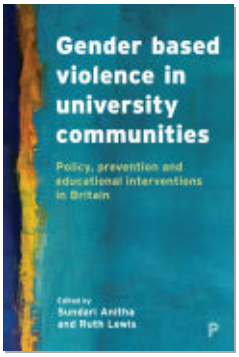
10. Tackling gender based violence in university communities: a practitioner perspective



10

Tackling gender based violence in university communities: a practitioner perspective

Ellie Hutchinson

In recent years, universities across the UK have begun exploring, developing and testing bystander approaches to tackling violence against women and girls (VAWG). Differing in their approaches, the programmes are underpinned by a belief that sexist social norms are at the root of violence and that by utilising social marketing techniques and prevention education programmes, aimed at non-perpetrating men, social norm change can occur. By engaging with men as allies, bystander programmes aim to create positive social environments, upskilling men and women and supporting them to challenge peers engaged in sexist behaviour. At the heart of this approach is a belief that sexist social norms, as they are learnt, can be unlearnt, challenged, and ultimately changed.

This chapter provides a brief outline of how one such approach – Get Savi (Students Against Violence Initiative) – was developed and delivered in Scotland between 2012 and 2015. Focusing first on the broader policy and political context in which this programme was developed, this chapter explores the importance of a political consensus around the causes of VAWG. Crucial to the development of Get Savi was both a political and practitioner consensus around adopting the socio-ecological approach to violence prevention, most vividly represented in national policy approaches developed by the Scottish Government. The financial environment at this time also enabled violence against women organisations to begin utilising partnerships and expertise to develop prevention education work. Alongside the broader context, this chapter also explores the role of partnerships in the development and in the re-imagining of the prevention education programme for a Scottish audience, based on the success of US approaches. Finally, it highlights some of the ongoing challenges such as the difficulties in generating long-term evaluations and in producing robust research around the relationship between programme attendance

and campus-wide behaviour change, due in part to the reluctance of institutions to engage at the senior and administrative level. By drawing together learnings from the project this chapter seeks to make recommendations for future policies and programmes on prevention education for student communities in the UK and beyond.

The policy and political context in Scotland

It was no coincidence that Scotland was the first country within the UK to test bystander programmes. Much has been written about the role of female MSPs (Members of the Scottish Parliament) and feminist organisations in promoting a positive policy environment in which to challenge violence against women in all its forms (MacKay and Breitenbach, 2001). The Scottish Parliament was established in 1999 and by 2000 a national strategy to address domestic abuse was published. This strategy noted that, domestic abuse 'is part of a range of behaviours constituting male abuse of power, and is linked to other forms of male violence' (The Scottish Executive, 2000: 5), setting the scene for a sophisticated, and importantly, gendered, understanding of domestic abuse, not seen within Westminster policies at the time of writing. This gendered understanding was no doubt brought about by the successful lobbying of feminist and women's organisations across the country.

This top-level consensus about the very causes of violence and abuse – that is gender inequality – was based on an analysis that made explicit the links between gender inequality and violence, allowing organisations to develop programmes and policies tackling issues across the continuum of abuse (Kelly, 1988). This approach contrasts with a so-called 'gender-neutral' approach which obscures or makes invisible the significance of gender and is unable to address the root causes of the violence. The Scottish policy context used the socio-ecological model to understand VAWG. A public health and a rights-based model, the socio-ecological model enables an understanding of VAWG as a complex, multi-layered issue that can be understood through a focus on the individual and their particular histories and contexts such as education, income, ethnicity; the various relationships they are part of and which influence them; the broader community and its values, norms and practices; and the broader socioeconomic factors and policies related to, for example, health and education, which create a structural context that inhibits or encourages violence and social inequalities between groups. The causal explanation for VAWG is complex and results from a combination of multiple influences on

behaviour. It is about how individuals relate to those around them and to their broader environment. The socio-ecological model allows us to address the factors that put people at risk for or protect them from experiencing or perpetrating violence (risk and protective factors) and the prevention strategies that can be used at each level to address these factors (CDC, undated).

The socio-ecological model outlines how, at each level of an individual's life, there are opportunities to challenge, resist and change social norms. For anti-VAWG practitioners this means challenging at the individual level sexist and rigid understandings of how men and women 'should' behave and the acceptability of violence and abuse towards women. A crucial aspect of the Scottish policy on VAWG was the recognition of all three dimensions of responses to this problem – prosecution, protection and prevention, the last of which was much neglected in the UK. With a gendered analysis in place and a top-level strategy to address VAWG, the Scottish Government has developed training strategies, ring fenced and protected funding for children's workers, ring fenced funding for service providers and developed prevention strategies to address all forms of VAWG.

In the early to mid-2000s, VAWG prevention work in Scotland was mainly focused on children and young people, understanding children and young people as both resisters and conduits for emerging social norms. In 2008, the National Domestic Abuse Delivery Plan for Children and Young People Experiencing Domestic Abuse (hereafter, the Delivery Plan) was developed, calling for action across the four Ps – protection, provision, prevention and protection. In 2009, the NSPCC published ground-breaking research into abuse in teenagers' intimate relationships (Barter et al, 2009). This research refocused VAWG organisations on the experiences of young people and reinvigorated policy work to prevent violence in a period when children and young people were beginning to come to the attention of researchers, practitioners and policymakers seeking to understand and challenge VAWG.

It was in this context that the Delivery Plan was rolled out over the subsequent years. While the Plan highlighted specific actions needed to tackle social norms and explore the role of education within prevention, it omitted to place VAWG in a broader economic and structural context. For example, the Plan's work on prevention focused heavily on education, seeing young people as conduits for change. While this approach enabled deeper conversations with educators and young people around sex, relationships and domestic abuse, it failed to address the impact of broader economic signifiers of inequality –

for example, poverty and equal pay, and how they directly influence perceptions of entitlement and ability.[1] Consequently, much work developed from this high-level policy focused on the ability of children and young people to resist social norms, rather than on the adults and institutions responsible for them, or on the broader structural context within which these norms are fostered.

Although the Equality Unit was instrumental in leading this work, it was difficult to work across departments and bring in other work areas – such as Education or Children and Young People. Critically, education in the Scottish context is de-centralised, meaning that in practice each local authority area delivers education priorities inconsistently – with some children and young people accessing prevention education in particularly committed (and resourced) areas, such as Dundee City (Dundee Violence Against Women Partnership, 2010) and other children denied access to this work.

However, with a clear focus on prevention, the Delivery Plan undoubtedly created a positive environment for organisations to develop work based around social norm change. It is argued here that the shift to prevention also occurred during times of relative economic stability whereby battles to secure funding for the very existence of frontline services had been (somewhat) tempered. During this time, Women's Aid groups offered at least one children's worker per group through government funding, enhancing the work they were able to do with children and young people in schools. This established strong networks between groups and schools, and broadened their role within the community to include education and awareness raising. Previously, much of this work had been unfunded; the Delivery Plan made the work and roles explicit and created a mandate for prevention education to occur within education establishments.

Relative financial stability created a context conducive to partnership working unlike in England, where cuts to the funding of domestic violence services, short funding cycles and the tendering process increasingly pitted services against each other for a diminishing pool of resources. The very different context in Scotland enabled national and local VAWG organisations to collaborate effectively, both in the policy arena and in service delivery. Organisations such as Rape Crisis Scotland, Scottish Women's Aid (SWA) and Zero Tolerance,[2] which had historically close working relationships, were able to develop partnerships with newly established White Ribbon Campaign (WRC)[3] as well as Amnesty International. LGBT Youth's domestic abuse project, and worker, were increasingly lobbying the violence against women field for better support and understanding of the issues

faced by LGBT young people in accessing domestic abuse services, and thus close working relationships were established (LGBT Youth Scotland, 2011). On an informal level, the size of the sector meant that staff regularly worked in several organisations, had some ties with partner organisations or even shared office spaces, creating a strong informal network of organisations and individuals working to prevent VAWG. The VAWG partnerships at the local level further entrenched these networks, and the Prevention Network, co-ordinated by Zero Tolerance, embedded these relationships. Further, a collaborative, consensus-driven ethos underpinned many of the organisations, explicitly feminist in their praxis, creating an environment of positive and productive partnership working. In sum, then, the stage was set for the development of a collaborative prevention education initiative aimed at children and/or young people.

In the context of this policy-driven working consensus on the meaning of prevention and the causes of VAWG across Scotland, by 2007 many organisations were working on the understanding of prevention as being community-focused with an emphasis on healthy relationships, consent and positive masculinities. The following section outlines how this context enabled the development of the Get Savi programme.

Building consensus, laying the ground work: developing the Get Savi programme

As the largest and oldest domestic abuse charity in the country, SWA was well-placed to promote prevention education with children and young people within a broader focus on domestic abuse. As the national umbrella group of 39 affiliated Women's Aid groups in Scotland, the organisation could draw on the knowledge and experience of workers on the ground to explore and identify gaps in service provision and policy development. During this development phase, each group had at least one children's worker in post, and some were staffed with training or education workers. SWA was also able to appoint a Prevention Worker (and author of this chapter) with a specific focus on prevention policy. This post was situated within the Children and Young People's policy team, which located prevention work within an educational approach, focusing on building positive relationships from an early age. For SWA, this meant a continuation of the work already undertaken directly with children and young people experiencing domestic abuse, and the ethos of co-production and involvement in policy development and campaign messaging.[4] The Prevention Worker

at SWA was responsible for developing policy responses to abuse in young people's relationships and promoting healthy relationships as well as supporting the work of local member organisations (Women's Aid groups), local authorities and national policymakers in promoting a prevention education approach to preventing domestic abuse.

Critics of this shift towards prevention education rightly noted that funding for prevention workers and projects was often temporary and that, during times of economic restraint, funding for education and prevention services is often withdrawn, that service provision was still patchy and that crisis support was still underfunded. However, in Scotland, funding was provided through the Scottish Government who accorded higher priority to prevention work than was the case in the rest of the UK, where Women's Aid groups and other VAWG service providers existed in a consistently precarious funding environment with a focus on operational survival and crisis provision, stretching their resources and challenging their very ability to operate (Ellis, 2008). In addition, services in England were operating within a political environment that ideologically favoured a gender invisible approach which (see Donaldson et al, Chapter Five in this volume), as argued earlier, fails to acknowledge or address root causes of VAWG.

The initial work of the Prevention Worker at SWA involved mapping current prevention education methods across the country, bringing together resources within the growing prevention field in Scotland and identifying gaps in practice (Ellis, 2008). This research identified gaps in existing prevention education programmes, which included: institutional reluctance to recognise the existence of and to address the issue of gender based violence (GBV); the limited focus of sex and relationships education where little attention was given to issues of active consent (compared to a focus on sexual health and contraception); and lack of consistent, coherent and accessible policy and practice responses to abuse in young people's relationships, findings which resonate with other literature (Ellis and Thiara, 2014). Inconsistencies across local authorities were also noted, with some dedicating teams and resources to aligning education, health and violence against women organisations, and with others focusing solely on crisis support.[5] In a context where violence, including sexual violence, against young women is not consistently identified as a social problem and recognised as violence, there is an inherent limitation of crisis-led responses as these approaches incorrectly assume that victims recognise and name their experiences as abuse and seek help. Additionally such a response does little in terms of early intervention and prevention, which require an ongoing and active engagement with the underlying causes of violence and abuse.

This mapping research identified the need for and the potential of bystander programmes, and a working group to develop a Scottish response was then established with representatives from Zero Tolerance, Rape Crisis Scotland, LGBT Youth, White Ribbon Scotland, National Union of Students (NUS) Scotland and SWA. The Prevention Worker based within SWA researched existing evidence about the effectiveness of bystander programmes, and assessed their potential value within the Scottish context. This review of existing bystander interventions and the debates surrounding them informed the framing and the content of the bystander programme, Get Savi, developed in collaboration with the above mentioned working group.

The first issue identified was the underlying ideological approach that can inform particular interventions; some interventions focus on individual change and responsibility to intervene in situations, whereas others emphasise broader cultural change. Programmes that focused solely on individual behaviour, particularly those that focused on the potential victims through responsibilisation strategies such as self-defence training and altering their own conduct, were immediately rejected. Approaches that did not identify or sufficiently critique broader social structures that underpin particular acts of GBV – for example, those that individualised problematic behaviour rather than locating it within power relations and structural inequalities based on hierarchies of gender and sexuality – were also deemed inappropriate. Additionally, approaches such as those in the military that took a top-down approach to behaviour change (for example through rote-learning such as 'repeat after me' training scenarios) were discounted as inappropriate for both the Scottish context and long-term impact. The working group also considered approaches that have been utilised in the US which draw upon traditional modes of masculinity as a tool in reducing VAWG – for example 'real men don't rape' or 'my strength is not for hurting' campaigns and terminology. Following discussions, these approaches were rejected as it was judged that their understandings of manhood could reaffirm traditional models of masculinity and femininity which construct women as inherently vulnerable and in need of protection, and known men as potential protectors of women from stranger men (Stanko, 1990), and thereby undermine a structural approach to ending violence that is based on a critique of binary constructions of masculinity and femininity. (For feminist critiques of anti-violence campaigns which draw on problematic ideas of masculinity and femininity, see Escobar (2013) and Ferguson (2015).) Additionally messages that derive from dominant constructions of masculinity also risk a narrow focus on GBV in

heterosexual relations, and invisibilise GBV against sexual minorities that is based on hierarchical constructions of gender and sexuality (Namaste, 1996; Cramer, 2011).

Within the bystander movement, one key point of conflict is around the 'gendering' of violence, with some programmes taking a strategic or a politically driven gender invisible approach to enhance attendance.[6] It is argued that this approach may encourage more institutional buy-in in the initial stages in a broader political context which degenders GBV. According to this argument, in terms of engaging students, an approach that – at least initially – invisibilises gender may encourage more attendees, as well as minimise resistance from men and from those women who might feel uncomfortable at the focus on gender. Such an approach may also be premised on the common sense understanding that everyone – at a basic level – wants to be a pro-social rather than an anti-social person, and hence an active bystander in the context of an intervention programme. Given the resistance to recognising the gender-specificity of GBV, the notion of gender is introduced gradually and cautiously to minimise resistance from men. However, one criticism of bystander programmes which take this approach is that men are not 'silent bystanders' of sexism but beneficiaries. To deny men's culpability within an economic and cultural system designed to disempower women and privilege men is to underplay the structural elements at play.

Our approach to the problem of GBV was quite different; our starting point prioritised gender in understanding GBV, and recognised how structural inequalities underpin GBV and how GBV reinforces structural inequalities. We anticipated resistance because prevention education involves calling out and challenging privilege derived from gender and sexuality. A lack of resistance would imply either that the programme was not addressing and challenging the structural inequalities that underpin acts and expressions of GBV or that the participants were already questioning these hierarchies and engaged with these debates (which was often the case for members of feminist societies). Implicit in our feminist understanding of prevention education was that such education programmes would inevitably – and ideally – be delivered to participants who are victimised by GBV in its various manifestations, those who are observers and perhaps condone such behaviour or remain silent, as well as to participants who benefit from gender privilege and actively strive to maintain their privilege. We came to the conclusion that programmes that invisibilise gender fail to address structural and cultural change, and therefore it is posited that they will be unable to achieve long lasting and meaningful impacts.[7]

At the heart of our approach was the acknowledgement that while men's voices are crucial in ending violence against women, they are not central. Rather the experiences of survivors and women must be prioritised in work to end VAWG. By seeking to challenge sexist power dynamics in our own working relationships, we hoped to challenge sexist power dynamics in the classroom and beyond. While the role of men as allies was embraced within our approach, it was not centralised. In practical terms, this meant that in many instances, we sought to deliver the programme as mixed gender pairs, embedding a feminist praxis of *doing* as well as *believing*, and we sought to create a space for and facilitate conversations about GBV that were grounded in participants' real-life experiences of GBV – which meant privileging the voices of women and sexual minorities who experience such violences. To some extent, the delivery of the training in mixed gender pairs was also one way of overcoming resistance to programme content by men and some women.

Central to the development of what would become the Get Savi programme was a recognition that the North American context was somewhat different to the Scottish context. The working group was committed to ensuring the programme would reflect not only the Scottish context, but also the local institutional context in which the training would be delivered. Unlike the institutional context in US universities, Scottish university and college students have comparatively few pastoral care structures and fewer opportunities to develop cross-campus communities. Similarly there is currently no central funding for university-based GBV prevention programmes, supported and housed by the university and funded across state and federal bodies.[8] There are no fraternities or sororities or similar communities of accommodation and, unlike many American campuses, no mandatory training for all incoming students on issues relating to violence against women. There are no university-based violence against women crisis centres and no prevention officer based on campus.[9] In terms of institutional support for addressing (and acknowledging) VAWG, it could be argued the Scottish context provides minimal university-based dedicated support for victims of violence. Indeed, it can be argued that colleges and universities have been loath to engage with the existence of VAWG on campus, particularly when perpetrated by students themselves and even less so when perpetrated by university staff (Weale and Batty, 2016). University responses have been somewhat more responsive when their student is victimised by a non-student or a student of another university (NUS, 2010).

In the Scottish context, university responses to VAWG are therefore somewhat invisible. However, students themselves have been increasingly active and visible in responding to VAWG in universities. The NUS undertook a number of projects to explore GBV on campus, including work on lad culture, stalking and sexual harassment (NUS, 2010, 2012). Feminist activism has been reinvigorated, with offline and online activism becoming more and more vocal (Lewis et al, 2016; Lewis and Marine, Chapter Six in this volume). While this was a welcome development in terms of engaging with feminist activists on campus, it also created challenges as we worked to persuade student unions and university administrators that feminist groups were not solely responsible for challenging VAWG, but that the institution as a whole should also be held responsible.

Given the gender-specific understanding of the problem in the Scottish context and the ideological approach of the partner agencies, the working group came to a decision to utilise a discursive approach of curious non-judgement which is grounded in a feminist praxis of change, whereby the role of the trainer is not to direct but instead to create supportive spaces for individuals to develop their own knowledge and empower themselves. This approach was centred on a feminist understanding of GBV that could be adapted to the Scottish context. Following the review of literature on prevention education and evaluations of bystander programmes, the Green Dot and the University of New Hampshire's programmes were deemed most appropriate as models for development – combining institutional support, social marketing techniques, accessible training models, a non-judgemental discursive approach and importantly, robust and meaningful monitoring outcomes.[10]

The context in which Get Savi was developed was one with a highly energised, active student community, a healthy, well-funded, supportive VAWG sector, and a national, policy consensus supporting VAWG prevention work in local areas with a focus on healthy relationships and active consent. The combination of these three vital factors meant that we could experiment, innovate, try something new, to fail, to experiment, and ultimately to fully engage with young people on the kind of programme they needed to tackle VAWG within their own communities to make real, long lasting change.

Programme development: getting it wrong, getting it right

The Get Savi programme[11] focused on four key themes: i) GBV exists; ii) it is both the cause and the consequence of sexism; iii) we can (and

should) challenge it; and iv) there are certain skills and techniques we can use to do this. The original model aimed to develop a peer network, with young people trained as peer educators to deliver the programme in their own communities within the first 18 months. It was intended that this programme would create a sustainable network supported by SWA and/or the WRC.

A peer to peer training method was developed, to ensure that messages were given (and absorbed) by members of the same community, leading to a better understanding of the issues, and a willingness to act and therefore change behaviours.[12] The initial training of the potential peer trainers was delivered by practised trainers working in SWA and WRC. The initial programmes were delivered to student volunteers, and it was immediately apparent that more women than men would sign up to support it and that, common across all VAWG work, many attendees were drawn to the programme through already identifying as feminists or as activists. These factors meant that our initial ability to engage with non-perpetrating (and non-engaging men) was reduced, and that different ways to engage with men would be required. To engage with men, we identified supportive NUS representatives and student societies to act as conduits for engagement, and sessions were held with chairs from a variety of societies including sports, feminist, LGBT, BME and social groups. The most supportive and vocal students for dispersing the programme throughout their institutions were often linked to a number of societies. The programme was also delivered to university staff, student societies and groups in response to requests following media-publicised acts of misogyny and discrimination by young men in leadership positions within the university.

The programme developed as the attendees brought their own experiences of hearing, and collectively devised effective mechanisms for challenging, sexist and homophobic comments made by family and friends such as "that's so gay" and derisive use of the phrase "like a girl". Rather than prescribe scenarios to discuss in workshops, we supported participants to anonymously submit scenarios which were then used in workshop discussions. Other learnings from initial roll-outs of Get Savi were that both the length of the workshop and our expectations of students were unrealistic. With many of them talking about violence for the first time, the leap from educated to educator was too far. Similarly it became clear that weekend workshops would not be attractive for most students.

To support the delivery of the programme and address some of the practical barriers, we created an online wiki on terms and practice tools for students, redeveloped the programme to be undertaken either

in one day or in two afternoon settings, and tailored the programme to audiences' needs. As we delivered more and more sessions to more and more students across the country – over 100 in total – it became clear that feminist groups required different conversation starters and introductions to the gendered analysis than other groups, that LGBT societies wanted to dedicate time to talk about homophobia, that staff and students from sports and entertainment societies required more support in developing their understanding of the issues, and that the role of the trainer should shift from trainer/instructor to facilitator/mediator in mixed gender groups. This facilitation/mediator role was particularly important when women disclosed instances of sexual harassment, violence, microaggressions and sexism to their male peers. These conversations provided much more powerful learning moments than theoretical examples ever could. This learning – about how to create an open, non-judgemental space while dealing positively with disclosures – was vital in how we trained peer educators. It was apparent from the early stages that many attendees had an expectation that the course would provide 'answers' to how to challenge VAWG. Creating a space for people to explore their own experiences safely – through anonymously submitting scenarios and discussing them in small groups – enabled attendees to fully explore what worked for them, rather than simply responding with what they thought they 'should' say. Embedding an ethos of person-centred change, of non-judgemental facilitating, and feminist praxis required facilitators to actively listen and respond to issues arising and provide a skilled response to unexpected questions – something that many peer educators felt unable to do initially.

One of the shortcomings of this early phase of Get Savi was that the programme did not fully explore the intersections of race and privilege, a gap that was picked up by some participants themselves. This was likely due to the lack of lived experience of the project board, resulting in a gap in the delivery of the programme. However, due to the openness of the approach, and the levelling of power dynamics within the classroom, we were able to redevelop parts of the programme having learnt from the students directly.

Through listening, reflecting and learning from the positive response to Get Savi, we extended the project to run over four years. At the end of this period, we were able to recruit a number of young people as peer educators from NUS Scotland, Queen Margaret University in Edinburgh, Robert Gordon University in Aberdeen and the University of Lincoln. Students who attended the course were able to develop standalone campaigns and programmes for other students with support

from academics. However, with staff changes and shifts in organisational priorities, it was difficult to sustain a conversation with peer educators or trained students to document how the programme evolved over the course of its delivery through the peer students' networks and over the years as it cascaded down.

Monitoring and evaluation: learning through doing

While the delivery of the course was organic, the four themes remained central: that GBV exists; that it is both a cause and a consequence of sexism; that speaking out can help to create anti-violent cultures; that there are ways to speak out safely. Resistance to the first two themes was often encountered by groups who had been mandated to attend (particularly male staff) and some young men; however, as most groups were self-selecting we encountered little active resistance from young men, but we did factor in extra time and facilitation skills to give more space to explore sexism and incidences of violence where resistance was particularly evident. Taking a person-centred and group-ed approach to programme delivery did result in better and more meaningful engagement with groups – this was reflected in positive post-programme evaluations around enjoyment and skill development – but in terms of evaluating the programme long term it became harder to identify change as each session was delivered according to the needs of each group.

Initial plans to undertake long-term evaluation of the programme were thwarted by the lack of institutional support and lack of obligatory responsibilities.[13] The evaluations undertaken at the end of each session were not robust enough to draw any conclusions. The limitations of the type of data we could collect were three-fold. The evaluations did not measure long-term individual change; there was no means of capturing institutional and cultural change; and there was no baseline survey against which to measure attitudinal change. Therefore, although we knew that attendees had intentions to change, we knew little of how they did change, and what impact this intention may have had. Further, without institutional support, behaviour change was limited to individual acts, rather than shifts in whole campus cultures. Meaningful and in-depth change requires not only individual confidence to challenge, but also institutional support for anti-violence cultures. It was this institutional support that was predominantly lacking.

Without collecting baseline attitudes and behaviours from communities we were unable to fully explore the impact Get Savi has had on campus communities and what the needs for further

engagement were.[14] While it was possible, then, to gain insight into the process of behaviour change, and we could identify some elements of short-term change, it was harder to gain any insight into long-term behaviour and cultural change.

Conclusion: learning and recommendations

Throughout the period of the project, we gained several insights into the theory and praxis of running a bystander programme for over 16-year-olds in further and higher education. First, the favourable context in which we developed the programme must be acknowledged.

The gendered understanding of violence at the government level enabled us to pitch our explicitly feminist programme to further and higher education establishments. Without this high level of support our ability to engage with students or develop the programme as we did would have been greatly reduced. In the financial and political context, prevention education was deemed not only a legitimate funding arena, but also a necessary one. This not only created an environment where we could experiment with emerging practice, but also enabled us to apply a feminist praxis of collective working, without fear of competing for ever decreasing funding pots.

Second, by applying a feminist praxis, we could take a person-centred approach to facilitating change, creating safe spaces for empowerment. We then enabled groups to develop their own tools to challenge sexism and supported them in a group setting to hear each other's experiences of living within patriarchy. However, this approach created challenges in terms of creating robust evaluation tools. By shifting programme delivery according to the needs of each group, we were unable to fully evaluate the long-term impact of the programme as a whole.

Lastly, the reach of our programme and our inability to evaluate the programme was further compounded by the reluctance of university management to engage with the programme at all. For example, we were unable to engage on an in-depth level with men as allies, and our ability to target traditionally masculine societies (such as sports) was greatly undermined by lack of institutional support. In the main, we ended up working with student societies and individual students, and ran only three sessions involving staff. We were unable to undertake whole-community social marketing campaigns or to support the development of anti-VAWG policy and practice on campus. We were unable to undertake baseline surveys without which we were unable to evaluate what long-term or widespread change may have occurred.

For bystander programmes in the UK to have the success of their North American counterparts, several factors must be in place. There must be institutional support from the outset, involving all societies, staff and students. Support services for students must be visible and accessible, and have a specialist knowledge of VAWG. Baseline surveys must be conducted on attitudes to violence and prevalence. All staff and students should undertake bystander training, and administrations should develop policies around reporting, as recommended by Universities UK (2016). Bystander programmes should also be supported by a social marketing campaign that utilises various media accessed by students and staff. Finally, to ensure robust monitoring and evaluations, there must be post-programme surveys exploring attitudinal and behaviour change in the short and long term.

Without these changes, it is likely that bystander programmes will remain the preserve of feminist, LGBT and particular student societies that have explicit lived experience of the issues and a developed understanding of GBV. For bystander programmes to be successful within and across campus communities, institutions must acknowledge the incidence and prevalence of GBV. They must acknowledge that GBV is a human rights as well as a public health issue, and that as communities and public bodies, they have a duty to protect students from preventable violence and abuse. Innovation requires risk, and risk requires support. Without that support – financial, cultural and political support – innovative programmes to address norm changes at the individual, community and institutional level will simply not succeed. It is our plea that campus administrators invest in this approach and provide students with the opportunity to learn, live and thrive in safe and supportive communities.

Notes

1 See the Scottish Government's 'National Domestic Abuse Delivery Plan for Children and Young People', www.gov.scot/Publications/2008/06/17115558/0

2 Zero Tolerance is a Scotland-based prevention education charity working to end men's violence against women by promoting gender equality and by challenging attitudes which normalise violence and abuse. Its work began in 1992 with a series of iconic awareness raising poster campaigns.

3 The White Ribbon Scotland campaign provides training and information workshops to engage men and give them the skills to stand up to violence against women.

4 Previous campaigns and research involving children and young people include the Listen Louder campaign around safe contact in the context of abusive fathers and support needs (https://vimeo.com/128989352) and the Support Needs of Children and Young People who have to move house because of domestic abuse (Stafford et al, 2007).

[5] This inconsistency is replicated across the UK, with some children and young people able to access prevention education initiatives, and some barely able to access crisis support. With no ring fenced funding at either the local or the national level dedicated towards prevention, it is often the first service to go.

[6] These ideas on gender and prevention education have been developed through conversations with Sundari Anitha.

[7] For more in-depth analysis, see https://aifs.gov.au/publications/bystander-approaches/challenges-implementing-bystander-approaches-responding-and-preventing-sexual-violence

[8] Within the American context, however, there is federally distributed and centrally ring fenced funding for such programmes: https://fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/R42499.pdf

[9] Durham University created a new post of Student Support and Training Officer (Sexual Violence & Misconduct) in the Academic Support Office in 2016. It is believed this is the first such post in the UK.

[10] See http://cola.unh.edu/prevention-innovations-research-center/evidence-based-initiatives#BEM for the University of New Hampshire programme and https://alteristic.org/progress/for evaluations of the Green Dot.

[11] http://www.preventionplatform.co.uk/?p=3015

[12] See www.eab.com/research-and-insights/student-affairs-forum/custom/2014/09/peer-led-sexual-violence-prevention-program-operationscontent%20page

[13] In many US and some UK institutions, bystander programmes are undertaken as part of a course requirement (such as within the University of New Hampshire) and pre- and post-programme surveys must be undertaken by participants to fulfil course requirements.

[14] A further approach to support social norm change is that of community readiness. A community readiness approach analyses the community's readiness to make change around a public health issue, and provides a framework for campaigning and lobbying. See http://triethniccenter.colostate.edu/docs/CR_Handbook_8-3-15.pdf

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