference, UK (17th November 2018); Seminar on Putting the Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2023 in Action, by the NCPE (4th October 2018), and Slovenian Ministry of Social Affairs Round Table on VAWG (23th November 2018); all these events are in open websites inserted in the outputs of the project.

- f) Public audiences were reached in the National Seminars, in all the four countries, and in the International Seminar on SH and SV (see <http://www.bystanders.eu/news-and-dissemination/>);
- g) Wider public were and continue to be reached targeted by the international website (<http://www.bystanders.eu/about/>) and PT-FPCEUP website in Portuguese and in English (https://www.fpce.up.pt/love_fear_power/bystanders/bystanders_en.html) where all the dissemination activities and public documents are widely accessible; moreover news in media are also described and listed in the outputs, including news in TV journals, newspapers, radio; also, the facebook was and will be used to disseminate Project activities (https://www.facebook.com/pg/Bystanders-358419457931787/posts/?ref=page_internal) and in Portuguese (<https://www.facebook.com/UMAR.Assedio/>), namely with the final public documents; these platforms with all the reservations and when cautiously used are an important way of disseminating activities and ideas to challenge patriarchal culture.



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The mainstreaming of equality between women and men was the backbone of the Project Bystanders, fully present in all the activities. First, the Project used whole school approach, that is, working with all the actors in schools, such as students, teachers, other school staff, school governance, families and local educational policy makers, for instance, the municipalities. Not only the implemented activities but also the dissemination strategy targeted these actors to promote change *vis a vis* SH. Gender mainstreaming was also achieved by providing a manual and pedagogic tools to implement the Speak Up/Speak Out Training Programme, a training manual that includes sessions with students *and* with teachers and other school staff. In the schools where Bystanders Project implemented the activities, a team of teachers committed themselves to continue the work, and this is also a sustainable change due to the potential multiplying effects of teaching activities with younger ages. The international team was very cautious about which activities would be implemented in schools in order to be sensitive to the context: each team elaborated a country context paper on SH and on educational system's organizational and curriculum structures and implemented an audit research using Focus Group methodology to understand the students' social representations on SH and the broader culture on the issue. The team is also multidisciplinary, ranging from sociology, psychology, education, social work, and policy studies; almost all have relevant and published research and/or intervention in gender violence prevention, some specifically on SH. The team was also very successful in bridging research and intervention in each country – articulating the activities between researchers and professionals and activists in ONGs. Moreover, the Project produced contextualized knowledge, namely the country report and the comparative paper, which are available in the websites of the Project, that is public access. The international team is also a mixed group with women and man.

Another core principle of our intervention/research was (and is) the carefully ensuring Children's rights. All the activities planned and implemented followed the ethical requirements — according to each country norms, these requirements ranged from Education Ministry authorization, School board authorization, parents informed consent signed, students informed consent signed, to practical procedures to ensure



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anonymity and confidentiality of all participants and of schools. The care with children's rights is also present in the pedagogic activities implemented, and visible in the Manual and didactic materials, where the mutual respect and a non-violent culture are present. Children's rights are also an integral part of the Project Bystanders insofar the activities implemented aimed to decrease a form of violence against girls with high incidence and prevalent rates and with severe consequences for girls, and human development consequences for boys. The ultimate goal of the Project is to increase the well-being of our children, in this case, specially girls who are the most affected by SH.

Besides respecting Children's Rights, the Project managed cautiously the intervention and research activities ensuring all ethical procedures, not only with young people, but also with adult participants. Anonymity and confidentiality of all participants and schools was ensured and respect for every person's opinions and rhythms was present in all the activities and are explicit in the Manual Speak U/Speak Out.

7. Ethical procedures

All ethical procedures were followed through the development of the Project: each team got ethical approval in the framework of their countries/institutions. Anonymity and confidentiality of participants, schools and cities were guaranteed in all the teams. Ethical issues were considered and addressed throughout the entire Project, given the sensitiveness of the issue and the age of the students.

The students and their parents/legal guardians were asked to read and sign a consent form to participate, which was accompanied by an information sheet which explained the project, what we were asking of them. Each team had facilitators who were experienced in working with young people on topics of sexual violence and sexuality. They work to their ethical ground rules, and negotiated these with each class before the intervention began. Each team had a procedure for what they would do if there were disclosures during the sessions, if a student became uncomfortable and need to leave.

At the beginning of the intervention, facilitators highlighted the importance of respecting the confidentiality of the group process and asked for the participants'



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commitment to not disclose any personal content outside of the groups. A class agreement was created at the outset, and it was re-introduced at the beginning of each session.

An ethical dilemma emerged during the project: the project had foreseen a video done with students. We realised this might be problematic, as it would be virtually impossible to protect their anonymity. This was replaced by an animation using the voices of actors.

In the public events, we were careful to only draw on project activities, results and outcomes and not discuss specific situations of victimisation that had been raised in the sessions.

Students that participated in the National Seminars were accompanied by teachers and other staff, so that support was available should they need it.

8. Evaluation

The evaluation is a crucial endeavour if professionals and activists want to know the effectiveness of our practice. In Bystanders Project internal evaluation was three fold:

- 1) Quantitative and qualitative evaluation of the Speak Up/Speak Out Training Programme with pre- and post-questionnaires of the intervention sessions both with students and with teachers and other school staff as well as implementation diaries with field notes about the implemented sessions;
- 2) Follow-up evaluation after 3 months of the intervention sessions with a Plan design to evaluate increase in knowledge and awareness and changes in feelings and attitudes towards SH;
- 3) A comparative analysis on the effectiveness of Project intervention implementation; this *démarche* was fundamental to understand what worked better and the difficulties faced when implementing the Training Programme in schools.

The conclusions of this evaluation are expressed in the comparative paper from where we extracted the following paragraphs.



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“Recognition and awareness of SH

There was movement in terms of recognition and awareness amongst some staff and some students, but this was not consistent either within schools or across the four countries. In a number of schools, the attendance of staff was not consistent across the two sessions, meaning that the same ground had to be covered twice. In all four countries we realised that the understandings of staff on SH, sexism and gender inequality were basic at best, with a few notable exceptions. One of the key learnings of the project is that school contexts are ones in which sexual harassment is normalised and tolerated, which in turn means that teachers take a considerable range of behaviour for granted and have not developed skills and knowledge, nor is there an institutional backing, in order to intervene and create change. In short they do not draw a line.

That so little attention is paid to the conditions in which girls learn is a matter of considerable concern, given that the EU fundamental Agency found sexual harassment to be the most common form of violence against women. Our reflection here is that any future use of the Speak Up/Out materials will need to invest more time and resources in working with staff before implementing the intervention with students.

Change in students’ attitudes and behaviours

Most students, with the exception of a few groups of resistant boys in two countries, wanted to be part of change with respect to SH. Many groups of girls attested to the fact that this was an everyday event which they either experienced or witnessed. The content of the programme encouraged and enabled students to question taken for granted behaviours and to explore the impacts they may have on those subjected to harassment. Whilst the role play exercise meant students were able to practice a range of ways in which they could become active bystanders, there needed to be more time to rehearse and embed this within their class and wider than this to the whole school. Where they had little faith in teachers – for a range of reasons across the four countries – the spaces in which they could make change were diminished. What we



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were able to show however, was that there was an appetite for the kind of discussions and debates that the programme generated and to be part of creating change amongst young people.

How schools have taken action

We have noted elsewhere the specific actions which were taken by some schools as a direct outcome of the Project Bystanders. Here we reflect on why this part of the project was the most challenging to implement. The fact that not a single a school across the four countries had a policy on sexual harassment, and no teacher could recall any training on how to deal with it, was another reflection of the limited attention to the issue in schools, and a failure to take responsibility for the fact that schools are a conducive context in which sexual harassment is an everyday experience for girls. This was not, therefore, a fertile field, in which the seeds planted by the Project Bystanders could thrive and grow. There was limited support from school leadership teams, with much more coming from committed teachers who had already recognised the issue. Without the backing of policy and school leaders, however, their influence had limits.

One shift that was evident across teachers and students was the way in which the intervention required them to think about the victims of harassment. Initial thoughts on what could/should be done tended to focus on the harasser, leaving victims both unsupported and potentially open to social exclusion if they had made a report. We were left with a sense of fatalism among many students and staff, that this was so endemic that all which was possible was to respond to the most overt and harmful behaviours through bullying and safeguarding policies.

We are not fatalistic, we know that our materials are engaging and they enable students to ask questions and reach new insights and conclusions. For this to move into change at the institutional level required more time and resources than were available through this project, but we now know that to embed the learnings in a school culture requires: specific training for teachers; working over a longer time



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within schools; building support for the project in school leadership teams and offering template policies which can be adapted by staff and students in specific locations.”²

Finally, it is important to state that the Programme Speak up/Speak out is being replicated in other countries. A replication has been accomplished by a PhD student in Brazil which will be possibly finalized in 2020.

Conclusions and recommendations

The main conclusion of the Project Bystanders is that the initial plan was very well prepared, very challenging but at the same time very realistic, hence the international team was able to implement all the activities foreseen and achieved very positive key results regarding the objectives we set for ourselves, as described in other sections of this report.

Some of the outputs were found not applicable or not useful, and it was the collective decision of the team. It is our view that this collective decision means that the reflections are more likely to inform further use of the materials.

However, for the sake of a good implementation and a good dissemination, there are other outputs or more extensive outputs which were not foreseen and were elaborated by the Project, such as the dissemination activities in various academic and other public events, publications and social networks.

The main recommendation for the European Commission would be the importance of having a specific call for projects and proposals on sexual harassment. This is the most prevalent form of violence against women and girls, as shown by the FRA Violence Against Women survey (FRA 2014), and one of the most normalised. Specific calls can build a stronger and more in depth knowledge base.

It would also be important that FRA or other agency could repeat the VAW study or develop a new study on sexual harassment specifically, which looks at schools and online as specific contexts in which it is common. We believe that with the contribution of these specific projects, with the contribution of social movements

² <http://www.bystanders.eu/comparative-paper/>



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against sexual harassment and promoting its reporting and finally with the contribution of creating legal policies on SH (such as the Istanbul convention and GREVIO reports), the prevalence of reported SH situation might be higher, meaning that victims are acknowledging it and seeking support, and perhaps its normalization would be somewhat reduced.

Our experience also leads us to suggest that schools are a conducive context in which sexism and sexual harassment are part of recreating gender inequality. The European commission should consider whether gender mainstreaming has had the unintended consequence of creating a complacency about these issues, since in none of the four countries were these issues priorities in schools. Folding SH into generic bullying policies, which was the case in all four countries, means it is seldom addressed directly, and the responses can be inappropriate.

Hence, another recommendation for the European Commission is formulating recommendations for the school, which should integrate explicit content on preventing sexual and gender violence, as well as SH, in a pedagogic manner and appropriate to children's and adolescents' level of development. Most of the countries include gender equality in school curricula, but it is not enough. Sexual, gender violence or SH are not explicit in many of them. Such behaviours and such a culture continue to be reproduced by a *hidden curriculum* (Giroux, 1983) and the European Commission should stress that these forms of violence are harmful for the children and young people and should be addressed in the curricula.

Moreover, we also suggest that European Commission should recommend the EU members states to promote national research on educational policies on gender violence prevention; as well as recommend research on educational policies to prevent SH at European level.

We also suggest that GREVIO includes monitoring the primary prevention work in schools, in all forms covered by the Istanbul Convention, which means also SH.

The European Commission can also recommend to EU member states to open national calls for funding project on specific forms of VAWG, namely SH. The calls could foster



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intervention projects at the national level, combatting and preventing SH, and mostly de-normalising this form of violence.

The European Commission should also reinforce CE campaigns on sexual violence and SH against minors, reinforcing that there is no case for consent in those younger ages, and that adult carers such as teachers and other professionals working with children and adolescent should prepare them to speak to a trustworthy significant person and prepare adolescents and young people on how to be assertive about their personal, physical and emotional limits. With the experience of the Bystanders' Project an effective way to do this is to empower bystanders to act and speak out against SH, as far as it will increasingly create a culture of the unacceptability of SH or other forms of exploitation of others.

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