

IPVI2021 – Session in English, topic 23 (violence in schools and educational settings)

Session title:

**Education and raising awareness in schools to prevent and encounter gender-based violence (EraseGBV)**

Authors:

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### **Session abstract**

A significant number of children and adolescents are subjected to gender-based violence (GBV) at home and at school. Yet GBV among children and youth has been invisible in public policy, legislation and the education system. Although teachers and other professionals at school, such as psychologists among others, are in a key position in awareness raising and in the recognition of and early intervention in GBV among their students, previous research shows that they often lack the knowledge and skills to address the issue. This lack is largely due to limited training on GBV.

”Education and Raising Awareness in Schools to Prevent and Encounter Gender-Based Violence. Developing and implementing a training programme for teachers and other professionals. (Erase GBV)” – research and development project focuses on this very issue by studying skills of school professionals in addressing and intervening GBV in school, and by developing a training programme to enhance their awareness of GBV and skills for intervening it.

The Erase GBV project is funded by the European Commission (2019-2021). Researchers from three universities and experts from NGO’s in Finland, Croatia and Spain collaborate in the project in developing a research-based, needs-adapted training programme. Development of the training is based on a needs-assessment

conducted via electronic surveys and focus group interviews from students, professionals and university teachers in the field of education. The design also includes evaluating the suitability and effectiveness of the training.

This session will present the findings and experiences of the project. The session includes four presentations: a general overview of the project; input from the needs-assessment survey conducted in the three partner countries; findings from qualitative analyses of focus group interviews with the (future) school professionals; and description of the development of an online training programme based on needs-assessment, including insights on evaluation of such training.

### **Presentation 1: Institutional and affective practices of encountering GBV in the field of education**

Authors: Marita Husso & Helena Päivinen

A significant number of children and adolescents are subjected to violence as victims of physical, emotional and sexual violence at home and at school. Yet gender-based violence (GBV) among children and youth has been invisible in public policy, legislation and the education system. Although teachers and other professionals at school are in a key position in awareness raising and behavioural change as well as in the recognition of and early intervention in violence among their students, previous research suggests that they often lack the knowledge and skills to address the problems of GBV. This lack is largely due to limited training to address GBV.

Education and Raising Awareness in Schools to Prevent and Encounter Gender-Based Violence (ERASE GBV) –project studies institutional and affective practices of encountering GBV in the field of education. The research focuses on institutional procedures and professionals experiences, emotions, and conceptions in encountering violence, awareness on different forms of gender-based violence, and challenges and possibilities to intervene such violence. This project, funded by the European commission, is conducted collaboratively by the University of Tampere and City of Jyväskylä in Finland, University of Zagreb and Centre for Education, Counselling and Research, CESI in Croatia, and Blanquerna, Ramón Llull University and Conexus Psychosocial Treatment, Training and Research NGO, in Barcelona, Spain. In addition to research, a research-based, online training package for education professionals and other professionals at school will be developed in the project.

Data collection and development of the training program was conducted in Croatia, Finland and Spain. Data was gathered via electronic surveys and focus group interviews from students, professionals and university teachers in the field of education. The presentation introduces the composition of the project, background, objectives, data, and outline of the future challenges and opportunities.

### **Presentation 2: Assessment of training needs for coping with school related gender-based violence in three countries**

Authors: Ivana Car, Dean Ajdukovic, Marita husso, Helena Päivinen, Berta Vall & Anna Sala-Bubaré

School-related gender-based violence (SRGBV) is present in schools worldwide and its consequences are related to various students' outcomes, such as academic achievement and social and health outcomes. This highlights the importance of successful coping with SRGBV and its prevention. The leading role for coping with it is often in hands of teachers and school professional, but previous research shows that they often find themselves insecure and incompetent with addressing and dealing with this issue. The aim of this study was to assess the needs for the development of the training for coping with SRGBV in Croatia, Finland and Spain. An online survey was conducted with 653 university teachers, school teachers and other school professionals, and students as future teachers and school professionals. The main topics addressed in the survey were coping with cases of SRGBV, experiences with previous training on GBV, received support and strategies in coping with SRGBV and previous experiences of encountering SRGBV, as well as their interest in undertaking training on SRGBV. Results indicate that majority of participants did not receive education on this topic but would be interested in attending the training and especially learning about guidelines for prevention and intervention in schools. They feel underprepared for coping with SRGBV and highlight the lack of skills for recognition of cases and dealing with SRGBV as their main challenges. Furthermore, the cross-country comparison indicates that the training needs are similar among the three countries which imply that the same training programme would be suitable for international usage. The conclusions of this survey provided the basis for needs-adapted training development.

### **Presentation 3: Experiences of addressing GBV in the school context: Insights from focus group interviews with (future) professionals**

Authors: Helena Päivinen, Marita Husso, Berta Vall, Oriol Ginés & Heinrich Geldschläger

Teachers and other professionals at school are in a key position to raise awareness of, identify and intervene gender-based violence (GBV) against children and youth. This task requires skills and resources, including self-reflection of the professional dealing with GBV cases. Witnessing violence affects not only the victim, but also the bystanders, including the intervening professionals. Violence hurts and it raises a variety of emotions, which, when unattended may have an impact on wellbeing and health.

The "Erase GBV" project studies institutional and affective practices of encountering GBV at school. The research focuses on institutional procedures and professionals' experiences, emotions, and conceptions in encountering violence, awareness of different forms of GBV, and challenges and possibilities to intervene such violence. To develop a needs-based training for school professionals a multi method needs-assessment was conducted in the three participating countries: Finland, Croatia and Spain. The assessment included data collection via electronic surveys and focus group interviews for students training to become teachers, teachers and other professionals at school, and university teachers. This presentation will showcase

findings from the content analysis and discursive reading of the focus groups interview data.

In the light of the findings, teachers and other professionals at school feel a responsibility for tackling GBV among their pupils, but they also feel a variety of uncomfortable emotions when facing this task, which might hinder them from actively addressing GBV. Therefore, it is important to support teachers on their emotions and feelings encountered that might prevent them from doing this important task of identifying and tackling GBV in schools. The findings highlight the need for training, support, and guidelines for (future) professionals in their important but challenging task of identifying and addressing GBV in the school context.

#### **Presentation 4: Developing the training programme based on the needs assessment**

Authors: Satu Lidman, Dean Ajdukovic, Ivana Carr, Berta Vall, Sala-Bubaré & Elene Lloberas

The central objective of the EraseGBV project was to develop a training programme (TP) for school professionals to help them identify and intervene in gender-based violence (GBV) against and among their students. The TP is accessible on-line, not depending on a trainer but manageable as a self-learning tool either individually or in small groups, i.e. university students or work communities. It also enables university teachers to include it either wholly or partially in the teacher training courses.

The partners of EraseGBV have together developed an on-line training available in Finnish, Croatian and Spanish. A related English manual will be published. As it was considered essential that the contents of the TP would be based on actual needs of the target groups, the TP is designed based on the assessment of needs of future school professionals and those already working on the field, using qualitative and quantitative inputs (survey and focus group discussions) in all partner countries. This gave the researchers a valuable insight into the actual needs for information and skills among the target group. Accordingly, certain themes and topics were considered as especially relevant for the TP.

The TP provides material for 16 hours of learning, starting from basic information on different forms of GBV and its consequences and raising awareness for the issue. Further, the TP encourages to critically ponder and reflect on one's own attitudes, knowledge and strengths in order to make schools safer for everybody. Finally, it gives practical instructions, builds skills and new ideas how to handle cases of GBV in the school context. At the end of the presentation, the plan for evaluating the TP outcome and the process of fine-tuning it to the participants' needs will be discussed.

Keywords: gender-based violence; training professionals; school; prevention; intervention