Integrating the prevention of gender-based violence in the curriculum design and development with high school teachers

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> *no one*
> *knows everything and no one is ignorant of everything*
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A violence-prevention curriculum has been object of research on curriculum studies since several decades (Bergsgaard 1997), but gender violence prevention had not yet received so much attention from this field of studies. In some countries, gender-based violence prevention is included in education for citizenship, in a wider view of education against gender stereotypes and prejudices (Salcedo-Barrientos *et al*. 2012; Andersson 2012; Cox et al. 2010). Similarly, several studies have provided evidence about the role of schools in (re)producing masculinities and femininities (Mils 2001) as a cultural ground for gender and domestic violence. The role of school education as regulatory or emancipatory has also been discussed since the implementation of compulsory schooling when educators believed school education would liberate oppressed social groups (Sala 2012; Ledwith 2007).

Nevertheless, less attention has been paid to teachers' education on the subject and even less, how to integrate these subjects without overload the school curriculum and the teachers' work. UNESCO (2014) provides a guide for teachers, but it does not discuss how to integrate these contents in a school curriculum avoiding to produce a collection curriculum (Bernstein 1996) or a *bank education* (Freire 1979).

Gender-based crime primary prevention is an innovative strategy on prevention of violence, and its relevance has been established for long time (Wolfe & Jaffe 1999). UMAR – Association of Women, Alternative and Response created a primary prevention program where preventing violence at schools is the goal (Magalhães, Canotilho & Brasil 2007; see also Magalhães, Canotilho & Patrícia 2010), using action-research as the philosophy in the intervention. Parallel to this intervention, the team also provides regularly the data on dating violence (Guerreiro et al., 2015), articulating research, intervention and reflection in a programme that is intended to produce social change.

Promoting violence prevention programs has to overcome limited time interventions, so UMAR is concerned on training education professionals to be able to prevent these types of crimes, promoting a primary prevention program at schools working with youth using art as methodology, to reach a peaceful society. At the same time UMAR implement the primary prevention program called "Artways – Educational Policies and Training against Violence and Juvenile Delinquency" on which students are the main target group. With Artways prevention is included in schools and curriculums of these youth are improved. At the same time we work with youth using art through discussion of movies, songs, promotion of paint and draw, using educative games and pedagogic strategies.

In this paper, we will present the analysis of teacher training programme of UMAR in partnership with the FPCEUP, providing evidences of the possibilities and the difficulties of integrating gender-based violence prevention in school curriculum.

Method:

Using a field-based methodology in dialectic with critical analysis, this paper will present the analysis of the implementation of a teacher training programme on gender and domestic violence prevention. The data analysis will focus in the content of the training programme, the pedagogical methodology and evaluation, as well as the assignments elaborated by the teachers who attended the course.

Keywords: gender-based violence prevention; curriculum; teachers.

Introduction

Family and gender violence are serious social problems across the EU. Victimisation surveys across 28 European countries by the European Union's Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA 2014) showed that one in three women had experienced physical and/or sexual violence as an adult. The media in Europe, in the findings of FRA, is such a prevalence as 28%. Studies in Portugal show that one in three women have been victimized at least once in their lifetime (Lisboa et al 2008). Data collected by UMAR also shows that young generations seem to reproduce gender and domestic violence: in dating relationships, in Portugal, the prevalence is 25% (Guerreiro et al. 2014), which is close to the 33% in adult couples.

Studies have also established the high costs of domestic violence - either human or health and economic costs: for instance, for the USA, The National Center for Injury and Health Control (2003) found that intimate partner violence costs 5.8 millions per year in health care costs and lost productivity. In Portugal, Lisboa et al. found an average of an added health costs for every woman of 140,00€ (Lisboa et. al. 2008), which is an indicative the amount of the costs of the violence. This urges political decisions to prevent this serious problem, first to redress and ensure protection and safety for the victims/survivors, as well as to diminish the costs (Garcia-Moreno, 2001; WHO 2001).

Studies have been outlining that children either direct or indirect victims show similar levels of anxiety, negative health and cognitive consequences (Ellsberg & Heise, 2002), as if they were directly targets of the each of the singular act of offence.

Apart from family, other sites are also contexts of widespread gender violence against women and girls, for instance, public places such as streets, and schools. Educational settings are special sites for sexual harassment against girls and young women, either by their mates or even male teachers and other school staff, as it has been well demonstrated (see for instance, Meyer 2008; Timmerman, 2003; Magalhães, 2011; and also Ferrer-Pérez, & Bosch-Fiol, 2014, for university settings). These experiences of sexual harassment can be as victims as well as bystanders (Hitlan 2006; Stein, 1995).

Despite the seriousness of the problem, family and gender violence are often misrecognized and misrepresented. An important but often unrecognised aspect of family and gender violence is, as above mentioned, that children's and young people's exposure to family violence, both directly and indirectly, has negative effects on their emotional and physical well-being, development and educational attainment. In their role as statutory and universal providers, schools represent a key site for awareness raising, preventing family and gender violence and supporting children and parents affected by family and gender violence (Mills, 2001).

There are already a relevant literature that accounts for prevention programmes in formal education (Thompson & Trice-Black, 2012; Cox et al., 2010; Whitaker, 2006). However, the evaluations of those programmes usually rely on quantitative or experimental designs (see, for instance, Taylor, et al., 2008).

Teachers' close contact with children, often on a daily basis, means they are better placed than other professionals, e.g. social workers, for both recognition of violence and earlier intervention. Furthermore, they are able to act in dialogue with the parents or other representatives of the child to prevent the occurrence of violence. Second, they serve as significant gatekeepers to referral pathways and welfare services. Finally, teachers are in a unique position to implement primordial prevention of family and gender violence. Within civic and citizenship education teachers are able to target the cultural foundations of family and gender violence cultural ground for changing prevailing attitudes and cultural practices.

However, previous studies indicate that teachers often lack knowledge and skills to address the problem of family and gender violence. Therefore, there is an urgent need for education and training to increase teachers' awareness, knowledge and skills to prevent family and gender violence.

Moreover, teachers and other school staff show some preconceptions about gender that can contribute for the social reproduction of the gender regime; however, they also they also defend a "reasoning around similarity" (Andersson, 2012: 281) which can contribute to change the ways schooling are preparing boys for a more equal society and girls to feel more empowered.

Method

The method used for this article is a field-based methodology in dialectic with critical analysis. The Project of Primary Prevention of Gender Violence in Schools is developed through the principles of action-research and within a perspective of an emancipatory and feminist education (Freire, 1978; Weiler, 1991).

Sharing a conceptualization of situated knowledge production (Haraway 1988), this study analyzes the results and the process of the implementation of a Project for preventing gender violence based on artistic education and feminist and Freirian perspective.

The documentary analysis will focus in the content of the training programme, the pedagogical methodology and evaluation either by the students, by the staff team and the teachers, as well as the assignments elaborated by the teachers who attended the teacher training course. Critical analysis will be mostly attentive about the coherence between the objectives, the philosophy, and the activities carried out by the facilitators. The analysis of the current Project Artways will be contrasted with the Final Report of the Project MCA II (Magalhães et al. 2014), in so far, the MCA II has already finished and Artways is still ongoing.

Further research evaluation will be pursued, namely using focus group research (Kitzinger, 1994), integrated in an external evaluation developed through action-research (Leitch & Day, 2000).

Integrating gender-based violence prevention in the curriculum

Gender-based crime primary prevention is an innovative strategy on prevention of violence, and its relevance has been established for long time (Wolfe & Jaffe 1999).

Since the end of 1990s, several school-based interventions have been operating in schools, mostly in middle and high schools (Whitaker et al 2006). The majority of those are interventions during a short period of time (some weeks or even some days), consisting in "didactic presentations, discussion groups, other activities intending to educate and to change attitudes, and beliefs about partner violence" (Whitaker et al 2006: 159).

Usually interventions are carried out by teachers (with previous training) or community professionals, as social workers, advocates, police offices and abuse survivors. In Portugal, there are also a number of primary prevention interventions in schools operated by police officers or advocates. They are usually of short duration, one or a few sessions, which we call "sensibilization session(s)", and somehow an external activity to school curriculum. Like in other countries, these sessions have didactical presentations followed by discussion with the students and information about the resources available to help victims. This model has its merit but it has proven to be not effective in changing the figures of dating, domestic and gender-based violence.

Some studies also show that the effectiveness of primary prevention programmes seem to be greater when there is a module about gender equality and gender stereotypes, i.e., not focussing only in domestic or dating violence topics. They also seem to have higher impact if they are extended in the school year and integrated with the school activities (O'Brien, 2001).

The Programme of preventing gender-based violence in schools

The Primary Prevention Programme of UMAR is an *universal* intervention, that is, it is not designed to work with a special at-risk group (not a selective intervention for an at-risk population group), it is based on a comprehensive understanding about working with children, adolescents and youth, and it involves using artistic and creative tools for the students as culture producers (Magalhães et al. 2007; see also, Magalhães, Canotilho & Ribeiro, 2010).

Distinctively of the perspective of Whitaker et al (2006), who call attention for the need for selective primary prevention programmes, we base our perspective in the idea that domestic and gender violence is rooted in a deeply grounded culture that perpetuates the subjugation of women (and girls) as well as black and colour people, LGBT groups and handicapped people.

The objectives of the Primary Prevention Programme of UMAR, developed by the Project Artways are: awareness raising about gender equality and gender violence; promote respect for differences; develop social values, attitudes and behaviours; enable youths in effective rejection of gender violence and empower them to social change.

For the implementation of the Programme, UMAR establishes protocols with the schools to involve a group-class for an average of fifteen sessions per year, during three years, using the methodology of "topic work" (Tann 1988)

or "methodology of *project*" (Dewey, 1916; Kilpatrick, 1935), in one hour every two weeks. Usually the hour is within the Civic Education, in schools where it is possible. In others, the facilitators ask for some time in other disciplines.

The idea of using that methodology with the students is based in the assumption that gender violence is deeply rooted in culture which demands the active involvement of the students for its change. Additionally, the Programme works through artistic education "projects", using an artistic "tool" (visual, dance, music, theatre, or other) at their choice. Artistic projects on topics around gender violence and gender equality build or elaborated by the youngsters or the children need the inter-communication of the shared or conflictive social values among them in the process of the producing of the final result.

The work along the school year flows between "instructional" training sessions and "artistic production" training sessions. The facilitators offer some relevant information about what is violence, in distinction with conflict, aggressivity, indiscipline, as well as the relevance notions about violence, mainly how they are defined in international and national law, the consequences of the violence, the main safeguards of a safety plan that everybody needs to know in case of facing (or knowing someone who face) domestic or dating violence (including in same sex couples), and what should be done in case of existing violence (or knowing someone who is being vicitimized).

Along with domestic and dating violence, there are other topics of interpersonal violence that emerges in the training sessions: violence by peers, racism, homophobia. The extended topics related with diverse types of violence is one of the reasons that UMAR is defending a three year programme that can cover those topics in different school years, as is being studied by other authors (Bergsgaard, 1997). It also allows the facilitators to negotiate with the students which topic(s) they want to work during each one of the school years. The "instructional" training sessions are intermediated with the artistic work to produce a final "artistic product".

The final "artistic products" produced along one school year are shown in a final seminar where all the groups-class are invited. This final moment, the Seminar, is being considered very important in the sense that all the groups-class feel they belong to a wider community against gender violence. This is where they share their visions and their "art products", they learn with each other and have a sense to belong to a social movement.

The evaluation of the Programme is threefold: a) as in the action-research projects, in-going evaluation is based on daily field notes by the facilitators and the continuous feedback from the students in all the sessions; b) the evaluation of other relevant participants, such as the teachers, the school governance, the parents, and other experts coming to the Final Seminar; c) a quantitative evaluation based on a pre- and post-test intervention. The combination of these diverse procedures gives the staff team a fair picture about the impact and the effectiveness of the Programme. Using mixed-method evaluation is being asserted as a good strategy to understand the impact and the changes of the intervention (Woltering et al., 2009).

As we have been referring, the Programme is carried out by "facilitators", and not by the teachers, for several reasons. The first reason, is that the pedagogical relationship between the facilitators and the students is not marked by the school evaluation, avoiding the competition of the grades and its relation with the considerations around school 'merit'. Second, dealing with those topics above mentioned it is very likely that some children, adolescent and young people will disclosure situations of violence they are living through or are known to them, and UMAR defends that specialized professionals should be there to have an adequate intervention. Third, the

current educational policies do not allow teachers or students to "spare" time for "artistic" work around violence prevention topics. The facilitators, coming from a diverse range of disciplines, such as sciences of education, criminology, psychology, social work, have in common a high degree of specialization in gender violence prevention.

Additionally, ethics needs to be considered in a programme like this (Notko et al. 2013; Fontes, 2004; Gorin et al. 2008), due to the sensitiveness of the problem. Ethical cautions have to be taken in consideration not only in the work with the students, but also in the intervention with families (Margolin 2005). UMAR has built a protocol of guidelines with teachers about how to act in case of violence disclosure. The students and their parents/legal guardians are asked to read and sign an informed consent to participate in the Project. At the beginning of the training programmes, the facilitators will highlight the importance of respecting the confidentiality of the group process and ask for the participants' commitment to not disclose any personal content outside of the groups. Moreover, the participants will be encouraged to bring any issues or concerns regarding confidentiality to the facilitator.

Also, all the facilitators are trained on how to address the information of training sessions in an ethical way. During the training, the participants are encouraged to think about their roles in facilitating children or young people groups dealing with issues like domestic violence, dating violence. They are also lead to reflect upon that some participants might disclose victimisation situations. The facilitators will be trained to respond appropriately. Specifically the facilitators will 1) acknowledge what was said and provide the victim with a private space, outside the group, to address her/his issue; 2) make clear that the victims are not at fault; 3) make clear that the behaviour of the perpetrators is not acceptable; and 4) provide contact information of appropriate support services, including who in the school staff might offer support.

The Programme is also meant to be implemented at a national level, at all Portuguese schools, integrated in school curriculum. Efforts are also made to connect the work of the facilitators with that of the teachers in a way that students perceive it as in school cultural activities, like any other discipline or activity.

Along with the evaluation of the Programme, UMAR also administered a questionnaire about dating violence to perceive the prevalence of the problem in the area where the Programme is implemented.

The Project Artways and its Programme is being subjected to an external evaluation by a specialized researcher from the University of Minho.

The impact of the intervention programme

The Project Artways involved more than one thousand of youth participants, 50 teachers, about 100 parents and reached more than 3 000 people in the first year.

In previous years, the impact of this prevention programs shows that it is important a continuous intervention among young people. UMAR work reveals a general change around 20 per cent in three years of intervention with the same students group.

3 years Intervention Results
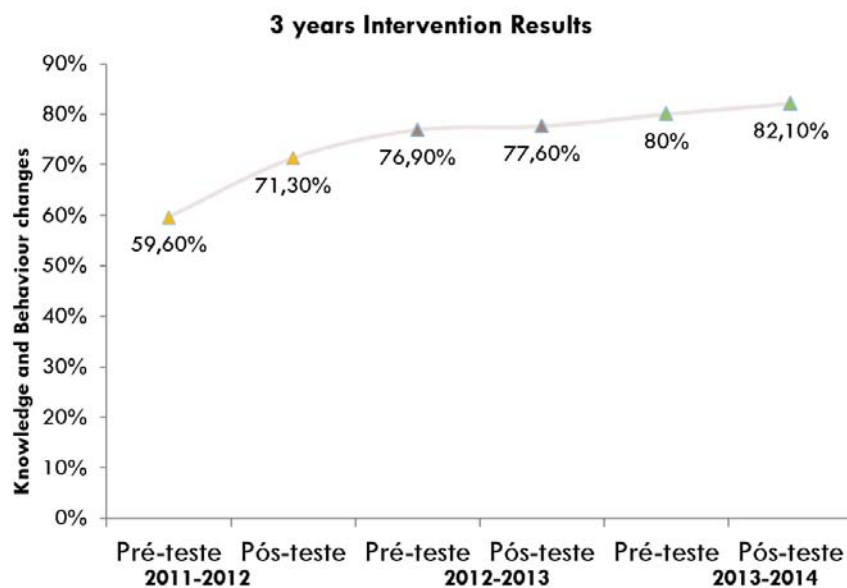
However, the impact are more than these data, which is confirmed by the number of requests from other schools for the implementation of our Programme.

During the academic year 2015/2016, Artways developed about 15 sessions with significant topics to prevent gender-based violence. To measure the effectiveness of this project, several mechanisms were used as explained above. With the respect of the pre- and post-test, we have found a significant change. The mean of the pre-test was around 63,3% and after the program implementation, one academic year later, the results were around 74,3%. On the one hand, this represents that our students know more and perhaps, hopefully, think differently about violence and are aware on what to do with these situations. On the other hand, we must say that these results could be greatly improved if we had the chance to work with these groups more time and during at least 3 years, as it is being established in the Programme of UMAR and evidenced by the above mentioned studies. But the project evaluation is not only based on numbers, and we needed to know further what youth thought on these contents and therefore we work to carry out a systematic feedback from students and facilitators: a working sheet for field notes was created, where facilitators describe session after session, the perceived changes in youth language or attitude in a certain topic.

At the end of the first lective year we asked youth their opinion on the project and its activities and generally the feedback is quite good. Due the space for this article, we will not transcribe all the youngsters' feedback. However, some were translated and quoted below for the reader can have a flavour of the students self perceptions of the Project.

Question: what did you learn with Artways Project?

Answer 1 - "what stereotypes are, human rights and what to do if you are a victim of domestic violence or bullying"

Answer 2- "that we should all be treated equally in spite of our differences"

Answer 3- "that is not necessary to use physical and/or psychological force/violence to succeed in life"

Question: what did you like the most with Artways Project?

Answer 1- "of the Seminar"

Answer 2- "of the representations and photographs created"

At the same time, as explained above, facilitators were interested on the feedback and evaluation of relevant participants such as teachers, school psychologists and municipality agents (sometimes directly involved in implementation of the project). Below we quoted some of their feedbacks about the Project.

"The project evokes a reflection on topics that usually are covered by adolescents lightly" - Teacher 1

"I have a vested interest in continuing the Project because I also learned how to adequate artistic methodologies with these important subjects" - Teacher 2

"This project truly contributes to the young people's understanding of values like self-respect and respect for the other and to signalize situations of injustice and violence. In short, this project helps youth to become citizens aware, responsible and interventive in all aspects of their lives" - Teacher 3

"Art is a reflection but at the same time promotes critical spirit among youth. The involvement of youth in different forms of expression is an excellent tool to raise awareness on these subjects" - municipality representative.

Discussion

In this article, we review the basis of the Primary Prevention of Gender Violence in schools carried out by UMAR through the Project Artways, highlighting its aims, philosophy, activities and impact.

The evidence shows high degree of impact and change at least in short term evaluation. The changes are more visible in the knowledge, in so far the changes in behaviour and attitudes are harder to assess. The more important change is the identification of control behaviours as a mean of violence: the controlling of the other's phone, facebook, or friends networks, as well as the surveillance of the ways of dressing or the go out with friends.

This study also provides evidence about the active involvement of the students in the activities, which is acknowledged by their teachers saying that the indiscipline decreased and the interest in the school work increased.

The results are better when the intervention is longer, which is corroborated by many of the studies reporting evaluation of prevention programmes.

It is worthy to note that the Project Artways work with both boys and girls, involving boys in a culture of equality and nonviolence (Flood, 2011). However, it will be relevant to implement a follow up on girls and boys attitudes, as the example of the work by Slocombe and Bentley (2015).

As Bergsgaard (1997) and Schippers (2007), masculinities and femininities are constructed in culture in a way that creates the ground for the gender regime and, in this sequence, the basis of gender violence against women. In the

Programme in analysis, it is visible that the topic gender stereotypes is one of the contents of working sessions with the students, but it is not visible in the activities how these stereotypes are relevant for a primary gender violence prevention programme.

Despite the philosophy of gender violence prevention, little attention is provided to the differential modes of the social construction of masculinities and femininities. The sex differences between boys and girls are not perceived in the reflections and evaluation documents of the Project, which call for more attention about the diverse ways in which boys and girls, young women and young men are involved in the Project.

Paulo Freire perspective is present in the implementation of the Project in schools, although it is not always clear how the connections are made between his method and the "artistic training sessions". Bartlett (2005) evaluated the application of Freirean philosophy in community intervention projects in Brazil, and found that educators do know little about the principles and the methodology, and guide their work based on the training meetings that staff share when planning the intervention. In fact, the author analyzes this connection between theory and practice around the Freirean concepts of dialogue, praxis and the collective construction of knowledge.

Foshee et al (1998) report the results of the Safe Dates, a school-based dating violence prevention, using both control and treatment groups and measurements of the impact of the programme with questionnaire about self perceptions about being victim and being perpetrator in dating violence. These authors also describe that one of the aims of the Programme is to encourage victims of dating violence to seek help. This could be a suggestion for Artways, i.e., to measure the extent to which adolescents and youngsters being victims or perpetrators have sought for help.

Finally, it can be said, along with others authors, that the success of the Programme stems from the participatory methodology (O'Brien & Moules 2007).

Brief conclusion

Projects like Artways challenge the regulatory function of schooling and can act as emancipatory dispositive for social transformation (Sala, 2010). Feminism and feminist pedagogy have long established the potential of formal education to improve the quality of women's lives (Glodfarb, 1990).

Combatting gender violence through project work on the basis of the active involvement have also great potential to change the culture of tolerance of violence that is pervasive across class, culture, economic status, sexual orientation or religion.

Further research and intervention can point out the relevance of moving to a whole school approach (Mathar, 2013), involving other teachers and groups of students, as well as school governance and local authorities.

The process will offer opportunities to further reflection upon the results, in an espiral perspective (McNiff & Whitehead, 2011; McKernn, 2013).

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Policies of higher education qualifications: the pedagogy curriculum in discussion

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This research was conducted with support from the Observatory Program from Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior– CAPES/Brasil), e presented as topic of discussion the The Institutional Program Initiation Grant to Teaching (Programa Institucional de Bolsas de Iniciação à Docência - PIBID) as public policy for higher education. This work has as objective to identify the possible contributions of anticipation of the link between academics and the playing field, proposed by PIBID, in the performance of compulsory curricular training. The specific objectives are: a) analyze the edict PIBID implementation and its objectives in the context of higher education qualification; b) identify teaching assignments in current school context; and c) recognize the contributions of participating in the PIBID for development of the supervised training. The adopted methodology in research is a case study qualitative approach, and use as an instrument for data collection analysis of legal documentation that supports the actions of the PIBID and of census data of higher education in Brazil, in addition to questionnaires with the academic Pedagogy course of Universidade Federal de Santa Maria (UFSM). The PIBID intends to unite the Secretaries of States and municipalities and public institutions of higher education (Instituições Públicas de Ensino Superior - IPES), in search of improvements in teaching in public schools through scholarships for teaching beginners, aimed at scholars graduate courses, looking for commitment of them, when graduates, with the exercise of the Magisterium on the public network. According to the Census of higher education, the year 2013 by the Instituto Nacional de Estudos e Pesquisas Educacionais Anísio Teixeira (INEP), the rates of enrollment in graduate courses increased by 19.61% since the year 2009, but in the last two years, enrollment grew by just 0.8% demonstrating a stagnation in demand for these courses. In face of these statistical data are curricula lagged in relation to the challenges of teaching. Inserted in the universe that governs the school and relationships that are established, the academic