Daphne III – Youth for Youth: Empowering Young People in Preventing Gender-based Violence through Peer Education

Training Evaluation Report for CYPRUS

Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies

Prepared by:

Stalo Lesta

Nicosia,

December 2012

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1. Introduction to Youth 4 Youth

This report outlines the background, context, evaluation and impact of peer education trainings conducted with adolescents as part of the Youth 4 Youth Project. The project's main aim is to contribute to the prevention and combating of gender-based violence among adolescents by providing them with a safe space to reveal their attitudes towards violence, and to reassess their tolerance towards it. Moreover the project develops and promotes the peer education methodology as a tool to empower young people to become actively involved in developing an environment free from violence for themselves as well as for their peers. The project was implemented using a gender equality and rights based approach.

1.1. Programme Objectives

- o Investigate and explore young people's attitudes towards gender-based violence and the links between gender stereotypes and gender-based violence;
- o Expose and challenge attitudes of tolerance towards gender-based violence among young people;
- o Empower young people to resist gender-based violence and develop attitudes of self-respect and self-value;
- o Further develop and promote the 'peer education' methodology as a tool to prevent gender-based violence among youth as well as promote their active involvement in developing a safe and protective environment for themselves and their peers;
- o To provide educators in formal and non-formal education with information and tools for working with young people in the prevention of gender-based violence;
- o To promote the role of schools and other formal and non-formal education centers in the prevention of gender-based violence among young people and in the promotion of relationships based on tolerance, respect and equality;
- o To contribute to policy development on the prevention of gender-based violence in educational contexts on a national and EU level;

2. Training Programme Structure

2.1. Target Group

Youth4Youth activities are primarily designed for young people aged 14-18. This age group is considered old enough to understand and discuss the concept of gender as a complex and diverse issue, explore the socially constructed gender roles and the limitations they carry for girls and boys and also recognize the socio-political and cultural circumstances that surround gender inequalities. Moreover, young people of this age group have already had various experiences in and out of the school environment including involvement in romantic

relationships and thus they can easily relate to issues regarding school related gender-based bullying and intimate partner violence, topics that have been thoroughly raised in the Training Sessions. For students aged 14-16, there is the additional benefit that they are likely to have a few more years at school before they graduate and could therefore continue to act as agents of change amongst their peers in this setting.

In view of the fact that the training programme incorporates the experiential methodology and is highly participatory in nature, it is recommended that it is carried out in small group settings, with the number of participants averaging at around 20. This is an ideal number to allow for equal and adequate participation of *all* students, enabling them to actively engage in the discussion and build and practice new skills, without some of them 'disappearing' in the crowd. Small group settings also provide an intimate and safe environment for participants, where they can disclose and explore sensitive information regarding abusive behaviors they may have witnessed or directly experienced. In terms of the gender mix, activities work best in groups where there are balanced numbers of boys and girls, though they can be used with same-sex groups. For participants to benefit the most from this training programme, it is important that a good gender mix is encouraged, as it will enable boys and girls to explore gender concepts through the eyes of both genders and understand beliefs and attitudes of the other gender, engaging in constructive dialogue amongst them.

2.2. Schools and Participants

The training workshops targeted secondary schools in Cyprus, both public and private. This was done in direct cooperation with schools and teachers who expressed an interest in the topic of gender based violence (GBV) and were willing to offer the time and space for the realization of these trainings. Here, it is important to note in some cases schools may develop a misconceived notion of the nature and the objectives of this training programme, often mistakenly regarding it as a way to address bullying, general school-related violence, juvenile delinquency or young people's deviant behavior. Thus, it is crucial that thorough, clear and comprehensive information is delivered to school principals and teachers prior to the implementation of the workshops in order to ensure that there are no ambiguities or misunderstandings with regards to the focus and specific objectives of the workshops.

In terms of implementation, in public schools Youth4Youth was delivered to whole classes as part of the curriculum, following an invitation by teachers that were sensitized on gender issues and wanted to further explore these concepts with their class. Participation for the classes selected in the public schools was mandatory for all the students of the class. However, if a student expressed any objections in participating, they were not forced to continue and were excluded. In the private school, the training programme was implemented as an after-school activity where young people from different classes opted

into the training themselves. Participation stemmed from the students' (rather than the teachers') personal interest and sensitization on the topic. Notably, both models worked well.

Teachers were invited to participate in the trainings if they wished to but they were requested to act as observers and make as few interventions as possible in order to allow the necessary space for their students to explore the various concepts with the facilitator without feeling as if 'evaluated for a grade' (as it usually happens during their regular classes). Having teachers as bystanders or not present, also provides a more conducive space for students to disclose any sensitive information on violence and abuse that they would otherwise feel too embarrassed to discuss in front of their teachers. In terms of duration of participation, since the focus of the training is on skills development, students would benefit the most if they attended the entire programme (all 4 sessions). As each session builds on concepts discussed in the previous session, it is easier for participants to follow the course of the trainings and grasp a more in-depth understanding of the issues discussed if they attend the programme in its entirety.

In total, four secondary schools in Cyprus took part in the programme, three public schools and one private. The public schools included the Lyceums of Paliometocho, Palouriotissa and Strovolos (Ethnomartyras Kyprianos). GC School of Careers was the one private school that participated in the programme. Overall, 84 students took part in the training programme, 55 girls and 29 boys. The majority of the students were 16 years of age, with the exception of Palouriotissa, where students were in their last year of school (aged 17 to 18 years). The breakdown per gender for each school was as follows:

	Total	Females	Males
Palouriotissa	**20**	14	6
Paliometocho	**18**	14	4
Ethnomartyras Kyprianos	**18**	11	7
GC School of Careers	**28**	16	12
TOTALS	**84**	**55**	**29**

Originally, a gymnasium was also added to the list of schools and students of the second form were targeted (14 year olds). However this class was eventually 'dropped' from the programme due to lack of commitment on behalf of the students.

Notably, there were some distinct differences between gymnasium and lyceum students in terms of overall participation and particularly in terms of their understanding and processing of the concepts put forth by this training programme. Being younger and with substantially less personal experiences, gymnasium students find it extremely difficult to relate to the socio-cultural construction of gender roles and can only perceive gender inequalities through a somewhat superficial and individualistic prism. In their opinion,

gender roles and gender inequalities affect only adult relationships and students found it difficult to apply these concepts in their own context. They also lacked an in-depth understanding of what constitutes violence and had a great tendency to bypass various behaviors because they just considered them 'normal'. Thus they often appeared disinterested in the training and found it difficult to see its relevance to their everyday lives. For them, the training was for other students older than them, and not for them. In many ways, despite various efforts to engage them, younger students continued to 'miss the point'. This highlights on one hand the need for targeting younger age groups to break certain 'myths' that exist at these young age and on the other the need for adapting the training material to fit their context in a way that they can relate to it.

Alternatively, older students, and particularly 17-18 year olds, displayed a more in-depth understanding of the socio-cultural and political context that surrounds gender inequalities and had very fruitful discussions on these topics. They seemed predominantly interested in how gender-based violence is expressed in interpersonal relationships and in intimate relationships in particular and were challenged on many myths that surround intimate partner violence.

In conclusion, even though the programme is applicable for ages 14-18 it is important to keep in mind the perceptual differences between the different age groups and be ready to adapt the content to make it interesting and most relevant to them.

2.3. Training Methodology

A non-formal education approach was followed throughout the entire training programme. A variety of experiential training methodologies were employed, aiming to enhance participants' learning through interesting, fun and interactive activities. These included brainstorming, role-playing, small group discussion, theatrical play, case-study analysis and art work. Indeed, it appears that teenagers do learn best and feel more engaged when interactive methods are employed because:

- Their learning relates to real life and explores issues that are directly relevant to young people.
- Their learning builds on personal past knowledge and experiences. It incorporates an exchange of ideas and experiences between young people, it challenges perceptions, and it encourages participants to directly or indirectly experience a certain situation with the encouragement/validation from others.

Duration of the Training Programme

The training Programme was devised to be conducted in four 90-min sessions, with three sessions allocated to exploring gender roles, gender-based bullying in the school environment and manifestations of GBV in romantic relationships. The last session was devoted to enhancing students' understanding of what is peer education and in teaching them group facilitation skills. For students who expressed an interest to become peer educators, additional training sessions were implemented. 'Training the Peer Trainer' sessions were conducted to familiarize the peer educators with the activities to be conducted and provide them with the opportunity to practice facilitation and presentation skills.

Once the training Programme was completed, peer training sessions were conducted by the peer educators themselves. The number of peer trainings varied by each school, according to what was more feasible in their setting, ranging from 2 to 4 accordingly. It is recommended that at least two peer education trainings are conducted, in order to provide the opportunity to the peer educators to utilize their learning from the first training and become more impactful.

Clearly, the above specified training duration (4.5 hours) is not adequate in providing young people with a broad and comprehensive view of *all* GBV-related issues and their implications nor does it provide adequate room for an in-depth exploration of ways to combat GBV. In lieu of time restrictions, discussions on the historical and theoretical background of gender-based violence have also been limited, in an effort to ensure a maximum time for interactive and experiential learning, especially in relation to challenging attitudes and skills development.

Similarly, the time allocated to training peer educators in group facilitation and presentation techniques, has also been short. Clearly, the 2 hours dedicated to the peer education session do not provide adequate time for students to develop into experienced, stand-alone trainers who can provide all the necessary answers and make appropriate interventions without support.

Surely, this does not connote that this training Programme cannot be successful or have a positive impact. In actual fact, this constricting timeframe called for a focused and targeted approach. Priority was given to the key issues affecting young people in relation to gender-based violence (as these were identified by previous research), with the trainings concentrating on gender roles, gender based bullying, and violence in romantic relationships. Equally, the trainings' concentration on awareness-raising and enhancing young people's understanding of what constitutes GBV, proved to be fundamental, as most students seemed to be unfamiliar with the term and were often not in a position to name abusive incidences as such. Lastly, even though not extensively trained as facilitators, peer

educators drew upon their own experiences as participants in the initial trainings and facilitated their groups very effectively using interactive techniques they had personally experienced.

2.4. Outline of Training Sessions

Taking into consideration that the primary objective of the Project was to empower young people to develop a safe and protective environment for themselves and their peers, the training Programme aimed at maintaining a balance between awareness-raising and empowerment activities. These two sets of activities are referred to as 'core' and 'follow up activities'. Core' activities provide the basic knowledge and understanding of the specific subject addressed in each Session. 'Follow-up' activities are designed not only to increase awareness, but also to motivate and empower young people to be active agents against the perpetration of gender-based violence and discrimination.

However, this does not imply that follow up activities are not as important as core activities. In reality, the follow up activities proved to be fundamental in consolidating knowledge, challenging attitudes, encouraging shifts in perceptions and building skills in standing up to violence and abuse. Thus 'follow up' empowerment activities are a fundamental part of this Programme and need to be time-budgeted accordingly, to ensure that they're given adequate and equal 'space'.

	General theme of Activity	Activity Name	'Core' or 'follow-up'	Time
Session 1 **GENDER NORMS**	Differences between gender and sex	**Gender and sex**	Core activity	20 min
	Gender norms	**Gender in a Box**	Core activity	60 min
	Gender norms	**Target Shooting**	Follow-up activity	30 min
	Empowerment activity	**It's my right!**	Follow-up activity	20 min

Session 2	General theme of Activity	Activity	'Core' or 'follow-up'	Time
	Types of gender-based violence	**Types of Gender-based Violence**	Core activity	30 min
GBV IN THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT	GBV in the school environment	**Scenarios of GBV in School**	Core activity	50 min
	Empowerment activity	**Vote with your feet!**	Follow-up activity	30 min
	Empowerment activity	**School Rules**	Follow-up activity	25 min

Session 3	General theme of Activity	Activity	'Core' or 'follow-up'	Time
	Myths and realities about GBV	**Myths and realities about GBV**	Core activity	35 min
GBV IN ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS	GBV in romantic relationships	**Role-play**	Core activity	60 min
	Empowerment activity	**Bystander interventions**	Follow-up activity	25 min

Session 4	General theme of Activity	Activity	'Core' or 'follow-up'	Time
	Introduction to peer education	**What is peer education and why is it effective**	Core activity	40 min
TRAINING FOR PEER EDUCATORS	Qualities and skills of a peer educator	**Qualities and skills of peer educators**	Core activity	20 min
	Group facilitation skills	**Peer educators in action- role-play**	Core activity	70 min
	Peer educators plan and practice delivery	**Planning and practicing a Peer Education Session**	Core activity	2 hours +

Session 5	General theme of Activity	Activity	'Core' or 'follow-up'	Time
	Introduction	**Short introduction about the training**	-	5 min
PEER EDUCATION SESSIONS	Gender norms	**Gender in a Box**	Core activity	40 min
	Myths and reality about GBV	**Take a stand**	Core activity	40 min
(SAMPLE)	Short evaluation by participants	**Give out questionnaires to be filled in anonymously**	-	5 min

	General theme of Activity	Activity	'Core' or 'follow-up'	Time
ART ACTIVITY	Students create artwork to communicate Youth4Youth Programme messages to their community	**Art Activity**	Follow-up activity	n/a
	Artwork is showcased (either permanently or as a one-off exhibition)	**Exhibition**	Follow-up activity	n/a

2.5. Facilitators and Facilitation

Truly, experimental learning takes place when the trainer assumes the role of a facilitator rather than the role of a teacher. Facilitators create an environment that is conducive to participatory learning, in which all students can teach each other through sharing, constructive dialogue, discussion and feedback. Given the complexity and sensitivity of this type of trainings, it is necessary that the facilitator carries prior experience in participatory teaching methods and is experienced in working with young people. Familiarity with concepts of gender, gender roles, gender equality, gendered violence, psychological abuse and human rights are also necessary. Moreover the facilitators need be able to discuss abuse issues openly in the presence of others, in an honest, direct and unembarrassed manner. Towards this end, they also need to be in a position to handle the personal and intimate information that is shared in the trainings with sensitivity and understanding, in a non-judgmental but supportive way. Moreover, they need to be prepared to provide emotional support to participants who may become upset after recalling or sharing an unpleasant or hurtful incidence.

Though this is not always possible, having two facilitators ensures that a more supportive environment is provided to participants (both in terms of their learning and in terms of any psychological support that may be deemed necessary). If there is someone 'extra' then s/he can, if necessary, take time out of the group for young participants who need space to talk about personal experiences of GBV. Co-facilitation also allows for different facilitation styles to be used, increasing the likelihood that activities will engage a wider number of participants. Furthermore, if the two facilitators are of different gender, it can help build rapport with all members of a mixed-sex group. Male educators tend to be perceived as more credible by male participants and having both female and male co-facilitators embodies the recognition that men have an equal role and responsibility in helping to combat gender inequalities and GBV.

2.5.1. Dealing with disclosures of violence or abuse

Young people may experience different forms of GBV in their environment, be it gender-based bullying at school, they domestic violence or abuse in their own romantic relationships. When implementing some of the activities of this training Programme, it is important for facilitators to remember that, since they do not know 'who is in the room', they need to approach the various topics with sensitivity and tact. A young participant who has experienced an abusive behavior or they may have been a victim of violence needs to feel that s/he is in a 'safe environment'.

It is often the case that, triggered by the training activities, young people do feel the need to disclose information about their experiences either as bystanders or as victims. This is more

common when they discuss scenarios on gender-based bullying in the school environment or when they watch the enactment of the role play about how gender violence is manifested in intimate relationships. Both activities encompass realities that are highly relevant to young people, thus the stirring up of various feelings and the need to share them is natural. Some participants may even become highly emotional and overwhelmed.

Even though it is difficult for a facilitator to prepare in advance for dealing with disclosures in the group, there are some important guidelines that can be followed to ensure that young people are in a safe environment and don't feel exposed. Setting ground-rules prior to the commencement of the exercise reassures participants that no-one is obliged to share intimate details or discuss incidences that may make them feel uncomfortable. Confidentiality needs to be maintained at all times and participants need to be reminded to treat what others share with sensitivity and care. Debriefing after the exercises also needs to be formulated in a 'non-personal' manner, to ensure that even if someone has had a personal experience, they do not have to answer by referring to it directly.

Regardless of the severity of the incidence that young people may discuss, it is very important that facilitators are clear about the school's guidelines in dealing with disclosures of abuse. For instance, do young people need to be referred to the school counselor? Do the parents need to be notified? Can any referrals be provided as for instance to organizations or phone-lines that can help support young people who have experienced bullying or abuse?

3. Reflections on the Training Sessions

3.1. Session 1 – Gender Roles

3.1.1. Session 1 Learning Objectives

- Explore how the media and society shape the roles for men and women
- Help students understand how stereotypes/gender roles are shaped and perpetuated by the society they live in
- Recognize the negative impact of intractable gender roles for both boys/men and girls/women and also to explore how gender stereotypes impact on their own lives by limiting their choices and opportunities
- Explore the link between gender socialization, gender inequalities and hierarchies of power
- Gain confidence to challenge gender stereotypes('normalised' or 'accepted' beliefs about masculinity or femininity) and the harmful behaviours that are used to enforce them

3.1.2. Students' Participation and Key learnings

This was a very interesting session for participants especially because the 'Gender in a box' activity used depictions of gender roles through the media. Young people particularly enjoyed analyzing magazine pictures and they found this activity very interesting and stimulating.

Being constantly bombarded by media (either traditional media and/or social media), it was evident that young people's perceptions about gender roles and the 'expected' behaviors for women and men were largely influenced by corresponding media depictions. Just by looking at magazine pictures, young people could immediately associate how women and men are expected to look like and how they are expected to behave. And essentially, these young people's reflections reiterated 'normalized', 'traditional' and 'stereotypical' beliefs of what is 'feminine' and 'masculine'. For instance, men were thought to be the heads of the household and the breadwinners of the family with a more dominant presence in the public sphere (involvement in politics, professional development, leadership positions etc.). Women on the other hand were placed in the private sphere, being the family caregivers.

More specifically, young participants drew the gender boxes below with the following attributes being associated with women and men:

<u>Women</u>

o Curvaceous	o Sexually hungry	o Nurturing
o Nice breasts	o Desirable	o Dreamy
o Beautiful	o Provocative	o Romantic
o Nice hair	o Sexy	o Sweet
o Slim	o Pussy cat	o Weak
o Great body	o Sly look	o Inferior to the man
o Takes care of her appearance	o Woman of the house	o Dynamic
o Demure	o Caregiver	o Plain and characterless
o Modest	o Takes care of the kids	o No sexual life

<u>Men</u>

o Dynamic	o Tough	o Seeks the glory
o Athletic	o Stern look	o Successful
o Ambitious	o Strong arms	o Rich
o Wild	o Womanizer	o Ready to beat up someone
o Aggressive	o Sexy	o Selfish
o Superior	o Sly	o Player
o Desired	o Dominates women	o Provocative
o Confident	o Exploits others	o Sexually dominant

Some controversies with regards to the gender roles were also explored in lieu of the changing roles for women and men. While women were expected to be subdued, timid, shy and sexually prude, they were also expected to be sexy, provocative and 'sexually hungry'. Equally, some girls mentioned that even though they would like their boyfriends to be tough and macho, they would also like them to be gentle, sensitive and caring.

Interestingly, young people's responses reflected that it was difficult for them to understand how societal expectations give rise to gender inequalities and how societal pressures are personally affecting them by often limiting their choices and, in many cases, their behaviors as well. Some participants even tried to justify that certain inequalities are normal because of the different 'nature' of men and women (i.e. men are physically stronger than women thus they are tough and macho, while women are more nurturing by nature because they give birth). Furthermore, gender inequalities were mostly perceived to be in relation to professional development and responsibilities in home-making, things that they attributed to grownups and irrelevant to their context. To help them gain a better understanding of the limitations of the gender-box, the Gender- in -a -box activity was followed by an activity called target shooting, which is described below.

Target Shooting
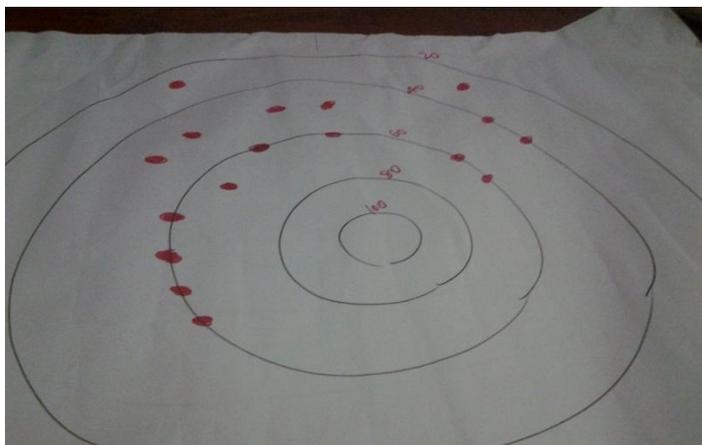
Young participants were asked to identify the extent to which they believed they belonged into the gender boxes. The majority of them clearly placed themselves outside the box, acknowledging that they only had a 40-60% 'match' with the characteristics attributed respectively for women and men. The visual representation of their answers proved particularly useful in generating some fruitful discussions with regards to the importance of appearances and the need to conform to the norm.

Participants recognized that even though it is impossible to fit into the boxes, yet appearances are still very important, especially for young people in their age. Some even mentioned incidences where friends of theirs were trying to fit into a certain image so that they would not be singled out by others. Quite importantly, this exercise prompted young people to think that they can opt to accept or reject the predefined roles that society had set for them and that they do have the right to freely express their individuality, free from peer-pressure and definitely free from criticism, judgment or abuse.

<u>Key learnings</u>

The issue of gender roles and gender inequalities is quite sensitive and a difficult one to understand, taking into consideration that certain 'normalized' attributes, behaviors and conditions are often not questioned or reevaluated. Moreover, young people also tend to attribute gender inequalities to issues that primarily affect adults, as for instance equal opportunities in the workplace and in professional development. It is important to help students explore whether how the various qualities dictated by society are relevant to their context and how these are indeed limiting their behaviors. The target shooting exercise is particularly useful in helping young people identify the need to freely express one's individuality, taking into account that most people do perceive themselves as lying outside the gender 'box'.

3.2. Session 2 – Gender Based Violence in the School Environment

3.2.1. Session 2 Learning Objectives

- Increased understanding of GBV, how it is manifested, when it happens and what causes it
- Identify and dispel the common myths surrounding gender based violence
- Challenge young people's attitudes and behaviours that perpetuate GBV in the school environment
- Understand the impact of abuse and develop empathy for those who experience it
- Explore possible ways that young people can use to react to gender-based violence in and out of the school environment
- Identify possible barriers preventing young people from reacting to gender-based violence
- Identify actions that the school environment and the educators can take in order to protect students and support them to take a stand against GBV

3.2.2. Students' Participation and Key learnings

The scenarios appeared to be quite successful in challenging young people's perceptions about what constitutes gender based violence and how this can be manifested in their school environment. What was particularly impactful was the fact that the scenarios depicted incidences that young people could relate to as they presented situations that the participants may have witnessed or may have personally experienced. In addition, the scenarios provided the ground for stereotypical beliefs and myths about gendered violence to emerge, resulting in some fruitful discussions among participants which aimed to challenge these beliefs and re-evaluate them.

Building on the discussions of Session 1, where participants had experienced difficulty in identifying how societal expectations of gender roles are affecting the lives of young people, the scenarios specifically urged participants to explore how in fact young people are often wrongly judged or experience hurtful behaviors because they don't fit the boxes. This proved particularly useful in enhancing their understanding as of the causes and manifestations of GBV.

Evidently, the discussions following the scenarios depicted how young people can't steer away from stereotypical beliefs and how these often shape young people's behaviors towards their peers. It was important to note how the young people were not entirely accepting of people who lie outside the 'gender box' and often rushed to criticize them. In relation to the latter, victim-blaming was one of the most important myths surrounding GBV that emerged from the discussions. Many students would consider for instance that it was Ana's fault that she was sexually harassed because she was provocatively dressed. Similarly, in the participants' perceptions, Layla was being a prude by reacting to her classmates' discussions of porn magazines (even though those were demeaning and offensive) and thus she deserved to be mocked. The same principle held true for the remaining of the scenarios, with a high share of participants considering that the victims were actually 'looking for trouble' and provoked the violent behavior they experienced by the way they behaved. Thus, they considered that the bullying they received was often justified (at least to some extent).

Furthermore, it appeared that young participants experienced difficulty in recognizing psychological forms of violence as such. Some behaviors like repeated name-calling, rumors, constantly talking behind someone else's back and rejection/isolation of people who are 'different', were considered 'natural' and 'normal', especially in cases where young people had felt they had a 'reason' to engage in such behaviors (i.e. mocking a boy because he was more effeminate, creating rumors about girls with more 'liberal' sexual behaviors etc.). Moreover, even the participants that did identify these behaviors as psychological abuse,

they still shared the perception that psychological abuse is not as serious as physical abuse and that it does not carry severe repercussions for the victim.

Similarly, young people did not easily identify the types of violence depicted in the scenarios as *gender-based*. Even the share of students who could define the various behaviors as abusive, still experienced difficulty in making the connection that this violence was gender-based. Evidently, more emphasis needed to be placed on helping the students make this connection by probing them to explore how the different abusive episodes depicted in the scenarios were in fact related to obtuse perceptions about gender roles.

Key learnings

School related gender based violence does need to constitute an integral part of GBV trainings because it encapsulates manifestations of GBV in a context that is directly relevant to young people. Evidently, young people experience difficulty in identifying abusive incidences as being gender-based. Keeping this in mind, facilitators need to place particular emphasis in helping participants make this connection, by constantly probing them to explore how preconceived notions about gender and gender inequalities may underlie abusive behaviors.

Moreover, as young people often fail to recognize psychological forms of violence as such, with many behaviors often being bypassed as 'normal', 'acceptable' or even 'justified' facilitators need to ensure that these notions are challenged and counteracted. In relation to this, many myths that surround GBV need to be addressed, especially with regards to the causes of violence, victim blaming, the perpetrator's responsibility and the repercussions of abuse, including psychological abuse. Some students may also believe that they need to react to an abusive incidence by using force or by being equally abusive, so as to protect themselves. It is important that facilitators help them explore other more constructive ways of reacting to abusive situations without resorting to violence.

3.3. Session 3 – Gender Based Violence in Romantic Relationships

3.3.1. Session 3 Learning Objectives

– Explore how gender-based violence is manifested in romantic relationships.
– Challenge and dispel myths that encourage a 'romanticized' perception of violence in intimate relationships
– Explore young people's reactions to GBV in intimate relationships and identify the barriers experienced in challenging GBV (lack of awareness, fear, belief that it is a 'private matter')

– Motivate young people to develop strategies for addressing gender-based violence if they or a friend experiences it in their romantic relationships.

3.3.2. Students' Participation and Key learnings

<u>Myths and realities about GBV</u>

The 'take a stand' activity (on myths and realities about GBV) seemed to have made a very strong impact. Apparently, the way the exercise was administered, with the participants having to physically take a stand and support it with valid arguments seemed to be particularly impactful. By taking a stand, participants were encouraged to reflect on their own behaviors and perceptions and engaged in very stimulating discussions. Valuable discussions were held on controversial relationship issues including jealousy, the difficulties of exiting an abusive relationship, whether sexual aggression can be provoked by the way a girl dresses, the profiles of victims and perpetrators and the causes of violence and abuse. As young people later admitted in their focus group discussions, this activity constituted an important turning point in enhancing their awareness and most importantly in re-evaluating their original beliefs.

<u>Violence in intimate relationships</u>

The role play was regarded by participants as one of the most effective and most enjoyable activity of the entire training (see section 4.3 on enjoyability). They were all enthusiastic with it and the discussion was generated during the debriefing was highly passionate and participatory.

Overall, young people recognized the psychological violence, coercion, oppression, humiliation, isolation and control depicted in the play as forms of violence. For many participants, the role play appeared to be an 'eye opening experience'. While prior to the training they tended to perceive most of these forms of violence as 'natural' and 'expected' after the role play they had enhanced awareness of what constitutes GBV in relationships, and were able to identify it when it happens. Another great learning from this exercise seemed to be the notion of romanticizing violence and the risks associated with doing so.

Clearly, the role play had a strong impact to young people's awareness and understandings. The fact that the scenario of the play depicted issues that were directly relevant to young people's realities helped the participants relate to the 'actors' and their feelings. The role play was the first exercise that stirred the sharing of intimate personal stories and experiences. Reflecting on their personal lives, some girls claimed that they recognized their boyfriends in the face of 'George' while boys admitted that they sometimes behave in the same controlling manner towards their girlfriends or their sisters. Others mentioned that

they have friends who are in similar controlling and abusive relationships. Some girls also mentioned that they themselves had fallen into the trap of romanticizing violence in their relationships, placing themselves at the risk of psychological abuse.

Again, discussions revolved around the question 'Can someone provoke violence?' Some of the participants regarded that the girl in the role play was provoking her partner's controlling behavior because of the way she dressed and behaved. The 'expected' behaviors of women and men were discussed, with participants identifying that controlling behaviors are more 'accepted' if conducted by a boy towards a girl but are completely unacceptable if conducted from a girl to a boy. A girl trying to control her partner's behavior would be considered as 'bossy' and would be criticized badly.

Some 'myths' about the victims of violence were also raised. In their large majority, participants perceived that the girl in the role play was abused because she was 'weak', 'vulnerable', 'submissive' and 'a victim'. They found it difficult to believe that dynamic and more assertive people can also become victims of abuse. This provided a good opportunity for facilitators to address some myths surrounding the profiles of victims and perpetrators; i.e. concentrating on the fact that violence is never the victim's fault and that abuse is a conscious choice the perpetrator makes.

Key Learnings

Role plays are indeed very powerful tools to use to convey messages and raise awareness about specific situations. As young people relate with the characters in the play, they make attempts to 'psychoanalyze' them and understand their personalities. It was almost instinctive that participants tried to understand what about 'George's' personality made him a perpetrator of violence and what about 'Evelina's' personality made her become a victim of abuse. Some participants even started to look for psychological causes that may lead to violent behavior (mentioning for instance unhappy childhood, isolation, upbringing, perpetrators having been a victim of violence themselves etc.). However, psychoanalysis of the characters is beyond the scope of this workshop. Similarly, domestic violence, violent behavior and the causes of violence are too complex notions to be discussed in one training session.

Consequently, facilitators need to pay particular attention in ensuring that their group remains focused on the objectives of this exercise (the manifestation of GBV in relationships and the risks of romanticizing violence). Since it is important for students to understand the causes of violence and the reasons why women tolerate abuse, facilitators can address these topics in the discussions, but briefly. Facilitators can explain the complexity and multi-faced nature of violence and its repercussions and utilize this opportunity to clarify any misunderstandings or 'myths' with regards to the victims of abuse. It is important that students understand that violence is not only directed towards people who are weak or

vulnerable; instead, any person regardless of age, gender, social status, profession etc. can become a victim of violence.

Moreover, facilitators need to conduct the role-play exercise with care and sensitivity. As young people identify with the characters, the role play may result in the sharing of personal stories, which in turn may stir some intense feelings for some participants. Thus, it is crucial that all participants feel that they are in a 'safe environment' and that they are treated with respect and sensitivity. It is important that prior to the commencement of the debriefing, that the facilitator points attention to the fact that this is a sensitive exercise and that all participants need to treat what their classmates share with confidentiality and delicacy. In addition, participants need to be reassured that they are not obliged to share intimate details or discuss incidences that may make them feel uncomfortable. Participants can only disclose what they feel comfortable to share with others in public. The debriefing also needs to be formulated in a 'non-personal' manner, so that even if someone has had a painful personal experience, they do not have to answer by referring to it directly.

Lastly, referrals to support phone-lines can prove vital in the event that students share stories of violence that are placing other people at risk.

3.4. Session 4 –Training the Peer Educators

3.4.1. Session 4 Learning Objectives
– Explore the qualities of a peer educator and the skills needed in conducting a peer training.
– Understand what group facilitation is and practice facilitating a group.
– Help young peer educators to face their fears and anxieties concerning conducting a training session with their peers.

3.4.2. Training the Peer Educators

None of the students who expressed an interest to become peer educators had previous experiences in peer education, group facilitation or speaking in public. Thus, it was deemed necessary to first help them understand the role of the peer educator (and what was expected of them in this role) and then train them on the basic principles of public speaking and group facilitation.

Peer educators primarily focused on skills that could promote participatory and interactive learning among their peers. Some key principles of group facilitation were first discussed theoretically and then peer educators had a chance to carry out 'practice' peer training sessions where they put these skills into practice. The practice sessions proved to be critically important as they provided the ground for peer trainers to practice facilitating a

group, and provided a safe environment where they could explore how to best handle 'difficult' participants (participants that may be indifferent, causing trouble or asking very provocative questions). The practice sessions also provided the opportunity for peer educators to test how they could respond to difficult situations without feeling exposed, as for instance being confronted with difficult or provocative questions or having to deal with a group that is expressing some extreme opinions about the issue at hand. The practice sessions also allowed peer educators to discuss their concerns, fears and possible challenges and to explore ways that they could use to overcome them (as for instance how to deal with presentation anxiety etc.). Lastly, the practice sessions also provided a 'testing ground' for logistical issues to be sorted out prior to the actual peer education trainings, thus ensuring a smoother flow when the actual peer trainings did take place.

Overall, these practice sessions appeared to be an empowering experience for peer trainers. Having the opportunity to practice beforehand, young people felt reassured that they knew what to do and were more confident to assume their role as educators in front of others. In addition, having sorted all logistical details, peer trainers were ensured of how to react and when and were also clear on what arguments they could employ to convince their peers.

However, in lieu of the time constrains of training session 5, not all peer educators had the opportunity to practice group facilitation skills prior to the actual peer training session. Nevertheless, all peer trainers fell back to what they themselves had experienced during the training sessions and called upon their own observations and learnings. Indeed, the majority of them had learned a lot by example and it was easy for them to recall and employ skills in engaging and facilitating their group. The fact that they would also administer activities that they themselves had experienced also provided them with the confidence that they could carry them out well, not only because they were familiar with them but also because the particular activities chosen had made a prominent impression on them, thus they were easy to recall.

Agenda of the peer education training

Time	Peer education trainings	Notes
5 min	**Introduction**	Short briefing from peer trainers about the training
40 min	**Gender Box**	The Gender Box can be adapted to be conducted in 30 minutes. To save time, the discussion on the magazine pictures can be substituted with a brainstorming session in plenary about gender roles.
40 min	**Take a stand (Myths and realities about GBV)**	
5 min	Short evaluation by participants	

The rationale behind deciding on the agenda for peer trainings is to include activities that are enjoyable, have made an impact and proved to be catalytic in challenging young people's beliefs and perceptions. In addition, the selected activities need to be easy and straightforward so that peer educators can administer them with ease.

Nonetheless, a balance needs to be maintained between activities that young people would enjoy and would feel most comfortable to administer and activities that are geared towards raising awareness on specific and important issues related to GBV. Towards this end, an activity about gender roles and gender norms is mandatory as it constitutes the basis for exploring 'normalized' or stereotypical perceptions about girls and boys and how these often give rise to unhealthy behaviors. It was in this light that the 'Gender in a box' activity was selected and was adapted to be conducted in 40 minutes.

Even though it was originally planned to include an activity on exploring the ways that gender-based violence is manifested in young people's relationships (e.g. either including the role play on romantic relationships or scenarios on school related GBV), young people opted for the Take a Stand exercise on the myths and realities because they considered it more impactful. Evidently, the 'Take a stand' activity did have a great appeal and generated some very lively and very fruitful discussions among participants.

Things to think about

One of the most important parts of the experience of being a peer educator is the debriefing session after each peer training. Since most young people are probably acting as peer trainers for the first time, they are often unsure of how they performed and what impact they may have had on their peers. If peer educators don't have a chance to express their concerns and reflect on their experience, they may develop a mistaken perception of their performance and become demotivated. Thus it is important that they are given the opportunity to reflect on what they learned and also explore ways that they can improve or become more effective in this role. Lastly, but most importantly, these debriefing sessions also need to concentrate on celebrating the peer educators' achievements.

Peer education is indeed a fun and empowering experience and peer educators are often very keen to continue delivering peer trainings to their peers. The facilitators, the teachers and/or the school can explore ways to support such initiatives. Young people need to be encouraged and supported to continue to be actively involved in combating GBV, either as peer educators or in other ways (for instance through school projects etc.).

3.5. Art Activity

The purpose of the Art Activity was to further encourage young persons to act as agents of change in their environments by providing them with the opportunity to communicate

important messages to their peers or other members of their community. Besides being an incredibly effective communication and awareness-raising tool, art is thoroughly enjoyed by most students because it provides the ground for them to be creative and think outside the box, have fun and work collaboratively. Art and creative activities also provide the forum for students that are more introverted, and tend to shy away from discussions, to participate in conveying their own messages. Even though these more reserved students often appear to be 'absent' from what is going on during the training sessions, their art pieces reveal that they have indeed absorbed a lot and that they also have some important messages to convey.

Students were encouraged to consider various ways in which they could use art and not just limit themselves to creating posters. Building on previous experiences of the partners, various ideas were explored including digital stories (short animations or films), photography,   writing lyrics or composing songs, writing short stories or articles for a newsletter or website, creating and producing drama plays and creating information leaflets about gender-based violence. However, because the students already had a very busy schedule, they could not devote a lot of time in creating the art pieces outside the time allocated in training session 4. Thus, it appeared that creating posters or other drawings was the most feasible and the most preferred option. Only one group decided to take their work home and produced a figurine out of wire about sexual violence.

For the Art Activity to work well it is important that prior to its implementation, students have a clear idea of its objective. With the help of the facilitator, students need to arrive at the specific messages they would like to convey through their artwork and also ensure that these messages are clear, easily understood and relevant to the issues encompassing GBV. A brainstorming session proved particularly useful in exploring the types of messages students wanted to convey. Young people were encouraged to reflect on the Training Sessions and think of issues that made a particular impression on them or that they wanted to place emphasis on because of their importance in dispelling myths about GBV.

The common themes that emerged during the art activity for Cyprus were twofold: (i) a depiction of how gendered violence is manifested in romantic relationships (control, jealousy, intimidation psychological abuse) and (ii) a depiction of the severity of psychological abuse.

Throughout the implementation of the art activity, students were encouraged to let their creative ideas flow without censoring them. There's no limit to what students can create as long as it is non-offensive. They were also promoted to use a variety of materials such as newspaper clippings, pictures from magazines, collage, wire, sculpting materials etc., in order to make their posters more interesting and more attractive. Even though students

were encouraged to work collaboratively, some students felt that they could express themselves better if they worked on their own and their request was respected.

For some students, the 45 minutes allocated in Session 4 for the implementation of the art activity was limiting, especially for those that wanted to create something more complex. Additional time could be allocated after the Session, if this is feasible, or students may opt to complete their artwork at home.

In addition, it also important to explore ways of how the students' artwork can be further promoted so as to reach young people more widely (e.g. displays in places where young people hang out, media coverage, use of social media, displays in the project's website etc.).

Examples of artwork created by Youth 4 Youth participants
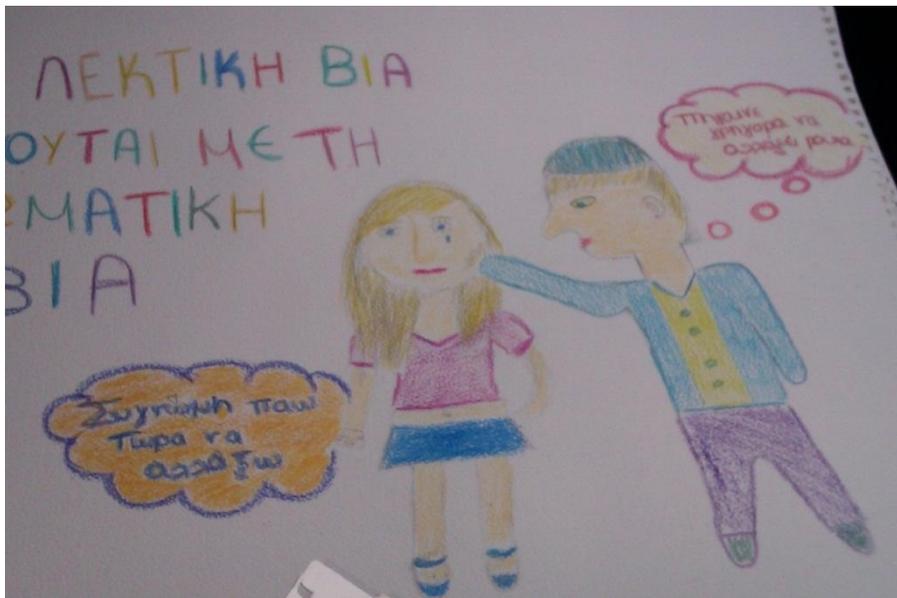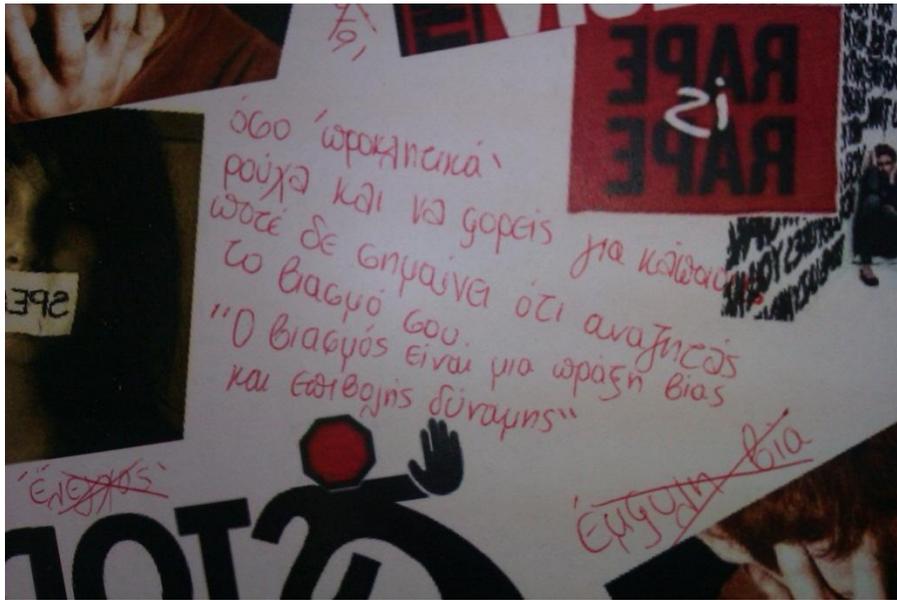
<u>Things to think about</u>

The art activity does take a considerable amount of time and in lieu of the time pressures of the training Programme, it is easy to give it secondary priority or omit it altogether in order to catch up with issues that may have arisen during the training sessions and require further discussion. However, the art activity is no less important than any other activity that is included in this training Programme. For one, it ensures inclusion of all members of the group as it provides the opportunity to the shy participants to express themselves in a less 'threatening way'. In addition, it constitutes a pleasant 'break' from discussions and personal reflections that may be mentally strenuous. Lastly, art brings out creativity; it is fun and enjoyable and has a direct impact both on the creator and the spectator. In many ways,

the art activity enhances the consolidation of knowledge as it encourages the students to work through getting a clear, strong and comprehensive message across.

3.6. Teachers' Training

Gender education has been recently recognized as one of the parameters of the reformed school curriculum in Cyprus, with specific learning objectives having been incorporated under the module of Health Education that is currently administered by Home Economics Teachers. Thus, Home Economics Teachers were targeted in a training workshop with the aim to discuss activities they can conduct in the classroom on gender related issues and particularly on gender-based violence. In total, 12 Home Economics Teachers participated in a 4 hour training session, conducted outside working hours on a Saturday morning. Participation to the training was entirely voluntary.

As the curriculum reform is relatively new, Home Economics teachers have not yet had a chance to receive any official or comprehensive training on gender issues. Moreover, pedagogical material on gender education is virtually limited as it is still currently under development. In lieu of this, it was deemed appropriate to deliver an introductory training to the teachers, aiming to first familiarize them with the fundamental concepts of gender, gender roles and gendered violence.

A PowerPoint Presentation was delivered to provide a theoretical background on the social construction of gender, gender inequalities that are apparent in the Cypriot Society and the basic principles of gender based violence (definition, causes and manifestations). Interactive exercises were then conducted with the teachers, exercises that the teachers themselves could then use in their classroom when teaching about gender. The aim of these exercises was twofold. On one hand, it aimed to enhance teachers' knowledge, challenge their perceptions and encourage them to rethink societal or behavioral 'norms' that perpetuate gendered violence. On the other hand, teachers had the opportunity to experience firsthand actual activities that they can conduct in the classroom and witness how such activities can be facilitated.

In terms of thematic content, the training activities focused on myths and realities about gender-based violence, manifestations of GBV in the school environment and intervention techniques (i.e. how can students, teachers and the school intervene to prevent GBV). The training agenda was as follows:

Time in min	Activity
20	Icebreaker and Introduction to the training. Participants' expectations
10	Presentation of the Youth 4Youth Programme
40	Power Point Presentation -Theoretical Background on: • Gender/ Social construction/normalization • Gender roles • Gender inequalities • Gender based violence (definition, manifestations)
20	Discussion on topics presented in the PowerPoint
30	Myths and realities regarding GBV Take a stand activity
15	Break
30	Scenario of GBV in school environment and discussion
30	Scenario of school related GBV with teacher as a bystander
20	Role Play and Discussion on Intervention techniques.
20	PowerPoint Presentation on intervention techniques. Discussion of how the school system can support teachers in standing up to GBV
5	Closing

Teachers found the discussion on myths and realities about gendered violence very useful, as it provided hands-on experience on how they could go about challenging these perceptional 'norms' of their students. However, the last session on intervention techniques seemed to be the most impactful and was singled out as the most beneficial activity of the teachers' training. The teachers often appeared to be at loss when faced with incidences of gender-based bullying and claimed that they didn't know how to react. Regardless, all teachers recognized the necessity of taking action and were very open and very willing to explore ways that could help them make an effective intervention. During the last session, teachers took the opportunity to discuss specific incidences that they had witnessed in their classrooms or in the school environment and explored various ways of making an effective intervention.

Things to think about

In the absence of systematic and comprehensive training on gender issues, Cypriot teachers often lack the necessary awareness, skills and competencies to successfully implement gender education in their classroom. What teachers need is not to be merely provided with pedagogical material or training handbooks that they can use for teaching; they need step

by step hands-on guidance on *how* they can implement the relevant pedagogical activities and *how* they can facilitate discussions to enhance their students' awareness. Most importantly however, teachers need clear guidelines, skills and techniques on how to successfully deal with incidences of gender-based bullying that are starting to constitute a recurrent reality in the school environment. Ultimately, teachers need to understand how they can make an impact, both in terms of encouraging their students to re-evaluate past beliefs and perceptions but also in terms of protecting them from gendered violence or abuse.

3.7. Supporting Young People with Experience of Gender Based Violence

As mentioned in section 2.5.1 above, the training activities may occasionally trigger disclosures of abusive incidences that are either witnessed or are directly experienced by young participants. To protect the young people who have disclosed such incidences, it is important that the facilitator handles their disclosure with sensitivity, discretion and genuine caring. Witnessing or experiencing an abusive incidence is a very delicate matter with often traumatic consequences on the parties experiencing it. Young people, who have experienced abuse either as victims or as bystanders, need to feel believed, validated, protected and reassured. Thus, it is important that the facilitator creates an environment where young people can feel safe to disclose without being judged. In addition, it is important that after the disclosure young people have a plan of action at hand, whereby it is clear where they need to turn to in order to receive support.

Facilitators also need to be clear about the school's guidelines in dealing with disclosures of abuse, especially if they involve incidences that have taken place in the school environment. In most cases of school based bullying, young people may need to be referred to the school counselor to ensure that they will receive appropriate follow up and support. In some incidences it may be deemed necessary to also notify the parents. In addition, it is good practice that the facilitator provides referrals to organizations or phone-lines that can help and support young people who have experience of bullying or abuse and feel the need to speak to someone.

During the course of the training Programme there were three incidences of students' disclosure. One boy admitted to be continuously bullied by his classmates because he is a good student and he is not good in sports. In the second case, a girl had admitted that one of her classmates was sexually assaulted at a party and that she was in such a fragile state after the incident that she could no longer attend school. The third incident regarded physical violence; a young boy was physically attacked because his classmates thought he was gay.

All incidences were quite serious and reprimanded immediate attention and handling. In order to respond to them appropriately, various interventions had to take place at various levels. Protecting the students who had experienced abuse constituted the first and outmost priority. The school counselors were immediately informed so that they could arrange for appropriate psychological support and monitoring to be provided to the students. The school principal and the school management were also notified to take all necessary measures from their end towards ensuring a violence free environment for their students. For the case of the sexual assault, referrals were provided to support phone-lines that could provide support to the victim and help her explore her options.

Quite importantly, in our intervention in the case of disclosures, it is also important to keep in mind that bystanders may also require support. For instance, the girl who was providing support to her friend who was sexually assaulted was also quite shaken by the incident and equally needed psychological support.

Lastly, a frequent follow up from our end may also be deemed mandatory to ensure that the appropriate support was provided to the students.

4. Overall Programme Evaluation

4.1. Students' overall Satisfaction with the training Programme

Overall the trainings appeared to have had a positive appeal. In their evaluation forms (as shown in Table 1 below) students mentioned that the workshops indeed fulfilled their expectations (75% claiming so) and found the topics enjoyable, interesting and relevant to young person's everyday realities (74%, 87% and 71% of participants claiming so respectively). In terms of the trainings' logistics, the duration of the sessions and the theoretical background that was provided also seemed to be 'just right', with 70% and 78% of students respectively claiming that 'enough time was devoted to each session' and that 'the theoretical aspect of the course was satisfactory'.

Overall evaluation of the training	% mentioning top scores (score 4 or 5)	Average Score**
The training fulfilled my expectations	75%	3.96
The topics discussed were interesting	87%	4.35
The topics discussed addressed issues that concern me in my everyday life	71%	4.06
The training encouraged active participation and	85%	4.44

expression of ideas successfully		
The training methods used in the course promoted my active engagement	**68%**	**3.82**
The training activities stimulated my learning	**75%**	**4.18**
I enjoyed the activities I participated in	**74%**	**4.09**
Trainers were well prepared	**91%**	**4.60**
Enough time was devoted to each session	**70%**	**4.09**
There was adequate time allocated for discussion / questions	**75%**	**4.24**
The theoretical aspect of the course was satisfactory	**78%**	**4.07**

** *Scores rated on a 5 point Likert scale, where 5= Completely agree and 1 = Completely disagree*

Table 1 – Overall evaluation of the training

4.2. Positive outcomes of experiential learning

Notably, what appears to have been a fundamental 'success' of the workshops was the non-formal experiential methodology that was implemented. Findings from both the evaluation forms and the focus group discussions indicate that students enthusiastically embraced this type of workshops not only because they were fun but also because they encouraged their active participation and enhanced their learning. As indicated in Table 1 above, 74% of students claimed to have 'enjoyed the activities they participated in' while 85% of them mentioned that 'the training encouraged active participation and expression of ideas successfully'.

As mentioned in the focus group discussions (FGD) it appears that the overwhelming majority of students encountered experiential learning for the first time and they were enthused by the experience. Students felt interested, engaged and motivated to participate. The fact that the workshops refrained from conveying knowledge in the traditional formal way of teaching (i.e. with the teacher being the primary conveyor of knowledge), provided the space for participants to learn from each other and also have 'ownership' of their learning process. For one, they felt free to express their opinions, without fear of being judged or criticized. They enjoyed the fact that they could engage in discussions with people their own age and explore how their opinions converge or diverge. They also felt encouraged to question, challenge and re-evaluate stances, attitudes and beliefs, both their own and others'. In general, the experiential methodology seems to have stirred an internal process of reflection, re-evaluation and critical thinking and provided the space for participants to decide for themselves what is right and what is wrong. By the end of the trainings, students claimed to now have a more spherical outlook on issues related to Gender Based Violence

'It was not like our classes, where a teacher just talks and talks. These workshops gave you the opportunity to talk and express your opinion. Moreover, the discussions helped to learn only to respect others opinions but to also learn from others', Boy, Private school

'I enjoyed the fact that you [the trainers] didn't try to impose any opinion on us. Issues emerged from discussions amongst us and this enhanced our learning. We also had a chance to hear 'the other side'. Through the discussion we realized what the right thing is, without someone imposing it on us'. Girl 1, Private School

'It was exciting that it was interactive and that we were encouraged to actively participate and have an opinion and 'take a stand'. Like the game with the line (on myths and realities about violence', Boy, Private School

'We were discussing that the way the educational system works does not help us to create social skills. It does not prepare us to face the world out there. But this training did just that!' Girl 3, Private School

'Even though my opinions were pretty much the same, after the training I feel I have a more spherical outlook on the issues related to GBV', Girl 2, Private School

4.3. Enjoyability

Enjoyability of the training was indeed high. Verbatims from evaluation forms make use of the words 'fascinating', 'excellent', 'fun', 'creative':

'It was fascinating!!Everything was excellent. I enjoyed every minute of it!'

'It was fun, creative and had the opportunity to express ourselves and talk about personal experiences'

Similarly, the mere fact that the overwhelming majority of participants (about 80% as shown in Table 2 below) expressed an interest to become peer educators also indicates how fervently they embraced the workshops and how enthusiastic and motivated they were after the sessions were completed. Furthermore, 9 in 10 expressed the intention to participate in similar workshops in the future, also suggesting the positive appeal of the workshops.

Future intentions on participation, recommendation and peer education	Definitely yes	Probably yes	Total YES	probably NOT	Definitely NOT
Would you like to participate in another similar workshop in the future?	53%	38%	**91%**	3%	6%
Would you recommend to a friend of yours to participate in a workshop like this?	63%	29%	**92%**	1%	6%
Would you be willing in the future to act as a peer educator of your classmates in issues related to gender-based violence?	46%	32%	**78%**	4%	18%
Do you think that such kind of workshops should be conducted by teachers during the school curriculum?	68%	24%	**92%**	1%	7%

Table 2- Overall satisfaction with the training reflected in future intention on participation, recommendation, and peer education

When asked to recall the feelings they had experienced during the course of the training, participants mentioned feeling 'interested', 'intrigued', having 'enjoyed themselves', 'happy', 'inspired' and relaxed (see Table 3 below). Quite importantly, more than half admitted that the workshops had a catalytic effect in helping them reevaluate their opinions and stances. Lastly, the overwhelming majority of students considered that such workshops need to be an integral part of the school curriculum (92% claiming so as shown in Table 2 above)

Feelings experienced during the training	% of participants claiming to have experienced each feeling
Interested	**76%**
Reevaluated your previous opinions and stances	**57%**
Intrigued	**51%**
Enjoyed myself	**50%**
Happy	**44%**
Inspired	**41%**
Relaxed	**41%**

Enthusiastic	**38%**
Empowered	**37%**
Content	**34%**
Surprised	**32%**
Challenged	**29%**
Engaged/Involved	**29%**
Disappointed	**10%**
Bored	**9%**
Stressed	**6%**
Tired and low energy	**6%**
Rushed/ Pressed for time	**4%**
Dissatisfied	**3%**
Disinterested	**3%**

Table 3 – Feelings experienced during the training

The role play and the debate on myths and realities of violence stood out as the most enjoyable activities. Both activities seemed to have had a great impact because they dealt with issues that are relevant to young people's everyday lives. As later mentioned in the focus group discussions, young people experienced the role play as a mirror of their everyday reality and they could see themselves in the characters.

Activities enjoyed	% of students mentioning each activity
Role play	50%
Discussions and exchange of opinions	34%
Gender box and gender roles/stereotypes	32%
The debate on myths and realities of violence	29%

Table 4 – Activities enjoyed the most (sorted in descending order)

Verbatims from the focus groups on the role play:

'We identified with the characters. You used an example which actually takes place in real life', Girl 4, Public School

'George and Evelyn were 'us'. Through them we could understand a lot of things about ourselves', Girl 7, Public School

<u>Reasons for enjoying the activities</u>

It seems that the primary reason for enjoying the activities concentrated on their interactive nature and the fact that they were also fun, creative, unique and educational. Students enjoyed the fact that they could express their own views and ideas and engage in constructive dialogue with each other. This surely stimulated a genuine interaction between them and helped them learn how to accept different opinions by actively listening to others and by 'leaving their own personal spectrum'. In addition, as the facilitators noted, the exchange of opinions and the interaction amongst the group seemed to have also have created a sense of bonding. Lastly, through this interactive exchange and by listening to different opinions, students were given the opportunity to learn from each other, thus in many ways it appeared that the interactive methodology of the trainings also helped to consolidate their knowledge.

Verbatims from evaluation forms:

'I have reevaluated my old beliefs'

'Develops critical thinking and confidence'

'The activities empowered me and gave me courage to react'

<u>Verbatims from focus group discussions</u>

'I have learnt to listen and to accept different opinions. I understood that even though certain things don't hurt me, it doesn't mean is the same for everyone' Girl 3, Private School'

'Through that exercise [because you had to take a stand] you became aware of different opinions, listened to what other people think and also reevaluated your own opinion' Boy, Private School

'I understood that we all have different opinions. I used to take for granted that others shared the same opinions as me on the issues of violence. For instance, to me it was clear that a girl cannot provoke with the way she is dressed, but during the exercise I realized that most people my age perceive something different'. Girl 1, Public School

'It helped you learn to listen' Girl 2, Public School

> *'In 40 minutes, you had to think, you had to express an opinion on things that you didn't think about in the past. You had to evaluate how you would react, what stance you would take, what arguments you could present'* Girl 1, Public School

Many students mentioned that the activities also encouraged them to develop critical thinking and often felt that they were 'forced to take a stand', looking for solid arguments to support their opinions. In addition, the interactive nature of the activities seems to have encouraged an internal process of reevaluation, with young people reflecting on their own stances, attitudes, beliefs and reactions, reassessing their beliefs and exploring how their behavior or experiences may deviate from what is healthy.

> *'This training had turned things upside down for me. Before I used to believe something and now I think of things in a completely different way. It's confusing. I still need to go through the process and find a balance',* Girl 1, public school

> *'I reevaluated everything',* Girl 2 public school

> *'When I realized how many things I do are wrong I was shocked! I would say to myself 'that is wrong', and that is wrong too',* Girl 5 public school

> *'I reevaluated my behaviors. I think before I act. It's like the gender workshop gave me the 'guidelines' of what is the right way to act',* Girl 2 , Private School

4.4. Awareness, Learning and Knowledge gained

4.4.1. Learning Outcomes - Comments from Participant Evaluations

Students claimed that the training had an unequivocal effect in enhancing their awareness and knowledge of issues related to Gender Based Violence. As stated in their evaluation forms, the increase in knowledge seems to have been high, reaching on average 74% (Table 5). The ability to clearly recognize GBV incidences also stands at an equal percentage (75%, Table 5). Quite importantly, young people also claimed that after the training they are more adept to recognize if their relationships are healthy and also understand if their own behavior may become unhealthy (as per table 5, this type of understanding has been claimed to be enhanced by 80%).

Even though a claimed enhanced knowledge and understanding of Gender Based Violence does not necessarily connote that an action will be taken, awareness-raising is definitely the first step in helping young people protect themselves and others from gendered violence and abuse. As the participants themselves mentioned throughout the workshops (and in the

focus group discussions, as mentioned below), this was the first time that they were able to recognize incidences that in the past they would have considered as 'normal' or 'natural' as incidences of abuse. And this is a very important realization to make. Towards this end, the training workshops seemed to have had a significant impact.

Degree to which training helped participants to…..	Average % out of 100%
Increase knowledge and understanding	74 %
Recognize incidences of gender based violence	75 %
Recognize if your relationships are healthy or not	79 %
Understand when your own behavior may become unhealthy	80 %

Table 5- Degree to which training contributed to raising awareness about GBV issues

In terms of the one most important piece of knowledge that has made the most impact, results from the evaluation forms point to the seriousness and repercussions of all forms of violence, be it physical, psychological and sexual (See Table 6 below). As already mentioned above in Section 3.2 (Reflections from Session 2), it was evident that prior to the trainings young people shared the opinion that physical abuse had more serious repercussions than psychological abuse ; while any form of acceptance of physical abuse was unthinkable, there was more 'leniency' and 'tolerance' for psychological abuse. It was also evident that young people lacked awareness in identifying, recognizing and classifying psychological abuse as such, with the risk of bypassing such abusive behaviors as 'normal'. After the trainings, these perceptions seem to have shifted, with students being more adept at recognizing psychological abuse and exhibiting much less tolerance. As students mentioned in their evaluation forms:

> 'Anything that aims to hurt is a form of violence'

> 'Physical violence does not outweigh psychological /verbal abuse'

> 'The serious repercussions of any type of violence; they can be traumatic for a lifetime'

To a lesser extent the fact that violence cannot be provoked, breaking gender stereotypes and standing up to violence and abuse received secondary priority in knowledge gained, as shown below in Table 6.

Most important thing learnt as stated in evaluation forms– Verbatims merged in similar thematic categories	# of students mentioning….
Recognize the seriousness and repercussions of ALL forms of violence, including psychological violence	*20*
The need to break gender stereotypes and live outside the box	5
The need for intervention and standing up to violence and abuse	5
The fact that violence cannot be provoked	5
Accepting others who are different and refraining from exercising any forms of gendered violence towards them	4
Anyone can become of victim of abuse	4
Recognized how things so far considered 'normal' or 'trivial' are forms of abuse	4
Both genders can be perpetrators of violence	3
The need to reach out for help if abused	3
Violence in relationships is unacceptable	3
Jealousy is a form of violence	2
No one has the right to exercise violence	2
Relationships need to have the right boundaries	2
Violence is everywhere	2
Power differential as a cause of violence	2

Table 6 – Most important thing learnt (sorted in descending order)

Actual quotes on most important thing learnt
Recognize the seriousness and repercussions of ALL forms of violence, including psychological violence
– 'Violence is not only physical but has other forms as well'
– 'Anything that aims to hurt is a form of violence'
– 'Physical violence does not outweigh psychological /verbal abuse'
– 'No difference between physical and psychological violence'
– 'The serious repercussions of any type of violence, they can be traumatic for a lifetime'
Accepting others who are different and refraining from exercising any forms of gendered violence towards them
– 'Despite the appearance or 'strange' habits of a person, that person has rights and should not be bullied'
– 'Accept people who are different and not judge them for their appearance. No one has the right to exercise violence'
– 'That we shouldn't label people and create rumors'
Violence cannot be provoked
– Women do not provoke violence by the way they are dressed. They have the right to wear what they want
– People also cannot provoke violence

– Women who are raped don't provoke with the way they are dressed
The need to break gender stereotypes and live outside the box
– 'Even though there are set gender roles it is ok to be outside the box and be yourself'
– 'We shouldn't force anyone to get into the boxes so he can be accepted. Everyone is free to be and express himself'
The need for intervention and standing up to violence and abuse
– 'Need to help someone who experiences violence'
– 'Need to report violence as bystanders or victims'
– 'If we experience violence in our relationships we should reach out for help'

Table 7 - Actual Verbatims on most important thing learnt

4.4.2. Learning Outcomes - Results from Focus Groups

In terms of awareness and knowledge, findings from the focus groups were also consistent with the evaluation forms revealing a focus on *knowledge gained in relation to the nature, types, manifestations and repercussions of violence and abuse*. Most importantly, participants have o learnt to recognize acts of gendered violence in their own behavior and others', identifying not only how their own behaviors may become abusive but also how they may be perpetuating GBV by their attitudes and stances.

Apparently the training had an 'eye-opening' effect, especially towards lowering tolerance or acceptance of certain behaviors that were often bypassed in the past as 'normal' or 'acceptable'. This was particularly true in terms of creating rumors or maliciously criticizing others who act 'differently', behaviors that are quite common among adolescents. Evidently, young people who participated in the focus groups, mentioned to have gone through a process of personal reflection and introspection, re-evaluating their own behaviors, beliefs and attitudes through a more critical understanding of what 'is right and what is wrong' and what is 'acceptable and not acceptable.' Quite importantly, they claimed to have consciously made an effort to disengage from 'ordinary' unhealthy behaviors and appeared to be more accepting of their peers' behaviors, even behaviors that would have usually been perceived as being outside the 'norm'. Towards this end, it appears that the 'Gender in a box' activity has had a positive impact in encouraging young people to express their individuality but also respect the individuality of others.

> *'We gained knowledge… We can now recognize the incidences of GBV and we know where to turn to if we need to ask for help' Girl 2, Public School*
> *'*
> *We understood that we act violence without being aware of it ' Boy 1, Public School*

> *'It made me think that things we normally do, like rumors and comments and judging people are not right and we need to change this behavior' Girl 2, Public School*

'I understood that if I make any negative comments about a girl, it's like I am forcing her to get into the 'gender circle' that I believe is correct. Also reflecting on the scenario of the girl who 'provoked' sexual violence by the way she was dressed, I have reevaluated my stance, and I am more 'accepting' of these behaviors. I would think twice before I say something' Boy 1, Public School

'Through the reflection you realize your limits, you realize where you need to stop, so you don't cross the line and exercise violence' Boy 1, Public School

Young participants also claimed to have developed an in-depth insight of how Gender Based Violence is manifested in their romantic relationships. On one hand, in lieu of their enhanced awareness, they claimed to disengage from behaviors that would ultimately hurt their partner. On the other hand, since they were more adept to recognize gendered violence and abuse, they feel more ready to take action and to protect themselves.

'I understood that in a relationship you need to set the right boundaries from the beginning. In the role play, the girl was a victim of violence and did nothing to stop it and this escalated' Boy 1, Public School

'When jealousy crosses the line it is something 'sick'. Jealousy is not an act of love. In the same way exercise control and checking on someone is a form of violence. It's oppression', Girl 4, Public School

'In the past I would check my boyfriend's mobile without thinking about it. Now I no longer do it' Girl 6, Public School

Furthermore, participants claimed to be in a better position *to identify and dispel common myths about violence*. They mentioned to have re-evaluated and forgone previous perceptions with regards to the causes of violence and victim blaming. Quite importantly, there was enhanced understanding of the fact that there are no excuses for violence and, that bullying is a choice that perpetrators make, rather than the victim's fault. These shifts in the understanding of the nature, causes, manifestations and complexities of violence are also clearly evident in the data of the PRE and POST questionnaires, outlined in greater detail in Section 5.1, Tables 12, 13, 14 and 15.

'I learnt that NO-ONE has the right to exercise violence. There is no excuse for violence' Girl 1, Private School'

> *'The most important thing was to understand that violence cannot be provoked. Up to now I would find many excuses to justify the fact that may I have been abusive in my behavior. But now I know that violence is not provoked'* Boy 1, Public School

> *'It was important to realize that being abusive is a conscious choice'* Girl 3, Public School

Dispelling myths about violence also seems to have had an indirect impact on helping the participants in the trainings gain a *more in-depth understanding of the seriousness of psychological abuse*. Psychological abuse was often regarded as a type of violence that was of secondary importance and often overlooked for having less serious repercussions. It would be interesting to examine how these perceptions of young people are influenced by the media's representation of violence and abuse, where physical abuse is the main focus. Physical abuse also seems to dominate popular discourse in society, as also teachings about violence in and out of the school environment. These depictions had clearly infiltrated into the discussions young participants held during the course of the trainings about the manifestations and repercussions of violence. However, taking into consideration that psychological abuse is the most common form of abuse in young people's relationships (romantic and others) it was crucial for the students to make the important realization that psychological abuse is indeed present in their relationships and that it does carry some serious repercussions. Thus, it cannot be ignored, overlooked or remain unaddressed. This important realization actually constitutes the first step towards young people's empowerment, encouraging their active intervention in protecting themselves and others.

Shifted perceptions and understanding about psychological violence were also outlined in evaluation forms, were evident in focus groups discussions and dominated the messages conveyed by the art pieces that were created during the art activity.

Quotes from focus groups:

> *'In the past I used to justify psychological abuse. Or maybe I wouldn't even realize that I was subjected to psychological violence'* Girl 1, Public School

> *'Before I thought that it was more serious if you had beaten someone up. Now I know that psychologically abuse is also important'* Girl 2, Private School

> *'In the past I thought that psychological abuse doesn't have repercussions. But I understood that it can seriously affect certain people and not all people are equipped to handle abuse.'*, Girl 1, Private School

Messages from art work*:*

> *'Verbal abuse is equally destructive in a relationship'*

> *'Verbal abuse equals physical abuse'*

<u>Understanding of the gender dimension in violence and abuse</u>

Following participants' enhanced knowledge on the types, causes and impact of violence and abuse, it would be of value to examine how this understanding incorporates the gender dimension and more specifically the extent to which the participants are able to identify certain incidences of abuse as gender-based.

Notably, and as stated in Section 4.4 above, the trainings seemed to have had a positive impact in enhancing knowledge about gender norms and how these affect the lives of young people. In some ways, participants seemed to have dispelled some stereotypical beliefs and were more open to recognize other people's expression of individuality.

> *'Before the workshops I had stereotypical beliefs about boys and girls. After the workshops I realized that not everyone is like that', Boy, Private School*

> *'In the past I would make some not so nice comments about girls who dressed in a certain way. Now I know that they have the right to dress any way they want'. Girl 3 , Private School*

> *'Now if we start a conversation on gender roles and issues related to violence, for instance if women provoke violence by the way they are dressed, I always win the argument. I feel my opinions have been strengthened. Girl 3, Private School*

However, when prompted to mention whether they recognized the gender dimension in bullying, violence and abuse, participants appeared confused, unclear and unsure. Even though they are able to identify abusive behavior as such and do recognize the limitations that the socially defined gender roles impose on the lives of women and men, it seems that it is difficult for them to see how the two interrelate. Even though they do understand how gender inequalities are manifested, their understanding of what constitutes gender-based violence is unclear and somewhat superficial. Perhaps this could be attributed to the fact that even though participants understood the manifestations of gender inequalities, they still have not fully grasped the implications, impact and effect that these inequalities may have on their own lives. It could be true that young participants may attribute gender inequalities to the lives of grownups and may not be clear of how these inequalities are manifested in their own context.

Participants found it difficult to reflect on how boys and girls are the recipients of certain unhealthy behaviors because of the expectations that surround their gender. When they talked about abusive behavior they did not do so through the prism of gender inequalities or gender roles. When asked to provide an explanation for this, they mentioned that in the case of abuse, it is the person, not their gender that should be of importance. Apparently, it appears that young participants tend to focus more on the impact that the abuse may have on the person experiencing it rather than the underlying causes. Indeed, gender blindness is necessary when we discuss the severity of the repercussions of the abuse and issues related to the protection of the victim, however, when exploring the causes of violence, the gender dimension is fundamental and cannot be ignored.

> *'For me, in incidences of abuse, I don't think about whether it is a boy or a girl. I think about the person', Girl 2, private school*

> *'In our age, we don't make many distinctions on gender. We don't see things through the prism of gender. In class, we don't make this gender distinction'. Boy, Private School*

> *'In the past when we saw two people fighting, we wouldn't even consider the gender dimension. We never made this connection to gender violence; we never thought that gender had anything to do with it and that someone could be a victim of abuse because of their gender.' Boy, Private School*

Clearly, there is a need for placing more emphasis in providing further clarity in what constitutes Gender Based Violence and helping participants distinguish between impact and causality. Perhaps a theoretical representation of gender inequalities and how these are influenced by hierarchies of power could have been more impactful in enhancing young people's understanding of gendered violence. Furthermore, consciously linking the cases of abuse depicted in the scenarios discussed in Training Session 2 with socially imposed gendered expectations could have helped enhance awareness of the gender dimension to violence. In addition, as young people do tend to confuse GBV as something that takes place only between women and men, it is important to further emphasize how GBV can take place within the sexes, directed by girls towards other girls and by boys to other boys.

5. Programme Outcomes

5.1. Shifts in knowledge, attitudes and Perceptions

5.1.1. Results from PRE and POST questionnaires

Questionnaire

A questionnaire was distributed to all students that participated in the training Programme in an effort to capture any differences in perceptions prior and after the trainings (PRE vs. POST). Specifically, the questionnaire examined (i) perceptions with regards to gender roles (stereotypical characteristics and behaviors of males and females), (ii) general perceptions and attitudes about violence including myths about violence and abuse (iii) attitudes and stances with regards to intimate partner violence /violence in relationships and finally (iv) interventions to violent or abusive incidences,. Each student completed the questionnaire prior to the commencement of the first session (PRE results) and after the completion of the fourth session (POST results). Both the PRE and POST questionnaires were identical in order to allow for a pretest – posttest analysis.

Likert scales were used throughout the questionnaire to measure young peoples' degree of agreement on various statements. Perceptions were rated on a four point scale, where

1 = Strongly disagree, 2= Disagree, 4= Agree, 5= Strongly Agree, 3= Not sure

Profile of students who answered the PRE and POST Questionnaire

In total, 84 students answered the questionnaire either as PRE or as POST. A notable difference between PRE and POST questionnaires was evident with 84 PRE vs. 69 POST questionnaires being recorded. However, it is noted that this 'loss' of students in the POST phase does not in reality reflect a 'drop out' in participation but it was actually attributed to conflicting activities coincidentally running in parallel to the last session in one of the schools ,which resulted in some students being unable to attend the training.

A detailed distribution of the students who answered the PRE and POST questionnaire is shown in Table 8 below, including sample breakdown by gender and school:

--	Total	PRE	POST
Total answered	**84**	**84**	**69**
By gender ---------------			
Boys	27	27	21

Girls	57	57	48
By school ---------------			
Paliometocho	19	19	17
GCS School	28	28	18
Palouriotissa	20	20	18
Ethnomartyras Kyprianos	17	17	16

Table 8 – Distribution of Pre and Post questionnaires

Statistical analysis of the results

In terms of statistical analysis, and in order to maintain statistical validity for the statistical significance tests, results were drawn only from students who answered both the PRE and POST questionnaires. A comparison of the PRE and POST personal codes (a unique code allocated to each respondent for tracking purposes) yielded a sample of 50 questionnaires that could be included in the analysis. These 50 questionnaires exhibited the following breakdown per gender and school:

Gender		
Girls	37	74%
Boys	13	26%
Area		
Urban	35	70%
Rural	15	30%
School		
Palouriotissa	14	28%
Paliometocho	14	28%
Ethomartyras Kyprianos	13	26%
GC School	9	18%

Table 9 – Distribution of questionnaires included for the analysis

It is quite important to note that the number of questionnaires answered by boys was actually too small to yield statistically significant results. Thus, looking at differences in PRE and POST results separately for boys and girls would not carry much value. Similarly, base sizes for region (urban vs. rural) and school were also below the minimum required sample for statistical significance. In lieu of this, results were analyzed only at a total sample level.

Originally, the use of Repeated Measures Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was considered in identifying significant shifts in PRE vs. POST data but was disregarded in lieu of sample size considerations[1]. Alternatively, paired t-tests were run to test differences in the Average

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[1] Even though there are no clear guidelines on the minimum sample required for Repeated Measures ANOVA as per the recommendation Tabachnick and Fidell make for MANOVA (Multivariate Analysis of Variance), which is similar to Repeated Measures ANOVA in that both involve multiple dependent variables, the minimum sample size is 10 + the number of dependent variables. This would entail the use of a sample of

Scores of the PRE and POST answers. All statistical significant differences were highlighted below in red and were marked with an asterisk.

Moreover, in order to capture a more spherical overview of the changes noted, a relatively 'qualitative' approach was adopted when interpreting the results, with the focus being on the various 'shifts' observed rather than on the actual numerical differences.

It is true that there was no control group when implementing the pre and post methodology, which may question the exact extent to which these shifts in perceptions can be attributed to the training intervention alone. However, as indicated by the results in tables 11 to 16, various significant shifts were evident on issues that were directly linked to concepts addressed during the course of the trainings and which were thoroughly discussed during the debriefing of the various activities. Thus, regardless of its actual extent of impact, the training has undeniably been impactful. Even in the least degree, the training workshops did manage to encourage young people to reflect on their experiences of violence from a different perspective and gain an in-depth understanding towards the need to protect themselves and others by taking a stand.

Perceptions with regards to gender roles

Stereotypical characteristics of boys and girls

Characteristic	Characteristic mainly attributed to…	PRE	POST
smart	Applies equally to boys and girls	84%	90%
independent	Applies equally to boys and girls	84%	78%
confident	Applies equally to boys and girls	82%	84%
adventurous	Applies equally to boys and girls	72%	70%
modest	Applies equally to boys and girls	72%	74%
ambitious	Applies equally to boys and girls	70%	74%
vulnerable	Applies equally to boys and girls	70%	82%
Adaptable	Applies equally to boys and girls	68%	78%
arrogant	Applies equally to boys and girls	68%	82%
polite	Applies equally to boys and girls	64%	68%
decent	Applies equally to boys and girls	62%	70%
compassionate	Applies equally to boys and girls	60%	60%
dynamic	Applies equally to boys and girls	60%	78%
caring	Applies equally to boys and girls	60%	56%

at least 70 questionnaires.
http://www.utexas.edu/courses/schwab/sw388r7_spring_2007/SolvingProblemsInSPSS/Solving%20Repeated%20Measures%20ANOVA%20Problems.pdf,
Tabachnick & Fidell (1996) Chapter 9

serious	Applies equally to boys and girls	56%	68%
aggressive	Applies equally to boys and girls	52%	54%
sensitive	Applies equally to boys and girls	52%	56%
athletic	Applies equally to boys and girls	48%	62%
shy	*Applies equally to boys and girls*	*46%*	*68%**
athletic	Applies mostly to BOYS	48%	36%
tough	Applies mostly to BOYS	50%	52%
aggressive	Applies mostly to BOYS	42%	40%
nurturing	Applies mostly to GIRLS	52%	40%
analytical	Applies mostly to GIRLS	54%	42%
sensitive	Applies mostly to GIRLS	42%	42%

*Asterisk * connotes a difference of statistical significance*

Table 10 – Stereotypical characteristics of boys and girls

With respect to the stereotypical characteristics attributed to boys and girls, no significant shifts were observed between PRE and POST responses. Interestingly, the majority of young people who completed the questionnaires diverted from stereotypical beliefs and did not share the view that there are 'masculine' and 'feminine' traits or personality characteristics. There was only a slight association with boys being perceived as more athletic and tough while girls were being considered more nurturing and analytical.

Stereotypical Behaviors of boys and girls

	Average Scores - PRE	Average Scores- POST	% Strongly Agree /Agree- PRE	% Strongly Agree /Agree- POST
Boys who have many sexual partners are macho	1.38	1.48	6 %	6 %
Real men don't cry	1.56	1.36	8 %	2%
Boys are usually better than girls in science	1.8	1.76	10 %	8 %
It's mostly the woman's duty to take care of the house and the children	1.82	2.02	10 %	14 %
Men are tough and aggressive by nature	2.04	1.92	14 %	10 %

Men are more driven than women to be professionally successful	2.06	2.24	14 %	24 %
It's in the woman's nature to be shy and timid	*2.26*	*1.8 **	*24 %*	*10 %*
Men are more focused than women in making money and being financially well-off	2.38	2.48	24 %	34 %
Boys cannot control their sexual urges	*2.66*	*2.08 **	*34 %*	*12 %*
Men should be primarily responsible for financially supporting their family	2.76	2.64	40 %	40 %
It's not proper for girls to swear	2.8	2.6	40 %	38 %
It's more difficult for boys to control their temper	*3.06*	*2.5 **	*54 %*	*34 % **

Asterisk * connotes a difference of statistical significance

Table 11 – Stereotypical behaviors of boys and girls (agreement in ascending order)

A list of 'normalized' behaviors that are considered 'stereotypically male' and 'stereotypically female' were included to capture participants' perceptions on gendered roles. The degree of agreement with these roles was generally low, with the majority of participants claiming not to share stereotypical beliefs about how women and men are expected to behave.

There is an interesting paradox to note here. When asked to quote their answers on a questionnaire with regards to behaviors that point to traditional gender roles, young people do not adhere to stereotypes. Conversely, a different picture was evident when in-depth discussions were held with them during the debriefing of Sessions 2 and 3, following the scenarios on GBV bullying and the role play. In these discussions, students' reactions towards people who lie outside the 'box' of gender roles seemed to be clearly bound by stereotypes and taboos, suggesting that their opinions do not entirely divert from what is socially 'normalized' or 'expected'. In 'theory' (as when filling out a questionnaire for instance) young people may provide answers according to what is politically correct; in practice, however, they act differently, with behaviors that may be point to adherence to stereotypes and socially accepted behaviors. In addition, a closer look at the above statements, indicates that most of them make reference to 'men' and 'women', thus young people may have failed to see the relevance in their own context and opted for a more 'politically correct' response.

Notably, the highest degree of agreement prior to the trainings was in relation to the social expectation for men to be finally well-off and being the breadwinners of their family. In

addition, young participants were more inclined to consider that boys have a higher tendency than girls to display some form of aggression, be it sexual or other (higher agreement with the statements *'Boys cannot control their sexual urges'* and *'It's more difficult for boys to control their temper'*.) With respect to women, stereotypical beliefs concentrated on women being considered as shy and timid and the need for them to exhibit 'proper' behavior (it is not ok for girls to swear).

While stereotypical beliefs about boys' perceived aggression changed considerably after the trainings, perceptions with regards to men and money/professional success did not change much. Equally, there was no significant change in the perception regarding the need for girls to display proper behavior (not to swear) suggesting that these are more strongly implanted in respondents' minds.

<u>General Perceptions about Violence</u>

	Average Scores - PRE	Average Scores- POST	% Strongly Agree /Agree- PRE	% Strongly Agree /Agree- POST
It is ok to make sexual advances to a girl who you know has had many boyfriends in the past	1.46	1.24	6 %	- %
I believe that bullying is a natural part of being a boy	1.56	1.32	2 %	4%
When a girl refuses to have sex with a boy she has been flirting with she is just playing hard to get	1.58	1.46	8 %	4 %
When students call each other names it is most often just harmless fun	1.9	1.68	10 %	10 %
There's nothing wrong with showing sexually explicit pictures from magazines to someone who doesn't like it	1.94	1.54	16 %	8 %
People who are being called names most probably deserve it	2.1	1.86	20 %	14 %
It's ok to gossip and create negative rumors about someone if their behavior calls for it	*2.14*	*1.62**	*24 %*	*2 %**
Making fun and mocking someone about their appearance via Facebook is not as serious as doing it in person	*2.4*	*1.74 **	*24 %*	*8 %**

Physical abuse is more serious than verbal abuse	2.72	2.54	36 %	22 %
Threatening to hit someone but not hitting them is still a form of violence	*3.94*	*4.46 * *	*84 %*	*94 %**

*Asterisk * connotes a difference of statistical significance*

Table 12 – General Perceptions about violence (agreement in ascending order)

Overall, the participants did not claim a high tolerance of violence and abuse. This was evident in both PRE and POST results. Young participants reprove of sexual violence (with high disagreement on the statements '*It is ok to make sexual advances to a girl who you know has had many boyfriends in the past', 'When a girl refuses to have sex with a boy she has been flirting with she is just playing hard to get'* and '*There's nothing wrong with showing sexually explicit pictures from magazines to someone who doesn't like it')* and recognize that there is nothing 'natural' about violence (again high disagreement on '*I believe that bullying is a natural part of being a boy', 'When students call each other names it is most often just harmless fun').*

However, victim blaming perceptions were evident in a small but significant share of respondents. More specifically, 20% agreed that '*People who are being called names most probably deserve it',* while agreement with ' *It's ok to gossip and create negative rumors about someone if their behavior calls for it',* reached 24%. Notably, these victim blaming perceptions were successfully reduced after the trainings, (as indicated by the statistically significant differences highlighted in Table 12 above), suggesting that discussions in Session 2 on victims' behaviors and need for support had been fruitful in conveying the right messages.

Another significant shift that was evident was in relation to internet abuse. While 24% *did not consider 'mocking over facebook to be as serious as mocking that takes place in person',* this share dropped to 8% after the trainings.

The only myth that young participants did appear to subscribe to was the one in relation to psychological abuse. PRE training data connote a total of 36% of participants agreeing (10% agreeing strongly and 26% agreeing) that 'physical abuse is more serious than verbal abuse'. After the training intervention, a slight shift was noted in this respect (with 22% being in agreement) but this shift was not statistically significant. Actually, taking into consideration that in focus group discussions and evaluation forms, participants themselves did claim to have made some important realizations on the serious repercussions of verbal and psychological abuse (as explicitly outlined in Sections 4.4.1, Tables 6 and 7 and Section 4.4.2.) one would expect that this shift between PRE and POST data would have been higher. However, the differences observed between qualitative and quantitative responses

could be attributed to dissimilarities in the profile of participants that answered the questionnaires vs. those that participated in the FGDs.

Myths about violence

	Average Scores - PRE	Average Scores- POST	% Strongly Agree /Agree- PRE	% Strongly Agree /Agree- POST
People who don't report on-going abuse by others must want the situation to continue	1.84	1.66	12%	8%
Violence appears mostly in grown-up relationships and rarely in adolescent relationships	*2.24*	*1.82 **	*20%*	*8%*
People who abuse others are usually not very educated	2.64	2.22	34%	22%
People who resort to violence most likely have a drinking problem	2.9	2.52	48%	34%
Victims of violence are usually people who are weak characters	3.1	2.68	50%	46%
Sometimes girls provoke sexual aggression by boys because of the way they are dressed	*3.2*	*2.1 **	*58%*	*18% **
Women are most likely to be sexually abused by a stranger than by someone they know	*3.26*	*2.62 **	*58%*	*32%*
If a person is being abused, they could simply exit the relationship	*4.12*	*3.16 **	*82%*	*52% **

Asterisk * connotes a difference of statistical significance

Table 13 – Myths about violence – (agreement in ascending order)

In relation to common myths about violence and abuse, average agreement scores prior to the training were centered close to 3, suggesting a certain degree of uncertainty in distinguishing myths from realities. Notably, the myths with the highest acceptance scores were the ones that experienced the highest shifts after the training intervention. More specifically, acceptance of the statements 'Sometimes girls provoke sexual aggression by boys because of the way they are dressed', 'Women are most likely to be sexually abused by

a stranger than by someone they know' and ' If a person is being abused, they could simply exit the relationship' has decreased considerably.

This highlights the successful impact of the 'Myths and Realities- Take a Stand' activity, which seems to have had an unequivocal effect in influencing young participants' perceptions. Evidently, after the trainings young people were in a better position to understand the complexities of violence and the reasons for victims sometimes choosing to stay in the abusive relationship and, in some respect, have cultivated some empathy for the victims. In addition, they seem to have dispelled myths with regards to causality of violence and victim blaming, revoking any victim responsibility, and adhering to the belief that violence cannot be provoked. These were important understandings to make, especially towards enhancing young people's need for taking action to protect themselves and others from gendered violence.

Reasons for exercising violence

	Average Scores - PRE	Average Scores- POST	% Strongly Agree /Agree- PRE	% Strongly Agree /Agree- POST
People exercise violence in a relationship because they want to control their partner	2.18	2.88 *	20%	46 %*
People exercise violence because they feel superior to the victim	2.96	3.52 *	46%	66% *

*Asterisk * connotes a difference of statistical significance*

Table 14 – Reasons for exercising violence – (agreement in ascending order)

Perceptions with regards to the causality of violence have also shifted considerably. After the trainings, young people acknowledged issues of control and abuse of power (power differentials) in a relationship as important causes that give rise to gendered violence in intimate relationships. This shift in beliefs was also a significant one, as young participants appeared to be in a better position to recognize when their relationships may be getting unhealthy and were more inclined to react.

General attitudes towards violence in relationships

	Average Scores - PRE	Average Scores- POST	% Strongly Agree /Agree- PRE	% Strongly Agree /Agree- POST
It is completely natural to restrict the amount of time your partner spends alone with his/her friends	1.92	1.56	14 %	6%
If your partner constantly checks on you (i.e. asking where you are and what you're doing) it means that s/he truly cares about you	*2.06*	*1.58 **	*12%*	*6%*
If a partner constantly points out your shortcomings it's because s/he cares	*2.38*	*1.72 **	*22 %*	*4% **
There's nothing wrong with checking the mobile phone of your partner	*2.48*	*1.62 **	*28 %*	*6% **
It is acceptable to shout, insult and threaten your partner if s/he has been unfaithful to you	2.52	2.18	32%	22%
When you show you are jealous in a relationship, it means you really love your partner	*2.94*	*2.2 **	*48%*	*18% **
It is ok to restrict the way your partner dresses if you think it is provocative	*3.14*	*2.26 **	*54%*	*16% **

Asterisk * connotes a difference of statistical significance

Table 15 – General attitudes about violence in relationships (agreement in ascending order**)**

PRE questionnaires reveal that acceptance of the various manifestations of violence in romantic relationships, varied according to the type of behavior, with some behaviors being more condoned than others. Control ranged from qualifying as acceptable or 'normal' to crossing the line to being unacceptable. Notably, behaviors that involved 'constantly checking on someone' and #restricting the time they spend with friends' received very low acceptance. Conversely, 'restricting the way a partner dresses', 'checking their mobile phone', 'shouting and threatening in the event of unfaithfulness' and 'constantly putting down someone as a sign of love', exhibited higher acceptance. This tendency was also confirmed during the debriefing of the role play, when young people seemed to consider these specific aspects of control as 'normal', 'acceptable', 'common', 'justified' and even 'necessary'. In addition, a considerable share (54%) perceived jealousy as an expression of

interest and love. Jealousy was also regarded as the most 'reasonable' explanation and sometimes even 'justification' of GBV in intimate relationships.

Quite importantly, very significant shifts were noted in almost all statements in relation to abuse in romantic relationships, the majority of which also exhibited statistical significance. Evidently, this would suggest that Session 3 (the Role Play) was particularly successful in conveying the necessary messages and in challenging or even changing young participants' perceptions with regards to intimate partner violence. As indicated in Table 15 above, after the trainings a considerably higher share of students did not condone control, checking up on someone or restricting a partner's behavior, with shifts in pre vs. post perceptions ranging from 25% to 40%.

General Attitudes about' interfering' in friends' relationships

	Average Scores - PRE	Average Scores- POST	% Strongly Agree /Agree- PRE	% Strongly Agree /Agree- POST
If you try to help a friend who is in an abusive relationship you'll make things worse for him/her.	2.14	1.98	10%	2%
What happens in a relationship is a private matter and others should not interfere even if violence is present	*2.5*	*1.64 **	*28%*	*4% **

Table 16 - General Attitudes about' interfering' in friends' relationships

 Notably, a small but significant share of participants (28%) expressed some reluctance in interfering in their friends' relationships in the event that those may become abusive. Even though this reluctance did not seem to be linked to the fear that an interference will make things worse for the victim, discussions during the training sessions (and particularly in Sessions 2 and 3) revealed that fear for worsening the situation *is* a prohibiting factor in taking action. As mentioned in the debriefings of Section 3, other reasons enhancing young people's reluctance to interfere include lack of confidence in handling the situation properly and the realization that experiences of violence and abuse are complex and multifaceted, thus making the intervention difficult.

Remarkably, inhibitions to interference seemed to have been lifted after the training workshops, with post data standing at only 4%. This shift could be attributed to various discussions that followed the activities focusing on the necessity for an intervention in breaking the cycle of violence and also on exploring effective ways to interfere, without exposing the victim or the perpetrator.

General attitudes about intimate partner violence – Boys vs. girls

IT IS VIOLENCE WHEN HE….	Average Scores - PRE	Average Scores- POST	% Strongly Agree /Agree- PRE	% Strongly Agree /Agree- POST
Checks what she does, where she is and who she is with	*2.88*	*3.86 **	*40%*	*80% **
Continually shouts at her	*3.72*	*4.2 **	*74%*	*84%*
Makes offensives jokes about her in front of others	3.98	4.36	78%	88%
Pressures her to have sex	4.16	4.4	80%	86%
Slaps her	4.66	4.6	96%	94%
Threatens to physically hurt her	4.38	4.42	90%	90%
ITS VIOLENCE WHEN SHE….	Average Scores - PRE	Average Scores- POST	% Strongly Agree /Agree- PRE	% Strongly Agree /Agree- POST
Checks what he does, who he is and who he is with	*2.82*	*3.86 **	*36%*	*78% **
Continually shouts at him	*3.48*	*4.08 **	*64%*	*82% **
Makes offensives jokes about him in front of others	3.94	4.28	80%	86%
Pressures him to have sex	3.98	4.28	76%	86%
Slaps him	4.14	4.3	82%	86%
Threatens to physically hurt him	4.2	4.34	86%	86%

*Asterisk * connotes a difference of statistical significance*

Table 17- General attitudes about intimate partner violence – Boys vs. girls

Prior to the trainings behaviors related to 'control' and 'shouting' were perceived as more accepted than expressions of physical or sexual violence. Moreover, young participants showed more acceptance of 'control', 'shouting', 'slapping', 'pressuring to have sex' when this was directed from girls toward boys rather than the other way around. However it must be noted that not many assumptions can be drawn to explain this difference, as this difference was not statistically significant, and could be attributed to sampling error.

After the trainings, perceptions with regards to control and shouting changed considerably (with noted statistically significant shifts) both when expressed from girls towards boys and also from boys towards girls. The other statements (physical abuse, slapping and pressure to

have sex) did not exhibit any significant shifts, but it must be noted that they originally incurred a ceiling effect regardless.

5.2. What have young people gained from the trainings?

<u>Results from Focus Group Discussions</u>

Evidently, besides the measured shifts in perceptions which were outlined in Section 5.1 above, it appears that the impact of the training sessions often carried a ripple effect on many areas of young participants' lives.

Firstly, the trainings cultivated a sense of personal introspection, with young participants claiming to stop and reassess a situation before they act. They also claimed that they often use the training as a reference point to guide them on how to react or to behave. They also seem to have more self-control over their behavior and are now more aware of how their behavior may hurt others.

> *'When I find myself in a certain situation, I stop and ask myself 'What did you learn in the 'gender' seminar' before I act. In the past I was more spontaneous and rushed to judge people. Now I understand that there is a reason for someone's behavior and I've learnt to accept it', Girl-1 15y, Private School*

> *'I reevaluate my behaviors. I think before I act. It's like the gender workshop gave me the 'guidelines' of what is the right way to act', Girl-2 16y, Private School*

The trainings also had a positive effect on communication skills, encouraging a more genuine and meaningful exchange among young people, which in turn had a positive impact on their friendships. Young participants have learned to talk to each other with respect. They can now hold an argument presenting valid points. Their relationships with others have improved because they are more understanding. They also feel more 'free' to be themselves without worrying that they'll be judged. In some ways, after the trainings, they recognized their right to be themselves and express their individuality without fear.

> *'I speak to my friends more openly now. If I have a problem with a friend I would tell them directly instead of talking behind their back as I used to do. I was inspired by the role play, when he did things behind her back and I put myself in her place ', Girl 4, Private School*

'I don't get so angry with my friends as I used to. I stop and consider that they may have a reason for their behavior and I am more understanding' Girl 1, Private School

'With the exercise on the line [take a stand] we have learnt to talk to each other with respect. To understand there is another side to the story and different beliefs than your own. I have learnt to respect people not only on issues related to gender but on all issues.' Girl 4, Private School

'In the past I felt ashamed to act in a certain way because I was afraid others may judge me or my behavior [negatively]. But now I can act as I feel and I don't bother of what other people think' Girl 3, Private School

In relation to the above, they also recognized other people's right to freely express *their* individuality. They claim to have developed a higher sense of empathy and can now respect other people's right to behave outside the norm without being judged. They have stopped passing judgment and are also careful with creating rumors, as they recognize that malicious gossip and rumors are forms of violence.

'In the past I would make some not so nice comments about girls who dressed in a certain way. Now I know that they have the right to dress any way they want'. Girl-3 15y, Private School

''We got into the shoes of the 'other person', the person being abused'. Girl 1 , Private School

'There's this girl in 4th Class and she is subject to various types of bullying behavior; they mock her and shout at her and create rumors about her (because of the way she dresses). Even though I don't know this girl and I don't have any relationship with her, when I witness them bullying her I ask them to stop and keep their opinions to themselves', Girl 3, Private School

The recognition that they do have the right to freely express their individuality, in combination with their more assertive communication, has instilled a sense of self-respect and self-confidence in young people. Young participants claimed to have more respect for themselves, better confidence and more maturity in the way they behave.

'The training helped me to learn to respect myself. To have confidence…. To accept who I am', Boy, Private School

5.3. Empowerment of Young People to stand up to GBV

5.3.1. Results from PRE and POST questionnaires

	Average Scores - PRE	Average Scores- POST	% Strongly Agree /Agree- PRE	% Strongly Agree /Agree- POST
Even though I suspect that a friend of mine may be in an abusive relationship, I would prefer not to interfere	1.78	1.78	4%	-%
If teachers step in when a student is being abused by other students they would make things worse	*2.44*	*2.04**	*20%*	*6%*
If I experience any sort of abusive behavior in my relationship I would immediately talk to my parents about it	3.24	3.26	50%	52%
If I notice that a girl/boy in my school is bullied I would immediately go and talk to a teacher about it	*3.26*	*3.76 **	*50%*	*72% **
If I experience any sort of abusive behavior in my relationship I would immediately talk to my friends about it	3.72	3.64	70%	62%

*Asterisk * connotes a difference of statistical significance*

Table 18 -– Interventions to incidences of Gender Based Violence (agreement in ascending order**)**

Unequivocally, young participants claimed that they would indeed take action if they realized a friend of them is abused (92% claiming so). Similarly, if they themselves were experiencing abuse about 7 in 10 would resort to their friends to ask for help.

One significant change that was noted after the trainings is re-establishing faith that if they report an abusive incident to a trusted adult, the intervention will be a successful one. Teachers are being endorsed as the trusted adults to turn to when there is the need to report an incidence of violence. While only 50% of young participants would have resorted

to their teachers prior to the trainings, this share has significantly increased to 72% after the trainings. The perception that teachers would make things worse if they interfere has also diminished from 20% to 6%.

5.3.2. Empowerment- Comments from Participant Evaluation Forms

Degree to which training helped participants to…..	Average % out of 100%
Know what you should do if you or someone you care about is being abused.	77 %
Feel ready and more capable to take action against incidences of gender based violence	72 %

Table 19- Degree to which training contributed to empowering participants to stand up to GBV

Undoubtedly, the trainings seemed to have had a very positive impact in providing young participants with the knowledge and the skills to stand up to GBV. In their evaluation forms, young people claimed that the trainings substantially increased their knowledge in how to protect themselves and others from violence or abuse (average scores stand at 77%, as shown in Table 19 above). Similarly, because of their enhanced knowledge and awareness, their degree of readiness to take action has also increased tremendously, standing on average at 72% (Table 19).

Why do you feel more capable to take action against gender violence?	# of students mentioning….
Gained awareness and knowledge	22
Feel more empowered or more confident	8
Gained skills in how to intervene and know what to do	4
Understood the commonality of violence in everyday life	2
Recognize the need to intervene	2
Understood that the appropriate services take violence seriously and respond	2
I understood the 'other' sex better	2
No one has the right to exercise violence	2

Table 20 – Reasons for feeling more capable to stand up to GBV (sorted in descending order)

Besides increasing knowledge and readiness to react, the trainings' most irrevocable impact was on empowerment. As mentioned in the evaluation forms, after the trainings, young participants felt more confident, more powerful (*'I was alert of how much power I have*

inside me to do things') and more motivated to take action (*'The workshops encouraged me to go for it')*. They recognized violence as a tangible reality of their everyday lives and realized that in order to break the cycle of violence they need to make an intervention. It seems that enhancing knowledge also had a direct effect in instilling confidence and cultivating a sense of maturity and responsibility, which in turn acted as an important motivator for action (*'I am more certain and more mature. I now consider violence as an important issue and thus the need to act')*

Verbatims on feeling more empowered:

'Gained more Knowledge and heard advice of how to deal with certain issues'

'I was alert of how much power I have inside me to do things'

'I have learnt to recognize the signs, where violence begins and I am more prepared to take action for it'

'I was empowered!'

'Before the training I was afraid about anything concerning violence. The workshops encouraged me to go for it, harsh it down!'

'I feel confident to act if it is necessary. I am more certain and more mature. I now consider violence as an important issue and thus the need to act'

'I am more confident because I have more knowledge'

'I feel ready to help a friend or even a person I don't know'

5.3.3. Empowerment- Results from Focus Group Discussions

Young participants' need and readiness to take action against GBV was also widely evident in their focus group discussions. In many ways, they appeared more ready to protect themselves and others, recognizing that in incidences of abuse the intervention needs to be done as soon as possible before violence escalates. The trainings also seemed to have had a catalytic effect in validating young peoples' need to make an intervention when needed, counteracting any previous inhibitions (for instance beliefs that had to do with 'what happens in a relationship is a private matter', 'if you interfere you'll make things worse' and 'if you interfere you may get in trouble yourself'). Forgoing these inhibitions, young people appeared more confident, more certain, more motivated and definitely more empowered to take action.

> *'In the past you wouldn't think that other people would want you to interfere but you know that reacting it is the right thing to do', Girl 3, public school*

> *'I understood that I need to interfere to stop violence. If I have a friend who is in trouble, I need to help her, I need to bring to her awareness what's going on' Girl 4, public school*

> *'I intervened when a friend was telling me about some difficulties she was experiencing in her relationship. She was trying to 'find excuses' and was 'romanticizing' . In the past I would it let it pass. I would say it's their business and I shouldn't meddle with them. But now I said 'Look, it's not like this'. I felt I had the power to intervene in something that wasn't right'. Girl 2, Private School*

Empowerment seems to stem from a variety of factors that are all interlinked. At first, knowledge itself is quite empowering as it provides the stepping stone for taking action. Being able to identify gender-based bullying, to acknowledge its impact and understand why it happens, empowers young people to stand up for themselves and for their friends. The fact that they were also encouraged to 'take a stand', 'make their 'voice heard' and 'do something' instead of remaining passive is also empowering in its own accord. And the more action they take, the more empowered they feel. And the more empowered, the more confident, the more determined and the more motivated they are to stop the perpetuation of gender based violence in their personal lives, in their schools and their communities.

> *'If I witness someone being harassed I am not going to tolerate it', Girl 1, Private School*

> *'Being empowered means I will react, I will act, I will talk, and I will take a stand. You will not remain passive.' Boy, Private School*

> *'I am not going let things pass. I will take a stand. I will react' Girl 3, Private School*

Young participants also recognized that making an intervention is not an easy thing to do. In reality, it has to be handled with delicacy and sensitivity, conveying the right message, without offending the perpetrator or exposing the victim.

> *'In the past I felt that I had crossed a line when I interfered. Now I am more careful when I make an intervention, without being 'too strong' and without offending anyone. I am more discreet,' Girl 1, Private School*

Others recognized that are some limitations to their interventions especially in cases of physical abuse or threats of physical abuse. They appeared uncertain on how to interfere in such incidences, expressing the fear of putting themselves in danger and ending up being hurt themselves.

> 'In such cases (threats of physical abuse) you're afraid you'll make things worse so you don't talk' Girl 3, Private School

A small share also expressed the concern that their intervention may not be effective and wondered whether their intervention does matter in the end. This is understandable, since in many cases of abuse, a change is not evident right away. Sometimes it takes months or even years for a victim to take proper action and for an abusive incidence to stop. And the fact that results may not be immediate appears to be demotivating for some participants who, in lieu of the delay in witnessing real change, were disheartened to take further action.

> 'Yes, you do interfere but would you be effective? You may ask the bullies who psychologically abuse someone to stop, but will they (the bullies) stop?' Girl 2, Private School

> 'I was tired. I was tired of trying to make her (a female friend) see. She eventually realized what she was going through and she left him. Now I heard that she is back together with him. I am just tired of trying. I don't have the stamina to help her any more' Girl 6, public school

6. The Peer Education Approach

6.1. Young people as Peer Educators

Young people are rarely included or given a chance to actively participate in issues that directly concern or affect them. The peer education approach was particularly empowering because first of all it gave young people a 'voice'. It encouraged them to take action, assume responsibility and also have a chance to stand up to injustice and discrimination.

> '[Peer education] was our opportunity to react. To stand up to things that we believe are not right. It gave us the chance to express our opposition when we feel an injustice is taking place', Girl 3, Private School

Among the key motivators in becoming peer educators was the need to share the knowledge they gained with peers, 'point them in the right direction' and help them. Since

the training was an eye-opening experience for them, they wanted to instill the same levels of knowledge and awareness among their peers so they could also be in a better position to recognize gendered violence and protect themselves from it.

> *'I felt that what I had learnt were the right things and I believe that others also had the right to learn these things. It was my obligation to share with others what I have learnt. It was the right thing to do. As a peer educator I could encourage others to become aware of these things'. Boy, private school*

> *'I felt that by being a peer educator I could help others, especially those that are bullied'. Girl 2, private school*

Indeed the participants in the training sessions exhibited high enthusiasm and strong motivation to become peer educators. In total, 43 peer educators were trained under the Youth 4 Youth Programme in Cyprus, 6 from Paliometocho, 10 from Ethnomartyras Kyprianos, 12 from Palouriotissa and 15 from the GC School. No particular selection criteria were placed in recruiting peer educators. An equal opportunity was provided to all young people that expressed an interest so as not to demotivate any of them.

Peer trainers successfully 'rose up' to the occasion and executed their role very effectively. Even though the time devoted to training them as peer educators was limited, peer educators drew upon the knowledge they had already gained during the workshops and reproduced it. In addition, some of the peer trainers also reflected on skills that they had seen the facilitators use during the workshops and replicated them in an effort to create a safe environment for their peers to share experiences and engage in an active discussion. What was amazing to observe, was young people who were otherwise quiet, withdrawn and shy during the trainings, emerge as active and enthusiastic trainers. Moreover, it was evident that peer trainers had already absorbed substantially more knowledge and understanding than was evident during the workshops.

Even though most peer educators were concerned about presentation anxiety, none of them appeared stressed. Conversely, they all seemed to be at ease and appeared comfortable and relaxed. They also appeared confident and emitted an air that 'they knew what they were doing'. This had a catalytic effect in making their peers trust them and engage in lively discussions with them.

It was evident that peer trainers took their role seriously and maintained healthy boundaries with their groups. They ensured that all ground rules were followed, ensuring that participants respected people who were talking, waited for their turn to speak and did not criticize each other for what they shared. Even though they later admitted it to be a challenge, peer trainers maintained their neutrality and impartiality, allowing room for all opinions to be heard. They maintained a good flow and kept participants interested by

asking questions to challenge them. It was interesting to watch peer trainers implementing some of the techniques the facilitators had used, indicating that they had also learned a lot by example. Moreover, peer trainers recalled examples from the trainings they themselves had attended and used these examples during the peer sessions to generate discussions.

> *'I was amazed that we could handle a peer education session without having to study or prepare beforehand. We remembered everything from the workshops, from the role play, the line game (take a stand) and all those; the games had made such an impression on us that they 'stuck' in our head',* Girl 4, Private School

Clearly, the fact that peer educators used activities that they themselves had already experienced was conducive in them administering them effectively and with confidence. In addition, peer educators had chosen to conduct activities they had considered to be both enjoyable and impactful, and thus felt particularly interested, engaged and passionate to administer. The 'take a stand exercise' (myths and realities) in particular was conducted with great enthusiasm and was very effective in engaging the whole group and stimulating some very lively and fruitful discussions. Peer educators worked in the same manner as the facilitators, challenging some very stereotypical beliefs about the nature and cause of violence and the responsibility of the victim and perpetrator. Peer educators later admitted that they were 'shocked' to observe the extent that the peers adhered to various 'myths' about violence but felt gratified that through peer education they were given an opportunity to challenge these beliefs and hopefully initiate a process of change.

Similarly, the Gender in a box activity was also administered in the same fervent. Through the various discussions in the trainings, peer educators had developed a strong sense of their right to freely express one's individuality without being judged, opposed or abused. This was the key message they tried to convey when discussing the nature of the 'box' which encompasses the socially constructed expectations for boys and girls. Peer educators encouraged their participants to explore how these expectations are shaping their behaviors and how they are limiting their choices. What could have been administered more effectively was creating a more in-depth understanding of what constitutes gender based violence, i.e. encouraging participants to view incidences of violence and abuse through a more prominent gender perspective.

This is also a general suggestion towards improving the effectiveness of the entire training Programme. Evidently, young participants needed to develop a better insight on how unequal hierarchies of power between girls and boys give rise to harmful behaviors that are defined as GBV. Clearly, more emphasis needs to be placed on clearly and explicitly defining Gender Based Violence and also encouraging participants throughout the course of the entire Programme, to explore how the particular abusive behavior discussed (be it intimate partner violence, bullying in the school environment etc.) is gender-based.

6.2. Peer Educators Experiences[2]

Young people shared great excitement with regards to their experience as peer educators. In their focus group discussion, they mentioned how much they had enjoyed themselves and confided that they felt so engaged in the process that they 'didn't want to leave'.

> *'It was much easier than expected [....] We overcome the original awkwardness and found a way to engage them... I didn't want to leave!' Girl 1, Private School*

> *'I was excited about being a peer educator. My excitement was such that I forgot about my math test, as the only thing I was thinking was the peer training I was going to deliver the next day!', Girl 3, Private school*

Peer training was also a wonderful opportunity for peer educators to develop 'soft' skills that they can use throughout their lives such as public speaking, presentation skills, planning and coordination, team work and group facilitation. Their communication skills were also greatly enhanced because they became better listeners. Moreover, peer trainings often 'forced' them to become more creative, engage in problem-solving and encouraged them to be flexible and think on their feet.

> *'I must have developed my skills to transfer knowledge. When I saw that they didn't understand I looked for other ways and other arguments I could use to persuade them' Girl 4, Public School*

> *'We learnt how to listen .... And also how to answer back if we needed to' , Girl 1, public school*

In addition, peer trainings seemed to have helped to further consolidate peer educators' knowledge and strengthened their process of change. Peer educators claimed to have gained more insight after conducting the peer trainings and engaged in more self-reflection and reevaluation. It was as though the peer trainings acted as a mirror to their own beliefs and perceptions and helped them realize how these were shifted.

> *'Being an observer gives you more insight. When you are 'absorbed' in your own process you don't realize what is going on inside you. Even though I felt that a lot of my opinions were challenged when we did this exercise I remember more vividly the peer training', Girl 1, public school*

> *'If we did the exercise again now we would definitely take a different stand now. Maybe towards to the middle', Girl 2, public school*

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[2] Results in this section pertain to what young people have shared in their focus group discussions

Even though peer education turned out to be an enjoyable and easily manageable process, peer educators claimed that they did experience some challenges, most of which they were of course able to overcome. Their main challenge was to engage their group and maintaining their interest throughout the course of the peer training. They also claimed to experience difficulty to refocus their participants when they were diverting from the discussion. Some peer trainers were also shocked with how 'out of place' their peers' opinions were at times, especially in relation to certain myths about GBV, having forgotten that they had shared similar opinions when they started the training Programme. This again confirms how young peoples' perceptions have been shifted after the training sessions. Having shifted from their original stance and the 'normalized' or 'stereotypical' perceptions about violence and abuse, peer educators now considered these as extreme, shocking and unacceptable.

> *'I felt that they were expressing some extreme opinions' Girl 1, public school*

> *'They were strong in their opinions. They really adhered by them. It made a strong impression on me, especially how they accepted certain things as normal (for instance control in relationships). It was difficult to persuade them'* Girl 4, Private School

> *'Yes, now that I think about it, our opinions [when they did the 'take a stand' exercise'] were shocking too! Girl 1, private school*

Similarly, peer trainers found it difficult to respond to these 'extreme' opinions without losing their neutrality and impartiality. The take a stand activity was particularly challenging in this respect as participants expressed a different stance from what peer educators acknowledged as being 'right'. Regardless of how extreme an opinion, peer educators managed to handle it with respect, counteracting it with valid arguments and created fruitful ground for reflection and reevaluation adhering to what they knew was 'right'. Even though peer trainers sometimes caught themselves to agree with a certain opinion that was related to a myth (as for instance the fact that girls provoke violence by the way they are dressed), they still concentrated on conveying the right message across.

> *'You understand that what they're saying is their opinion and you need to respect it, but on the other hand you know (according to the training) that it is not correct and it's difficult to remain impartial' Boy, private school*

> *'It was a challenge not to take a stance. It was difficult to try to persuade others through presenting various arguments without saying your own opinion. I realized that this way, and by not opposing their views, we had the maximum influence on them', Girl 1, public school*

'We had to focus on what was right. I felt I had to hold my tongue sometimes. There were instances when they expressed an opinion that I agreed with and I knew it was wrong, so I had to tell them 'things are not like this', even though I agreed with them', Girl 2, public school

Some concerns were also expressed with regards to their effectiveness as peer trainers and the possible impact they may have had in influencing the opinions of their peers. Peer educators raised high expectations for themselves and seemed to expect too much too soon. In their enthusiasm to share their knowledge and their inspiration with others, they often became impatient and expected to see a shift in opinions immediately. Towards this end, it is important to hold debriefing sessions after the peer trainings so as to provide the opportunity to the peer educators to reflect on how they did, discuss their concerns, redefine expectations to realistic ones, explore how they could better improve their skills and also celebrate their successes and further build on their strengths.

Being enthused by the overall experience, all peer educators expressed the need for continuity, for such workshops to be systematically conducted as part of their official school curriculum every year, as for instance through English or Sociology Classes. They all unequivocally expressed the need to continue their work as peer educators, more systematically and more widely.

'I would definitely do this a second, third, fourth, tenth time!!' Boy, private school

'The more times you do it (peer education) the more empowered you will be!' Girl 3, Private School

6.3. Empowerment through Peer Education

Peer education was indeed a powerful experience for young participants, with the majority claiming to have considerably felt more confident and more empowered. The mere fact that they managed to conquer the fear of presentation anxiety and feel a sense of accomplishment, was empowering in its own accord. Even though peer trainers walked into the peer trainings feeling nervous and worried that they would not be taken seriously by their peers, they were proven wrong. They appeared so sure in what they were doing that they inspired trust. In addition, it appeared that all the concepts and issues that had been discussed during the original trainings were so well imprinted in their minds that capitalizing on this knowledge, they felt confident to provide arguments effortlessly and naturally in order to persuade others.

'I didn't want to do it. I am afraid to speak in public. When I walked in I was nervous. But when I heard their views, I knew I had to talk, make an intervention. And I felt good doing it. Girl 4, public school

'I was afraid that I wouldn't be able to persuade them. I was afraid of how they would react towards us, I was thinking that they wouldn't listen to us', Girl 1, public school

'I remember last year I had to present a project and I was so nervous my tongue was tight. When I was peer educator I felt different, I was relaxed and I didn't give it much thought. I even sat cross-legged on a table and talked to my peers. I felt I could handle anything that they told me. I knew I had all the arguments to convince them. The workshops helped my presentation skills tremendously', Girl 2, Private School

Peer trainings were also conducive in helping young participants gain confidence in many ways. The fact that they were given the opportunity to express their opinions, 'have a voice', take a stand and be in a position to influence others, instilled self-confidence and enhanced their self-esteem. In addition, been given the opportunity to take in hand difficult situations and rise above them (for instance a group that was difficult to engage or a group that was expressing extreme opinions), also instilled them with the confidence that 'they can do it', which in turn was empowering.

''I felt I gained a lot! I personally felt more empowered. I felt I could handle a difficult group and engage them and this gave me strength', Girl 3, private school

'I had to deal with some 'difficult' situations, where participants expressed something strongly. Yet I found the strength and the nerve to answer to them', Girl 3, private school

Lastly, empowerment also appeared to be intertwined with the sense of accomplishment. Peer trainings provided the ground for young people to act as agents of change among their peers. Being of the same age, speaking the same language and drawing upon similar experiences, gives peer educators a different stature among their peers; they appear more credible, they convey more relevant messages and thus are more impactful. Peer trainers experienced great satisfaction from witnessing how the peer trainings were an eye opening experience for their peers. Helping others made them feel more motivated and committed to continue this process and keep influencing the perceptions of those around them.

'It was great! It was great to see the look in their eyes. To see that they understood, to experience what we had experienced before them. It was great!' Girl 4, public school

'It's nice to know that you are the one that 'opens their eyes' and you're helping them' Girl 2, private school

'Seeing them so actively engaged in the discussion, especially as they were leaving, I felt good. I felt I had accomplished something. Those boys and girls may leave the training and then talk to their parents, their friends. It's like you helped them out somehow' Boy, private school