

How ought we to inform our teachers about gender-based violence?

**Identifying the challenges faced in integrating content around gender-based violence into classroom teaching in five primary schools in the Mitchells Plain district,
Western Cape Province, South Africa**

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ABSTRACT

How ought we to inform our teachers about gender-based violence? Identifying the challenges faced in integrating content around gender-based violence into classroom teaching in five primary schools in the Mitchells Plain district, Western Cape Province, South Africa.

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MPH mini-thesis, School of Public Health, University of the Western Cape.

Gender-based violence is increasingly being identified as a critical public health issue - one which both the health and education services in South Africa need to take into consideration in their programme planning. Findings from a recent Human Rights Watch Report (2001), which investigated the extent of school-based sexual violence against girls in three provinces in South Africa, indicated that GBV was not only widespread but that there was considerable confusion amongst school officials and educators about how best to resolve the issue.

In responding to this challenge, the School of Public Health, University of the Western Cape piloted a gender-based violence teacher training model programme by training a group of 33 teachers from five primary schools in Mitchells Plain, a district within the

City of Cape Town. Whilst the training programme had a positive impact on participants, only six of the 33 teachers applied what they had learnt in the training programme to their classroom settings (Dreyer, Kim & Schaay, 2001; Dreyer, 2002), clearly suggesting that the programme had significant limitations.

This follow-up study – an important component of the on-going work of the pilot project - aimed to identify what the key obstacles and difficulties have been for the teachers in applying their training in a classroom setting. Using qualitative methodology, 14 key informants were interviewed in order to develop an in-depth understanding of how the current model gender-based violence training programme could be improved so as to ensure its increased implementation within the classroom in the future. The thesis suggests that there were key weaknesses in the design of the formative research phase of the pilot project, and recommends that the current training programme and lessons be refined so as to be more compatible with the current curriculum. In addition, it proposed that the project works in closer collaboration with key stakeholders in the Provincial Education Department as it re-tests the model in the next phase of its development.

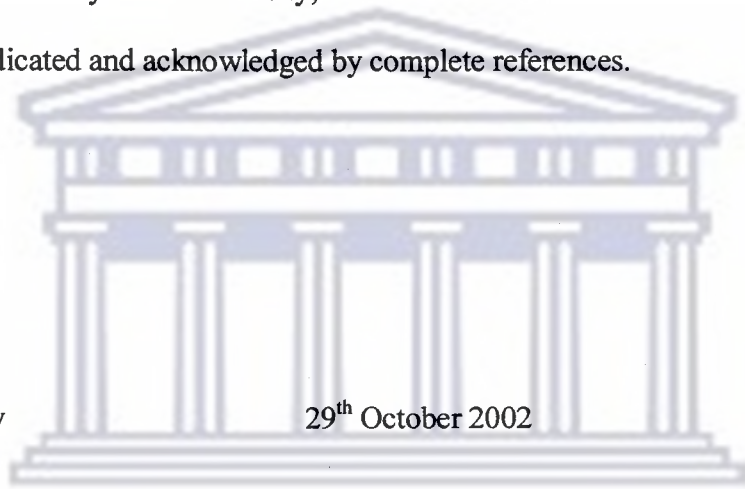
October 2002

DECLARATION

I declare that '*How ought we to inform our teachers about gender-based violence?*'
Identifying the challenges faced in integrating content around gender-based violence into classroom teaching in five primary schools in the Mitchells Plain district, Western Cape Province, South Africa is my own work, that it has not been submitted for any degree or examination in any other university, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.

Nichola Ruth Schaay

29th October 2002



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Signed

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INTRODUCTION

Recent years have witnessed the growing recognition of gender-based violence (GBV)¹ as a critical public health issue affecting the health and well-being of women and girls (Heise, Ellsberg & Gottenmoeller, 1999; WHO, 2000; Watts & Zimmerman, 2002).

Whilst there has been considerable public debate within South Africa in the last number of years about the accuracy of the country's rape and child sex abuse statistics, it is commonly acknowledged by both researchers and women's rights groups that the prevalence of rape and violence against women and girls is significant, and in a sense "endemic" to South Africa (Vogelman & Eagle, 1991). In addition, with the rapid increase in the rate of HIV infection amongst young people, notably women between the ages of 15 and 20 (LoveLife, 2001), the links between GBV and increased vulnerability to HIV/AIDS are increasingly being recognized as an issue that requires consideration at both a policy and service delivery level - particularly within the health and education sectors.

A recent Human Rights Watch Report entitled "*Scared at School: Sexual Violence Against Girls in South African Schools*" (Human Rights Watch, 2001) has drawn attention to the high levels of sexual violence experienced by girls in school, and called for concerted action to address this crisis. Despite this heightened awareness, there are very few local models or training programmes that are currently available to guide educators as to when - and for that

¹ Gender-based violence in this paper is defined as violence directed against women and girls *because* they are female, or violence that affects them - as women and girls - *disproportionately* to that of men. It includes all forms of sexual harassment (whether physical, verbal or psychological), forced sex, assault or rape. Whilst gender-based violence, by definition, includes both women *and* men, the term is often used interchangeably with the term violence against women - since women and girls are in the majority of cases the victims of abuse.

matter - how to incorporate the issue of GBV into the Life Orientation learning area of Curriculum 2005².

In response to this challenge the School of Public Health, University of the Western Cape established a pilot project in March 2000 which aimed to develop and test a model GBV primary school teacher training programme. Since the programme was seen as contributing to a broader set of anti-crime and violence-reduction initiatives that the Safer Schools Project of the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) was supporting at the time, entry into the schools was facilitated by the Safer Schools Project, which also provided some input into the original design of the training programme.

Apart from developing and pilot testing a model GBV teacher training programme, the project also provided a group of teachers from five primary schools in Mitchell's Plain, a district within the City of Cape Town, with a series of classroom lessons which, it was hoped, would enable them to introduce the issue of GBV into their classrooms. All teachers participating in the pilot programme had already received training from the WCED on basic conflict resolution and negotiation skills. The pilot training programme, which consisted of eight two-hour sessions, and was run over a two-week period in September 2000, focused on identifying teachers' own knowledge and attitudes towards gender and GBV, considering the different types of GBV that were prevalent in schools, reflecting on the messages the teachers were conveying to their learners around the concepts of sex, gender and

² Curriculum 2005 (C2005) is a popular term used for the outcomes-based education (OBE) approach that the Department of Education introduced into schools as part of the post-apartheid transformation process. Following a review in 2000, the original C2005 content was streamlined and the product produced by this process, *The National Curriculum Statement for Grades R – 9 (Schools)*, was accepted as policy in March 2002. Life orientation is one of eight learning areas in the curriculum and is present in the Foundation, Intermediate and Senior phases of the curriculum.

relationships, and identifying strategies for addressing GBV in their own school environments.

The training programme was evaluated using a pre- and post- training questionnaire. The evaluation explored the extent to which the intervention had equipped the teachers with sufficient knowledge and confidence to teach about GBV in the classroom; what their perceptions were regarding the acceptability and efficacy of addressing GBV in primary schools, and the extent to which they considered sexual harassment to be a problem within their own school environment. In order to ascertain the prevalence of GBV within the group, participants were asked to volunteer to complete an anonymous questionnaire eliciting information about their personal experiences of GBV.

Whilst the training programme had a positive impact on participants, in that it was able to increase the teachers' knowledge about GBV and their confidence to teach about this issue (Dreyer, Kim & Schaay, 2001; Dreyer, 2002), few of the participants applied what they had learnt in the training programme to the classroom: of the 33 teachers only six implemented the accompanying lessons in their classes. These figures suggest that the ability of the model GBV training programme - in its current form - to influence classroom practice is clearly limited.

Providing educators with an opportunity to explore their own knowledge, attitudes towards, and experiences of GBV - and then identify strategies for how they might be able to address GBV within the school setting - is imperative if we are wanting to provide learners with the necessary information and lifeskills to cope with the dual epidemics of gender-based

violence and HIV/AIDS. However, if a training programme – such as the one piloted in Mitchells Plain – appears to have had limited influence in being able to transform practice in the classroom, something is clearly wrong with the way in which the pilot training programme was designed, or in the content and/or the methodology of the training, or the manner in which participants were selected and/or supported by the programme – or a combination of these factors.

As part of the on-going work to refine the current training programme into one that is more appropriate and *realistic* for schools, the project developers considered this limitation to be a critical one, and one that required further investigation. The purpose of this study was thus to explore - with a sample of project stakeholders - what they considered to have been the key issues obstructing the teachers that participated in the model GBV training programme from applying the training in a classroom setting. It was hoped that by conducting a series of interviews with project stakeholders, the study would be able to identify some of the *critical* issues that ought to be considered by the researchers in the future as they continue to refine the model GBV primary school teacher training programme.

The study, which forms the basis of this mini-thesis, begins with a literature review. It explores the magnitude of the problem of rape and sexual coercion in South Africa, particularly as it affects young girls. It considers how prevalent sexual harassment and abuse of girls is within a school setting, and what implications this has for girls' education and health. The last section of the literature review considers how the project's model GBV training programme ought to be considered in the context of existing GBV policy and training initiatives, and provides an opportunity for educators themselves to reflect on their

own experiences of GBV. The literature review is followed by a section on methodology that discusses the study design and some of the ethical issues that researchers working in the field of GBV ought to consider. The interviews are analysed and discussed in the penultimate section of the thesis. The last part of the thesis draws conclusions and makes a number of recommendations.

It must be noted from the outset that the subject of this mini-thesis falls to some extent *between* the disciplines of public health and education, and thus in many respects ought to give equal consideration to the philosophies and theories underpinning both disciplines. The decision - in this particular study - has been however to approach this subject from a public health perspective. Whilst curriculum and training issues are considered, the data collection instruments, findings and discussion focus on the impact GBV has on the health of the individual and on communities.



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LITERATURE REVIEW

Despite the fact that the South African government has, through its support of international laws and its own constitution³, pledged to ensure that women are able to access – on an equal basis to men - basic human rights and fundamental freedoms, and be protected against any form of unfair discrimination on the basis of their sex or gender, women and girls living in South Africa continue to experience extraordinarily high levels of violence. This is not unexpected considering the history of the country, where the apartheid regime and its association with state-sponsored violence has not only left a legacy of social and economic inequality (Human Rights Watch, 2001), but given rise to a society that is marked by extremely high levels of violence. This is clearly illustrated in a 1996 comparison of South African crime ratios to those in over one hundred other countries, where it was revealed that South Africa was the leader in the incidence of murder, rape, robbery and violent theft (South African Police Service Semester Report 1/1999, quoted in Human Rights Watch, 2001).

The magnitude of the problem: rape and sexual coercion in South Africa

Prior to the government declaring a moratorium on the release of crime statistics in 2000, statistics released by the South African Police Service (SAPS) note that in 1998, 49 280 rapes and attempted rapes were reported to the SAPS (Vetten & Bhana, 2001), and a year later these had increased by 2000 (Human Rights Watch, 2001). Of relevance to the current

³ On 15/12/95 South Africa, by ratifying its support of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), assumed the obligation to “pursue by all appropriate means and without delay a policy of eliminating discrimination against women ‘by refraining’ from or engaging in any act or practice of discrimination against women” (CEDAW, art. 2(d), adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly, quoted in HRW, 2001: p 106-7). In addition, the Bill of Rights within The Constitution of the Republic of South African [Act No. 108 of 1996, Chapter 2, Section 9] prohibits unfair discrimination against anyone directly or indirectly on the basis of gender or sex.

study is that police statistics indicated that between 1996 – 1999, 40% of reported rape cases were among survivors under the age of 18 years (Crime Information Analysis Centre, 2000, quoted in Jewkes & Abrahams, *in press*), and that rape was the most prevalent reported crime against children (Porteus, 1999, quoted in Human Rights Watch, 2001).

It is, however, commonly understood and acknowledged by the SAPS themselves, that a considerable proportion of rapes are unreported – an occurrence that has been well illustrated by three local studies (Hirschowitz, Worku & Orkin, 2000; Jewkes et al, 2001; and Jewkes & Abrahams, *in press*), which found that between fifteen percent to half the women interviewed had reported an incident where physical force was used to make them have sex against their will to the police. The range of barriers to reporting to the police in South Africa has been highlighted by other authors (Stanton, 1993; Artz, 1999; CIET International, 1998; CIET Africa, 1998, quoted in Jewkes & Abrahams, *in press*), and include a fear of not being believed by members of the criminal justice system, a lack of belief that their action will lead to the perpetrator being punished, difficulties in accessing the police, and fear of reprisal and intimidation by the perpetrator. Ultimately, having to recount a coercive or violent sexual incident and describe, what is often perceived to be a shameful experience, to a stranger – or to a group of people in a public court – is an extremely difficult and harrowing experience, and thus might be considered by many to be better left as unreported.

In addition, Jewkes & Abrahams (*in press*) note that whilst rape might be clearly defined in terms of common law, in the discourse of the general public the question of *what constitutes rape* is much less clear, and is likely to be

“...interpreted differently depending on the relationship of the victim to the perpetrator, the ages of those involved, prevalent social notions of gender roles in decision making around sexual matters, the circumstances it occurred... [and will] depend on who is discussing the incident with whom, where, when and in what circumstances” (p 3).

Thus, the incidence of rape is likely to be much higher than what is illustrated by the national police statistics and reported rape might very well represent the ‘tip of an iceberg of sexual coercion’ – with the visible and more readily quantifiable incidents representing a small proportion of the real problem (Jewkes & Abrahams, *in press*).

However, even considering the difficulties with, and the sensitivities surrounding the reporting of rape and other acts of gender-based violence, coupled with the challenges of conducting research in the area, the most recent South African Demographic and Health Survey (1999) found a national prevalence figure for rape of 7%, with a range of 3 – 12% between provinces - clearly illustrating the magnitude of the problem of violence against women and girls in South Africa (Kim and Motsei, 2002).

Similarly, two other large household surveys of representative samples of women in South Africa, found that:

- based on a random sample of 1306 women respondents from the provinces of Eastern Cape, Mpumalanga and the Northern Province, the prevalence of rape to be 4.5%, 7.2% and 4.8% respectively (Jewkes et al, 2001); and

- 1.7% of the approximately 2 000 women interviewed for the National Victims of Crime Survey reported being raped in the last 5 years (Hirschowitz, Worku & Orkin, 2002).

The above data corresponds with evidence about the extent of the most common and most severe forms of violence against women from other countries. For example, whilst the findings on the prevalence of physical and sexual violence by intimate partners varies from one study to the next, Watts & Zimmerman (2002), drawing on data from Heise, Ellsberg & Gottenmoeller (1999), note that in nearly 50 population-based surveys on violence by intimate partners that have been done around the world, between 10% to over 50% of women reported being physically harmed by an intimate male partner at some point in their lives. In relation to young women in particular, Heise, Ellsberg & Gottenmoeller (1999) note that for many young women sexual initiation, although not physically forced, is nonetheless unwanted – an experience they perceive as happening *to* them rather than something they choose.

Sexual Coercion and violence in context: the particular vulnerability of young girls and children

Similarly, force, coercion and fear appear to be a significant part of many young people's sexual relationships in South Africa. In a national youth survey conducted by LoveLife (2000) which explored the dynamics of adolescent sexual behaviour, 39% of sexually experienced girls (in other words those who have had sexual intercourse) reported that they had been forced to have sex when they did not want to, and 33% of these girls reported being afraid to say "no" to sex. Corresponding figures for sexually active boys were

reported as being 7% and 15% respectively. CIETAfrica's survey (2000), which specifically investigated the culture of sexual violence in the Southern Metropolitan area of Greater Johannesburg, likewise illustrated how common sexual coercion appeared to be amongst male youth. By the age of 18 years, three out of ten sexually active male youth claimed to have had sex with someone without their consent. Significantly alarming was the high proportion of youth surveyed in this study who said that forcing sex with someone you know was *never* sexual violence, 27% of females and 32% of males reporting this as an opinion, and 10% of the boys interviewed thought that jack-rolling, *magintsa* or gang rape was "cool" – in other words, acceptable.

The "normalization" of physical and sexual violence perpetrated against adolescent girls and young women within the context of a sexual relationships has been reported extensively on by Wood, Maforah & Jewkes (1998) and Wood & Jewkes (1998). In the latter study, the authors suggest that violent and coercive practices are used by boys to impose and maintain the "rules" of a sexual relationship – be that in their prescription around the conditions and timing of sex, or in the manner in which they challenge a girl's attempt to end a relationship or reject an initial "proposal of love". And that beating is frequently used as a strategy for punishment and a way of gaining ascendancy and control over others within the community:

"Thus girls fought with other girls, neighbours with neighbours, boys with other boys, husbands beat wives, parents beat children, and teachers and circumcision school leaders beat their pupils. In this way the use of violence was 'normal' " (ibid, p 2).

Such violence not only reflects a patriarchal notion about the importance of men asserting hierarchy in their sexual relationships, but also how the broader community tolerates

violence as a means to resolve issues, and how many important stakeholders turn a blind eye to this.

With increasing media coverage being given to the issue of child sexual abuse in South Africa of late, especially infant rape, and the popular belief that child rape is spurred on by the myth that sex with a virgin will cure someone of HIV/AIDS, the particular vulnerability of children to sexual coercion and violence has been raised to a level of public debate – debate which has not been without some controversy. When a recent report by the South African Human Rights Commission (2002) entitled “*Does the criminal justice system protect children?*” estimated that one third of children in South Africa were abused before the age of 18 years, its accuracy was challenged by the Minister of Safety and Security, Minister Charles Nqakula, who suggested that it created a false impression of the situation in the country (Cape Times, 15 May 2002).

Clearly debates such as these, where the accuracy of popular or ‘non-official’ estimates (such as those produced by non-governmental organisations and agencies like the Human Rights Watch and the South African Human Rights Commission) are called into question by politicians, all illustrate how rape in South Africa has, as Jewkes and Abrahams (*in press*) note, become an issue of considerable political importance and sensitivity.

The dynamics of sexual violence within the school setting

Public debates and sensibilities aside, there is growing evidence to suggest that young girls are particularly prone to sexual abuse at school – an environment that has traditionally been perceived as a safe one. The results of the 1999 South African Demographic and Health

Survey (DHS), found that of the 11 735 women who participated in the survey, 153 of the women had been raped before the age of 15 years, and that the largest group of perpetrators in these particular cases were school teachers (Jewkes et al, 2002). Similarly, Human Rights Watch (2001) found that within the school environment the sexual harassment and abuse of girls by both teachers and male students was significantly widespread and common:

“...girls were raped in school toilets, in empty classrooms and hallways, and in hostels and dormitories...(they) were also fondled, subjected to aggressive sexual advances, and verbally degraded at school” (ibid, p 5).

Whilst noting that the South African Government had acknowledged the severity of this problem, the report suggested that Government had been slow in implementing effective responses and weak in enforcing existing protections, and thus with GBV remaining unchallenged in schools, much of “...the behavior that is violent, harassing, degrading and sexual in nature has become so normalized in many schools that it should be seen as a systemic problem for education, not merely a series of individual incidents” (ibid, p 5).

In response to the Human Rights Watch report a series of provincial hearings, initiated at the request of the Select Committee on Education and Recreation, National Council of Provinces, were held in late 2001 which re-affirmed many of these original findings. They found that sexual violence was a “serious problem”, “widespread” and cut “across all race and class lines”; that most of the perpetrators were inevitably educators - many of whom continued to teach in the same school as the learner whom they had abused, and that there was “a general lack of awareness about sexual violence among learners” and a lack of

responsiveness from many communities to the severity of the problem (National Council Of Provinces 2002:17-18).

The wielding of sexual coercion and violence within the school environment is not, however, confined to adults alone. In a recent survey conducted among 9 300 children across the country, CIET Africa (2002, quoted in The Sunday Times, 29 September 2002), found that many school pupils admitted to having forced sex on other children at school, and that "...these children [found] it normal to engage in intercourse without consent...(believing) that this is what they have to do to be successful in life."

Such tolerance of violence, where it has come to be perceived almost as normative and to a large extent accepted rather than challenged is, as Vogelmann and Eagle (1991) have suggested, an indication of how deeply entrenched violence is in the South African context. And whilst many South African schools have for years been places of conflict and violence - notably in the mid-seventies where the student resistance movement demonstrated against Apartheid education and schools became a critical site of the struggle - the current level of *sexual* violence that South African girls encounter in school, inevitably perpetrated by those in positions of power or authority - whether that be an adult or an older pupil, represents a significant and new challenge to the education system and to the "culture of learning" that the Department is trying to promote in all schools.

The consequences of gender-based violence for girls' education and health

Contrary to the commitments and standards set out in international treaties like the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)

and the Convention on the Rights of the Child - both of which South Africa ratified in 1995, and the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996, our school settings do not offer or encourage the establishment of a safe, non-discriminatory learning environment which afford both girls and boys equal access to learning opportunities.

As Wolpe, Quinlan & Martinez (1997) note, GBV has a significant impact on young girls' education and frequently results in "...intimidation; poor levels of participation in learning activities; forced isolation; low self-esteem or self-confidence; dropping out of education or from particular activities or subjects; or other physical, sexual and/or psychological damage". The experience of sexual harassment and sexual violence within the school environment, thus not only has a destabilising effect on learners, but erects a discriminatory barrier for young women and girls to seeking an education.

If an incident of GBV is left unchallenged in a school environment, as the recent Human Rights Watch report suggests is often the case, a girl is inevitably forced to have to confront those who have raped, assaulted and/or harassed her on a regular basis. Faced with the threat of having to face further intimidation and humiliation by the perpetrator(s) who remain at school, of not being believed, and/or of being ridiculed and ostracized if she were to speak out, many girls either leave or change schools - or at worst, remain silent about the abuse:

"The silence surrounding sexual violence for many girls grows into a resigned acceptance that unwanted and unwelcome sexual behaviours simply must be endured in educational settings. Girls learn to acquiesce to [sic] the violence because often

they receive little support from their peers at school or from school officials.” (ibid, p 74)

Apart from these educational consequences, the health consequences of GBV are multiple and are well documented. The most visible and immediate consequences - such as physical injury, can lead to permanent disability and in the extreme – death. Gender-based violence also places young girls and women at increased risk of STIs (sexually transmitted infections), and can precipitate various gynaecological disorders. In addition, in the context of school, an unwanted pregnancy, as a result of rape, could lead to further educational discrimination if a girl is excluded from school – either voluntarily or through subtle pressure from the school - because of her pregnancy.

It is commonly acknowledged that the experience of abuse also erodes a survivors’ self-esteem and puts them at greater risk of mental health problems, such as depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, suicide, and substance abuse (Heise, Ellsberg & Gottenmoeller, 1999). In many countries, there is evidence to suggest that childhood rape has increased the likelihood of unsafe sexual practices during later years, including having multiple partners, participation in sex work, and an increase in risk of rape in adulthood (Garcia-Moreno & Watts, 2000, quoted in Jewkes et al, 2002).

Increasingly, the link between physical violence, or the threat of physical violence, sexual violence and coercion and women’s increased vulnerability to HIV infection is being made, particularly in high-prevalence settings (Garcia-Moreno & Watts, 2000). In such settings, where girls and women are forced and/or coerced into having sex, where the use of condoms

cannot be negotiated – including within a regular partnership or a marriage, and where sex is used as a source of income or exchange and thus the degree of sexual risk (or sexual decision-making) is largely determined by the man, girls and women are particularly vulnerable to HIV infection. This is particularly pertinent to South Africa, where the prevalence rate of HIV in girls and young women aged 15 – 24 years is almost twice that of boys and young men of the same age (Human Rights Watch, 2001).

Considerations around integrating GBV content into classroom teaching

Whilst policy guidelines and statements have recently been developed to specifically address the issue of gender (Western Cape Education Department, 2002) and child abuse (Western Cape Education Department, 2001) within the Provincial Education Department, and the principles of the recently released *Revised National Curriculum Statement* clearly raise the importance of gender equality and social justice (Department of Education of South Africa, 2002), there is to date no national policy on sexual violence and harassment in schools⁴.

And although the Employment of Educators Act⁵, the South African Council of Educators Code of Conduct (2000), and Department of Education Guidelines for Educators on HIV/AIDS (2000), outline the various legal and ethical implications of an educator sexually assaulting or have a sexual relationship with a learner, the Human Rights Watch (2001:78) noted in their investigation that there were considerable misconceptions among school management about “what a school could or should do to prevent, investigate and punish

⁴ At the time of writing the Gender Equity Directorate, Department of Education had recently developed a draft set of ‘*Policy Guidelines for Dealing with Sexual Harassment Cases in Learning Sites*’. These are currently being circulated for comment to key stakeholders (William Tshabala – personal correspondence, 6/9/02 & 24/10/02).

⁵ Education Laws Amendment Act, No. 53 of 2000, Section 17 (1) (g) amended the Employment of Educators Act, No. 76 of 1998, to provide that an educator must be dismissed if he or she is found guilty of, among other things: “committing an act of sexual assault on a learner, student or other employee”; “having a sexual relationship with a learner of the school where he or she is employed”; or “seriously assaulting, with the intention to cause grievous bodily harm to a learner, student or other employee.”

sexual violence". In many instances school officials concealed sexual violence and delayed disciplinary action against the perpetrator at great cost to the victims. Similar inconsistencies on the part of the schools in responding to incidents of GBV were found by Brookes and Richter (2001) in their study conducted in eight schools across South Africa. Not only did they find that educators were often ill-equipped to handle the more serious cases of sexual abuse - such as rape, but that they felt inadequately supported by relevant institutions such as the police, social welfare and the education authorities. The failure of many school authorities to respond proactively to instances of GBV – be that out of ignorance, fear, or poor judgment – allows the perpetrators of gender-based violence to act with impunity which in turn continues the reinforcement of existing patterns of sex discrimination in schools.

Clearly greater consideration needs to be given to the way in which those holding positions of authority at school - be they the teachers, the principal or the school administrator – ought to be regarded as a priority target group with whom one ought to work. As Wolpe, Quinlan and Martinez (1997) note in their investigation of the issue of gender equity in education – schools, like other institutions, are settings in which sexism, racism and other forms of pejorative differentiation not only occur but are redefined and reinforced. To effect change, the authors suggest, educators themselves need to have meaningful and in-depth training – a recommendation that could be extended to include the issue of GBV.

Policies and training interventions aside, also few educational materials exist to help teachers incorporate appropriate information about GBV into their classroom teaching. The one South African publication that has been produced for use in an educational context,

Opening Our Eyes: Addressing Gender-Based Violence in South African Schools – A Module for Educators (Mlamleli et al, 2001) is intended for teachers, school management teams and school governing bodies – and, with some adaptation, mature learners. Clearly, materials aimed at the Foundation and Intermediate school phases have not been considered a priority by educationists working in the lifeskills field. Coupled with this is the apparent absence of any national or provincial strategy or guideline which outlines when and how teachers ought to be trained on GBV, and how – if sufficiently confident and skilled - they can best integrate the issue of GBV into the life orientation learning area and appropriately assess learner outcomes (Edna Rooth - personal communication, 12/08/02).

Teachers as active partners and participants in the curriculum development process

Research among health care professionals indicates that the attitudes and beliefs about gender and GBV, and a person's own experiences of GBV may significantly impact on his/her ability to address the subject in his/her professional capacity (Kim and Motsei, 2002; Moore et al, 1998). This is an important consideration, in light of the fact that 47% of the women teachers who responded to the optional questionnaire at the end of the project's training programme reported experiencing physical abuse at the hands of an intimate partner (Dreyer, Kim & Schaay, 2001).

Given this context, the pilot programme was based on the premise that to effect change educators *themselves* first need to be provided with the opportunity to learn about GBV – to understand its causes, the consequences of such violence, be able to reflect on their own behaviour and, along with legislative measures, would then be in a better position to contribute to its mitigation.

In addition, the importance of working with teachers - as active partners in the curriculum development process as opposed to recipients of a curriculum package - has been highlighted by Tones, Dixey & Green (1995), and is considered to have significant influence over the extent to which new initiatives are accepted and integrated into the “fabric of the curriculum” (p 5). Many of the popular theories which claim to explain the processes of curriculum development suggest this as a central theme: in other words, the extent to which the curricular innovation is imposed by the ‘centre’ (the ‘top-down’ approach) or developed by teachers themselves ‘at the periphery’ (the ‘bottom-up’ approach) will to a large degree determine its acceptability and use (Havelock, 1982; Bennies, Benne and Chin, 1969, quoted in Tones, Dixey & Green, 1995). In line with the ideology of health promotion, the latter approach – with full staff (and where appropriate learner) involvement in the curriculum development process is ideal.

This ideal, however, is not always possible – or, for that matter, adhered to. Kruss (1998) in an article entitled *‘Teachers, Curriculum 2005 and the education policy-making process’*, suggests that despite an official commitment to a participatory policy-making process, the course of developing a new curriculum in South Africa has been characterised by constant tension between those who formulate and drive policy and those who implement it - with the power and involvement of the ‘centre’ taking increasing dominance over provincial and local stakeholder involvement. As a result, teachers interests, expertise and concerns have not been incorporated into the form and content of C2005 in any significant way, but rather they “have received the curriculum ‘blueprint’ as a *fait accompli*, and are simply required to participate in a pilot, or go for ‘training’” (ibid, 107).

Clearly, working with a sensitive issue like GBV and attempting to integrate it into the curriculum - in a school system which is itself undergoing a process of transformation - brings with it many challenges. However, given the high levels of sexual harassment and violence that girls experience in South Africa, it is imperative that an increasing number of educational resources and interventions be developed so as to provide the necessary support to teachers as they face the consequences of this public health issue – literally in every one of their classes. Since the model GBV primary school teacher training programme developed and evaluated by the School of Public Health in 2000 had a significant impact on teachers, but was limited in its ability to transform and impact on classroom teaching thereafter, it would be of great value to investigate how such a model – one of the first to be developed for the local South African context – could be refined so as to better inform practice in the classroom in the future.

The logo of the University of the Western Cape, featuring a stylized classical building with columns and a pediment.

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RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Aims and Objectives of the Study

The study aimed to identify what the key obstacles and difficulties have been which prevented primary school teachers participating in a model GBV training programme from being able to integrate the content of the training into a classroom setting, and to make recommendations for changes to the training programme. In particular, the study aimed to:

- identify some of the key challenges faced by teachers following their participation in the model GBV training programme, specifically on returning to their schools where they were required to apply their training within a classroom setting;
- explore what kind of support (be that in terms of resources, mentoring, or organizational support) teachers would have found useful following the training programme;
- make recommendations, based on the above, about what would be the most suitable mechanism or approach to employ in the future when conducting such in-service GBV training for primary school teachers.

Study Design

The research took the form of an exploratory, qualitative study. This methodology was selected because the study, being exploratory, was better suited to an inductive approach that allows for a more flexible investigation of the issue. In addition, a qualitative approach allowed the researcher to record the diversity of experiences, views and meaning the different stakeholders had, and hold, in relation to the issues under investigation, and how these relate to the broader social context.

Study Population

The study was conducted in the same pilot site used to implement and evaluate the model GBV teacher training programme in September 2000. Essentially, the site is comprised of a group of five primary schools from Mitchells Plain, a district within the City of Cape Town, all of whom expressed a willingness to participate in the original GBV teacher training programme through the Safer Schools Project of the Western Cape Education Department. The five schools are situated in poor, working class neighbourhoods, and fall under the governance of the Metropole Central Education Management and Development Centre, Western Cape Education Department (WCED). The study population was drawn from the 33 teachers (21 women and 12 men) who participated in the original training programme, many of whom live in the district itself, and a smaller group of education specialists who have been directly or indirectly involved in supporting the programme since its inception two years ago.

Sample

Systematic, non-probabilistic sampling or purposeful sampling, was used to identify a sample of 14 key informants to participate in the study. The sample consisted of 12 teachers (five male and seven female) and two education specialists working in the life orientation field. The informants were selected on the basis of their experience of having participated in the model training programme, and – in the case of the two specialists – their past involvement in teacher training, curriculum design and health promotion at a district or primary school level. By purposefully selecting a sample of diverse and, what Patton (1987) refers to as information-rich cases, the study attempted to describe both the variation in the

group, and their variations in experience, whilst also documenting the core elements and shared patterns which cut across the diversity of these cases.

Data Collection

Seven individual, semi-structured interviews and one focus group interview was conducted by the primary researcher with the fourteen key informants during September and October 2002.

Focus group methodology was used in order to complement the data obtained in the individual interviews with teachers. By providing informants with an opportunity to discuss their individual experiences and opinions of the GBV programme collectively, the researcher was able to assess the extent to which there was a relatively consistent, shared view of the programme amongst the participants, and to identify points of dissent. Situating the discussion within a social context also allowed the researcher to identify some of the underlying dynamics of the group process and to highlight the extent to which these appeared to influence the popular or common opinions held by the group (Pope & Mays, 1995; Patton, 1987).

An interview schedule, based on the objectives of the study and informed by the literature review and field experience, was designed so as to structure the process of the individual and focus group interviews and to minimize variation in the questions posed to interviewees. Although focusing on common objectives, there was a slight variation in the questions that were posed to teachers as compared to those posed to the education specialists.

All the informants were approached by the researcher and given an outline of the purpose and aims of the study, after which they were asked whether they would be willing to take part in the research. In the case of the focus group, once permission had been granted by the school principal to conduct a focus group with the school teachers, arrangements were mediated through the school secretary, with whom the Project Co-ordinator had maintained an on-going relationship since the initial teacher training programme. Since participation in the study was during the teachers' own time, they were each paid a stipend for their contribution, which was then donated to the school.

Interviews were held at a place of the informant's choosing, and at time that suited him/her best. All the interviews were conducted in English. The option of using an interpreter, although available, was not used by any of the informants, and was not deemed necessary even when a lively debate ensued within the focus group and the group alternated between using Afrikaans and English.

In each interview permission was requested to record the interviews. Following each interview, the recorded interviews were transcribed by an independent person and then checked for accuracy by the researcher. In addition to this, the researcher kept a field diary in which she documented her observations and reflections of the interview process. These field notes were later considered alongside the interview transcripts in the analysis phase of the study.

Validity

The validity of the findings of social research is an important issue, and is of considerable importance given the popular perception among some scientists that qualitative research is not scientific. By its very nature – this study, in recording the experiences, feelings and opinions of a group of stakeholders about a particular issue at a particular point in time – can only claim to offer *one view* or *interpretation* of the subject under discussion. It must also be acknowledged that the researcher, either in the way she presents herself or is representative of a different social class, age, sex, or race to the key informants, will influence the process and outcome of the interviews. Taking the above into account in a qualitative research study, where the role of the researcher is central – and many would suggest *is* in fact the instrument in qualitative research (Gifford, 1996), is crucial, and was considered by the researcher in the analysis phase.

Thus, in order to ensure that the findings constitute a credible claim to truth, or correctly map the issue under investigation, the researcher made use of triangulation, and contrasted the material drawn from the interviews with information gathered from other sources. In that way, appropriate “checks and balances” as Patton (1987) describes them, were used to increase the strength and rigor of the research findings. Other sources of information which were drawn upon included, firstly, a review of related journal articles focusing on the issue of GBV, curriculum design, and teacher training, and secondly, feeding back the research findings to the informants to see whether they regard the findings as a valid account of their experience. The latter is a validation strategy, and referred to as respondent validation (Reason & Rowan, 1981, quoted in Silverman D, 2000).

Data Analysis

Qualitative data obtained from the transcripts of the interviews was content analyzed (Patton, 1987) to identify coherent and important examples and patterns that emerge from the course of the interviews. By making use of content analysis, the researcher looked for quotations or observations across the eight interviews that refer to the same underlying idea, issue or concept.

The reliability of the analysis of the qualitative data was enhanced by having the Project Coordinator review the transcripts from the eight interviews and compare her interpretation of the content with that of the primary researcher. This method, in which the category system of the researcher is checked by another person, has been suggested as a sound approach by many authors (Burnard, 1991; Silverman, 2000).

Following the initial interpretation, the key themes or categories which the researchers felt had been generated from the research were summarized and presented to the 14 key informants as a way of validating the findings. Based on their feedback, the primary researcher then proceeded to develop a set of recommendations so as to guide the development of the model GBV teacher training programme in its next stage of development.

Ethics

Approval for the initial pilot study was obtained from the Western Cape Education Department, and a similar request for authorization was obtained for the current study. It was agreed that the results of the study would be forwarded to the WCED prior to the

researcher submitting them to a popular or accredited journal, or disseminating the research findings to other stakeholders. In this way, the WCED would be provided with an opportunity to review the findings of the research, and then consider how best to disseminate them to local educators.

Jewkes et al (2000), drawing on the collective experience of the International Research Network on Violence Against Women (IRNVAW), have noted that research in the area of GBV involves (or entails) a particular set of risks and concerns. These relate to the safety of both the respondent and the researchers, the need to protect the mental well-being of those involved in a study as they witness and recall violent experiences, the risks of under-reporting the extent of violence experienced or perpetrated and not linking research to some form of policy or programmatic action. Whilst this study did not elicit individual accounts or experiences of violence, unlike a community-based study or a household survey which is designed to document the extent of GBV or the experiences of women survivors of violence in a particular community, the researcher still considered it necessary to anticipate some of the potential risks that might arise as a result of the study. Of particular concern was that the process of the interview itself could lead the informant to recall or recount a traumatic and violent experience either during the process of the interview or at a later stage. In order to ensure that all the informants were provided with the necessary information were they to require support, a referral list of local counsellors and service-based organisations working in the GBV field was given to each informant at the end of the interviews. In addition, participants were assured that they could withdraw from the study at any point during the course of the research process if they felt like doing so. In order to preserve the anonymity

of the particular opinions and experiences of key informants, the interview transcripts were all coded.



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RESULTS

Several themes emerged from the interviews. These can be clustered into three main groups: the first relating to the barriers that informants suggested hindered the transfer of the training into the classroom, the second relating to the kinds of support that teachers would have appreciated following the training, and the third relating to a set of recommendations that informants made in relation to improving aspects of the current programme.

Barriers to implementation: the challenges faced by teachers on their return to school.

When informants were asked what they thought were some of key challenges or barriers that teachers faced following the training programme, and which hindered their application of the programme into their classroom, most informants suggested that there were “many” or “a range of reasons” why there was so little application of the training programme in the classroom.

Informants suggested that the barriers ranged from contextual issues like the pressure of the demands placed on teachers when they returned to their regular school programmes and the ability of the programme to be linked to the identified learning outcomes of the current curriculum, to what they described as the personal “passion” or commitment of teachers to the issue of GBV, and the extent to which they were able to adapt the programme’s lessons to the needs of their particular learners or classroom settings.

A new project can “fall by the wayside” when you get “caught up in the routine of things”

Many of the informants suggested that - like many other training programmes – participants were often very enthusiastic about the issue and the discussions and ideas shared during the course of the training. However, their enthusiasm was often dissipated when they returned to school and were drawn back into the routine of their schedules and their many responsibilities. As one informant noted:

“The one thing is that while they are doing the course, they are almost on a high - they are inspired, and in their evaluation they write that they are going to apply what they have learnt and that they have changed inside, or something had shifted. When they get back to the school that situation is exactly the same...they get so caught up in where they left off, in the curriculum, in administration, and in all the things that seem to be irritating and worrying teachers. They just don't have that energy to do something, or they don't know where to start or they feel it's beyond them. It seemed so easy when they were doing the course, but then they get caught in the routine...”

And as one teacher noted:

“What happens is, when you come back...there's this tight schedule at school that is constantly there...That is the problem: we don't get time to reflect on what we've just experienced. So now that has been pushed aside what you just have learnt – which was good – and now you have to just run into the programme of the school that has been set out already and that needs to get your attention. And so that just falls apart. That just falls by the wayside and there you carry on with what's going on and you totally forget what you already learnt”.

Coupled with this is the difficult environment in which teachers find themselves. Violence within the surrounding community often results in disruptions to the regular school programme, leaving teachers with less control over the sequencing of their standard programmes and, inevitably with less time to consider new projects:

“I just feel that what is happening at the moment is that we have planned things but then...things just come up and we react, we react, we react. So there is no proactive thing... OK, I don't want to say we should blame the situation entirely on violence outside but actually it's part of an abnormal situation... like the day before the...community had a protest march about family evictions. So there was a lot of burning (of tyres) in the road... And you know, things like this just happen and you must just be part of it and you must just live with these things.”

The pressure that this puts on teachers was often evident in interviews. One informant shared how:

“...the moment I put my foot over the threshold (at school)...you know, it's just like something heavy gets me. In my heart, I just feel some heaviness coming in”.

Under these circumstances, for this informant in particular - and no doubt for many others - the GBV training programme felt like one more “good idea and new cause” that the school was “being bombarded with”, which, whilst being “interesting and meaningful” tended to “fall by the wayside” in the face of competing demands and responsibilities.

Without adequate preparation it feels like the training “happened in the middle of nowhere”

One of the respondents felt that a critical issue overlooked was that the programme failed to do the necessary “groundwork”: in other words, it failed to prepare the teachers and the school for “what they could expect”, how the training was “linked to the academic programme of the school” and “*why* it needed to go into the schoolroom” in the first place:

“...the training sort of happened in the middle of nowhere without any basis, you know. There wasn’t any sort of pre-programme warm-up to the concept. It happened, and there was an expectation that it would be implemented – that it would be put into the classroom – and I don’t think that happened. It really can’t happen that way”.

A similar idea was put forward by one of the educationists who noted that, despite the fact that issues such as gender stereotyping and sexism, discrimination and bias, sexual abuse, and violence have been identified as assessment standards for life orientation in the foundation and intermediate phases – and thus are seen as important components of the school curriculum, the training programme did not sufficiently describe or link these assessment standards with its own content, and as such the training was considered to be something *additional* to the basic curriculum:

“I think that’s one of the reasons why the teachers thought well why should I try this, is that it was not compulsory. It’s an ‘add on’ and there are so many ‘add ons’. I mean...the policy document clearly states that issues of gender have to be prominent in all the learning areas, and (this programme) can make the theoretical curriculum become a reality by helping them develop their learning programmes and classroom activities...but at the moment they (the teachers) see all this as an extra...”

“The material was very theoretical – it wasn’t very practical”

In addition, many of the informants suggested that the lessons proposed were not designed in such a way as to make “the life of the teacher easier”. Informants suggested that resources for the classroom needed to be developed to facilitate quick lesson planning and be ready for use in the classrooms the first time around:

“Teachers don’t want to use the old-style school books, because they are simply resources. They now want a textbook that...reminds them that this is a particular outcome they need to achieve and here is a lesson that helps them achieve it. What (is helpful) with the new textbooks is that the learning program is now being written for them...they just have to re-interpret it, in the style and way that suits their own particular approach.”

As one teacher noted, the lessons proposed by the project require some adjustment to fit into the current OBE framework, hence they are not as user-friendly as other lessons. There were also doubts as to whether many of the teachers would take the time to adapt the proposed lessons to their particular circumstances:

“Because I think teachers would say: listen, I’ve got a textbook here with all of the outcomes worked out already – it’s all sorted out. I’m not going to rack my brain now (to sort these lessons out) because that is a bit unnecessary you know”.

Another informant suggested that some of the activities that formed part of the classroom materials were not necessarily appropriate for the range of skills of the learners in their

classes, and that some of these activities were not necessarily “practical” to implement with a large class of learners – classes which often consist of 50 learners:

“Another thing, and here I’m relating specifically to the material - why possibly a lot of people didn’t implement it - is that the material was very theoretical as well. It wasn’t very practical. I don’t think it took into account the level of learners that we’re working with. Especially in our township schools, the level of language that we’re working with is lower. I’m working with grade 8 and I don’t think they would be able to cope at the level that the tasks are set. A lot of this (the lessons) has got to do with discussion and interpreting. Those are skills that are sort of higher order skills if I can put it that way, and a lot of our learners are struggling. Now if we’re saying that this is the kind of programme that must get implemented across the school - from Grade 1 to Grade 8 in our case, a lot of learners are not going to be able to cope with it. The teacher is going to have to adapt this so dramatically...”

Coupled with this was the logistical aspect of teachers having to find sufficient time to implement the GBV lessons. Many had already scheduled activities for their life orientation classes, and that the issue of GBV was in some ways having to ‘compete’ for time with other issues in the life orientation programme:

“Because if you think about it, gender is *one* issue out of many other issues in the area. So if we’re saying, ok we want to focus on these five areas for the year, gender is probably going to be one of them...realistically speaking, that’s about two hours worth of work. But to take it as a package as it is here, which is about 15 hours of class time - it’s not workable in terms of our programme that we have at the moment”.

GBV, like AIDS, “is not a nice thing to deal with – it isn’t that easy to bring up in a discussion”

It was noted that GBV, like HIV/AIDS is a very sensitive issue and therefore inevitably only a

proportion of the teachers would be comfortable to discuss the issue with their learners:

“...while people may enjoy the workshops they often shy away from the issues afterwards because it isn’t that easy to bring up a discussion...and they really have to grapple with how they are going to get the message across...”

Many of the informants also mentioned that, like in other training programmes, there will inevitably be a proportion of participants that feel “inspired” to take the training forward in some way or another, and a group of participants that “aren’t interested” in the issue. One informant described how they had taken this into account in their own training programme:

“In any training situation you can have people that are interested and you will always have a percentage that aren’t interested. The AIDS training for instance, at least 20% just don’t want to deal with it, they feel uncomfortable for some reason and it’s just not their thing. We accept that. Our target is 80%...and out of that we hope we get a smaller group of people who will be passionate about the issue”.

A similar distinction was made by teachers during the course of the interviews as they referred to some of their colleagues as being “driven” or “passionate” about a particular issue, and how this influenced the way in which they used the information in their classrooms:

“So if you don’t have the passion, if you’re not driven by the information, then you are going to be limited in terms of what you’re going to present in your classroom”.

Related to this, two informants raised the difficulty of working with an issue like GBV, that many of the participants had had first hand experience of. For many survivors of GBV, being asked (within the context of training) to consider the issue of GBV - when they themselves have not had sufficient resources or been afforded the opportunity to reflect on their own trauma – could in itself be a traumatic experience. Likewise, confronting discriminatory beliefs or abusive behaviour in a training context, when many of the participants might themselves be perpetrators of such abuse, is likely to raise some unease or discomfort. It appeared that these were challenges that the project still needed to consider:

“And we had a group of teachers and everyone of them had their own struggles and backgrounds that they were dealing with. And we might have teachers there with gender issues themselves. You’re presenting a programme and you’re saying, take this programme, but here you have a teacher who is not dealing with their own baggage and their own stuff, and they have to implement it into a classroom”.

Another informant alluded to the complexity of this issue:

“This is a difficult question to answer – why teachers did not apply the training so much...I don’t think I have even scratched the surface. Where do you start with a teacher whose husband is abusive?”

'I didn't do it because I don't do life orientation'

Finally, teachers who did not have the responsibility of teaching life orientation, felt that the lessons were inappropriate to incorporate in their own classes (such as the mathematics class) – and they thus did not even try to raise the issue at school following the training. As one informant noted:

“People tend to think in their subject boxes or learning area boxes and don't look out of that, so if you were not doing life orientation with your class you would not think about this”.

Areas requiring additional support following the training programme.

When informants were asked to identify what support they felt teachers required after the training, they identified two types – the first was the support they felt they required from “within” the school system, and the second was the support or mentorship required by the programme trainer or the facilitator.

In relation to the former, one informant suggested that the school needs to consider:

“...what is it that we can do as a school to ensure that this programme runs, so we take responsibility for the moving or the driving of the programme”.

References to this kind of support was similar to the ideas expressed around the importance of the “school management” committing to the process of the training.

In relation to the support required from the trainer, it was stressed that the trainer's support be “structured” or “embedded” as a critical component of the training programme – and that

just as they have assumed responsibility for the facilitation of the training, they should assume responsibility for supporting the application of the theory into practice *after* the course. The educationists stressed the importance of the project needing to conceptualise the training as one aspect of a larger cycle, with follow-up support being of equal importance as was the initial preparation and the training, and that it be offered in a structured manner.

The teachers, however, suggested that the trainer could offer support in a number of different ways – for example, by offering specific advice or input:

“A facilitator’s support really comes in when you’re looking for maybe different ideas around the issue. Maybe some more information, or some interaction with learners, or arranging a programme where we deal specifically maybe with the issue of gender violence in and outside the school - to talk around or to do something as a presentation...the kind of support that is more a resource than anything else”.

Or, by monitoring their progress in the class:

“...have someone come and check up...like once a month. I think if you go for training, you ought to come back and do it in your class...but you need someone to monitor this. And at the end of the day teachers appreciate this because if you are stuck and not sure what to do they can help you”.

This was echoed by another informant who noted how important follow-up support was after a training event, to ensure that the transition between the training and implementation is sustained:

“I mean, if you think about the training, what you’re doing there makes sense to you rather than if you actually think about it. It’s things that might even touch you. You say: you know, this is real. This is stuff that I can do if I focus on it. But once that sort of period is over and you have to go back and do it, then the feelings go away and reality sets in. It doesn’t matter how good your programme is. It’s about what happens after that. So there has to be structures in place that ensure that what (the training) carries over.”

Future options: suitable mechanisms or approaches to employ in the future when conducting such in-service GBV training for primary school teachers.

During the process of interviews, informants shared a number of ideas about how they felt the training programme could be adapted to better suit the needs of teachers in the future.

Adequate and direct preparation with all stakeholders is required if the programme is to be reasonably accommodated at the school.

Many of the teachers suggested that direct communication with a variety of stakeholders at the school, prior to the GBV training programme being implemented, would be an important step to consider in the future process. One teacher suggested that:

“I think a programme like this needs to be prepared...And I think maybe a discussion, with whatever group you are going to be working with...around all the kinds of issues that we’re dealing with at the school would be good. And how these issues (of GBV) impact on what’s happening in the classroom. How does it impact on our community and on our society. So open with discussions before we get into the training...”

It was suggested that this would also enable the facilitator to gain a better understanding of the local experience, which could in turn be incorporated into the content of the training, and thereby locate the issue of GBV more within the realm of the teachers' own experiences:

“...this programme has to be relevant to the experience of the teacher as well as the experience of the *locals*. So if it's not relevant to the teacher, the teacher is going to see this as outside of my reality and if I'm going to do it, it's going to be like I am ploughing through the thing. If it can be something that's relevant to the teacher, based in their *own* experience of reality, it becomes easier then to implement into the classroom”.

Whilst recognising that teachers were not always in control of their schedules in the face of various ad-hoc events, prior preparation and advance scheduling of the training programme would perhaps assist teachers to allocate sufficient time in their annual programme plans for the GBV sessions. Many of the informants discussed how their schools planned a term or a quarter in advance, and how they tended now to work around specific “themes” or “topic areas”. They suggested that if the school was informed well in advance (for example, at the end of a year) that they would receive training during the next year, they could then allocate class time and one of the “themes” or “topic areas” for the content of that training.

In addition, all of the informants remarked how important it was to get the school principals involved in the intervention – preferably from the beginning of the process:

“And if you can get your management behind the project then they can drive it. If your management is not behind the project and the process, it’s going to have a limited flow-out”.

And as another informant noted:

“The principals are key to the whole process, if you can get their buy-in up front, then a lot of your difficulties, will fall by the way-side”.

Two informants suggested that a general awareness-raising session was sufficient for principals to attend and that their full-time participation in the training programme was not necessarily appropriate. Getting them to understand the necessity of the programme, to provide their support to the training programme, and getting some commitment that they would be involved in assessing how the programme was being implemented in their schools was considered by some to be important:

“I think they need to be orientated, even if they come to a one-day thing.

Because...teachers in the Western Cape are still very conservative, so they are not going to challenge (the Principal) if he is using language that is not conducive...because he is the boss. So I think you need to do some little bit somewhere with the principals. And they don’t have time so they won’t enjoy doing the full thing - but just an awareness raising session would be good”.

Considerations around the selection of participants for the training programme

During the process of the interviews the issue of *who* should attend the training inevitably arose. There was some indecision amongst informants about whether participants should volunteer or be selected; whether only the teachers responsible for the subjects of life

orientation and languages should be trained – the two learning areas which informants felt were the most compatible with the GBV content, or whether all teachers should in fact be part of the training. However, the latter seemed to be an option that most informants agreed would be most suitable in primary school. Two reasons were given for this:

Firstly, teachers in primary school, unlike those in high school, do not always have specific subjects that they teach “year in and year out”, and are sometimes allocated different responsibilities from one year to the next depending on learner numbers and the configuration of the classes. Training life orientation teachers this year, will thus not automatically mean that they will have an opportunity to implement the training in their class the following year - if their responsibilities have been shifted:

“It’s very difficult, because especially in primary schools, teachers change from year to year. So you’re going to have a language teacher or life orientation teacher today, but next year, that teacher does maths and is not involved in language at all. So you have another teacher coming in who hasn’t had any training here and therefore is not going to implement this particular part of the syllabus maybe in the way that you would like it to go”.

Secondly, all the informants remarked how unsuitable they felt the ‘train-the-trainer’ approach was, an approach that is used frequently by the Department of Education – particularly for more “subtle” or “sensitive” issues - and how it ought not to be replicated by other projects. Informants suggested that information was often “diluted incorrectly” by this ‘cascade’ model, that teachers did not “want to be trained by their colleagues” and that there

was never enough time to share information with others at the school. One informant, who felt strongly about this issue, noted:

“It sounds nice on paper, train the trainer, but...will often do more damage than good. The course isn't just facts and information, now you have to go and do this, it's very subtle. So unless you have a system where if you're teaching at school X, then you train at school Z, so you don't train your own colleagues and preferably far away, so it's not in your neighbourhood, that might work because then you're still seen as the expert for another school. Colleagues don't respect each other that much, there is a lot of jealousy. And what if you can train your Heads of Department and tell them to get in a group, or shut up or whatever! It doesn't work...I have a problem with that model, and I think the AIDS training - it actually didn't work that well”.

Another informant remarked:

“The master trainer thing doesn't work, its hogwash. It assumes that someone is the super trainer and mostly they are not. It just does not work - train the people you want to train directly not via someone else”.

Given the current constraints on time and resources, it was acknowledged that the whole school approach would not necessarily be the most feasible option, and that under these circumstances the project ought to consider “not returning to the train-the-trainer approach, but looking to use some of its more useful components”. For example, one informant suggested that it might be an option to consider finding “a few good people” to take up the

issue in the classroom “instead of demanding that everyone teaches it” and then getting the school to work creatively around “timetable issues”:

“The message I am trying to give to the others in the Department, particularly those that manage schools, is that if we have a few good people, instead of demanding that everybody teaches it, because it’s everyone’s responsibility...let’s work around it. Let’s timetable around it. Give them more of the HIV load and let others take away some of their geography load. So we are using our best teachers to deliver what they are passionate about. That’s what brings education alive and real.”

The importance of creating an experiential learning space

Most participants stressed how important it was to create an innovative and supportive learning environment for teachers. When informants were asked to recall what they found particularly useful or memorable in the courses that they had attended, they often discussed how facilitators had used different and creative methods to “get the message across” like using music, or asking them to “write down their ideas in a diary”, or creating exercises that “touched their emotions”.

Informants talked about how important it would be in this course for participants to be provided with the opportunity for “reflection” and for “internalizing” the course content. In the focus group, specifically, teachers talked extensively about how important it was to “focus on the emotional stuff”, “the in-your-face stuff” as one informant described it, and “how important it was not to run away from that”.

A similar idea was raised in one of the individual interviews:

“And you need to focus on them (the participants) as a private person...because you want it to be ‘heartfelt’ because then you are going to have the teacher onboard. That's why it's quite a difficult training because you first have to get to the heart. Its almost like convincing people, it's not just factual ...so that's why there has to be a lot of time for reflection on emotion and feelings. I would include a lot of that in every session: how *you* feel”.

A number of informants raised specific suggestions in relation to the logistics associated with the actual training event. Most informants thought that it would be important to secure a training venue that was “quiet” and “away from school”, and that “investing a little in the training environment” would be beneficial to the productivity or the outcome of the course. One educationist remarked how important it was to “nurture” the participants, and that:

“They must feel like you care about them. Not just loading them with something else to do. You have to show them that. You have to show them, you are there to make their job easier.”

Informants had different opinions about when would be the most suitable time during which to train teachers. Most of the teachers themselves felt that “during school time” was the most appropriate, and one of the educationists agreed:

“I would definitely try and work it through the Education Department, so you can access the teachers in the school time as part of their general training - that seems to energise the teachers a bit more and you have a better attendance that way”.

However, it was noted that the issue around in-service training time was currently a “complicated” issue and the Department’s policy on the matter had not been finalised as yet. One informant noted that “...the Minister’s approach is that no teacher may be out of the classroom during teaching time, but that training ought to take place after school hours, over weekends and over school holidays” – an approach that has inevitably not been met with much support.

Anticipating and working with potential barriers during the training programme

Both educationists remarked how important it was, during the course of the training programme, to consider the kinds of barriers that teachers were likely to face when applying their training in their classrooms or schools. In this way they would be able to anticipate the difficulties, and think of solutions *whilst* still on the training course. This was considered to be particularly important in light of the sensitivity surrounding an issue like GBV, and that many of the participants taught in schools that were not necessarily gender-sensitive. As one informant remarked:

“...it’s very difficult with gender. You have staff rooms filled with very sexist people...and you (the participant) become a joke: ‘Oh you are the big women’s libber now!’, ‘Who do you think you are? Are you gay?’...(and) ‘Oh, this stuff is just for women, or women who don’t want to make food anymore’ - these are the types of things that people hear.”

Often, another informant remarked, participants returning from a training programme were struck by how “paradoxical” or “at odds” the school environment appeared from the philosophy underlying their recent learning experience. They recounted how, after

returning from a training course on conflict resolution and peace-building, the principal had informed a group of teachers that:

“If I see anyone of you hit somebody I am going to *kick your ass*”.

Clearly, having to confront opposing and/or different opinions about the content of a training programme that one has just experienced is one of the challenges that one is likely to be faced with.

Sometimes this also meant working with teacher’s own sense of despondency and disillusionment in feeling that the interventions that they make in the classroom were not going to be able to make any change to the problems in the broader environment because “it is so violent”. One educationist suggested that in their experience suggesting that teachers work with something small and manageable – like transforming the culture of their *own* classrooms was important. Re-assuring teachers that, in a small way, they would be making a difference was also considered important:

“I think that by acknowledging to the group that the structure that they are working in probably won’t change for the next five years, and getting them to think how they can work *within* that structure...is important. They must not feel that they can’t apply it in class because their school is sexist. They must do it to give the next generation a better chance”.

The use of role-plays - where participants are asked to develop their own solutions to challenges like these; and having more than one teacher from each school attend a training programme together in order that they can support one another when they return to school

were seen as important considerations. In addition, incorporating exercises into the classroom lessons which involved learners initiating a community project was seen as a way of assisting the teachers to make a link between what they were doing at school and raising the general awareness in the community:

“Maybe also giving them ideas for the stuff they can do for the learners as well - competitions for learners, posters, newspapers, plays, marches. Doing something fantastic for Women’s day, for example, and where there will be a prize for the whole school or class that does the most ...”

Making improvements to the classroom lessons

Both the teachers and the educationists suggested that there was a definite need to re-consider the current content and structure of the proposed classroom lessons so that they were more compatible with what teachers required. Suggestions for improvement included re-orientating the lessons so that they were more compatible with the learning outcomes of the new curriculum; ensuring that a range of age-appropriate exercises were offered for each activity so as to cater for the varying needs of learners, and working with teachers in assisting them to prepare such lessons. For example, one informant suggested:

“...when you give them (the teachers) a lesson almost plan it so that it’s so easy for them to do the next day - that it almost takes their preparation away. Maybe help them link it up by finding out before exactly what they’re teaching, what age group they are teaching and even spending time on making it appropriate for them. I find they battle to adapt it to their particular learners...I even help them if they don’t have photocopy facilities”.

It was suggested that it would be useful in future training programmes to develop a template or a basic outline of a series of age-appropriate lessons, which teachers could then adapt to suit their particular classroom context. For example, teachers ‘could bring in the problems that they experience in their own class’ and integrate those into the content of the basic lessons. The adaptation of the basic lesson plans could be completed during the initial training programme, or as a specific task in the follow-up training process. In this way, the facilitator would be able to support the participants as they made the transition from theory to practice, and be able to ensure that some of the critical concepts associated with the issue of GBV were being conveyed through the classroom lessons.

Whilst it was raised by one informant that “we need to consider how to integrate the material across the different learning areas”, no specific proposal for how this could be done was put forward in this regard. In addition, another informant suggested that additional consideration in the future needed to be given to how the teachers ought to assess the learning outcomes of the current lessons – another area that was not detailed sufficiently in the current materials.

Design follow-up sessions as part of the training programme

Finally, many informants stressed that it was important for the process of learning to continue after the training programme, in a way that is interactive and so that “people continue to learn from one another”. As one informant suggested:

“The learning needs to continue with the follow-ups. It is not a static thing, it is continuous with the first training intervention”.

Another noted that there ought to be more emphasis placed in the training programme on getting teachers to apply the theory from the programme practically in their classrooms in between training sessions. The suggestion was that:

“...I would make as part of the course, possibly to make it easier for teachers to apply, sort of mid-course I would let them identify one small thing they want to change in the school around gender. While the course is going on, they have to do that and then share with others what they did, or didn't do, or couldn't do. A kind of homework, or take-away task...and then after every session just give a small thing, not a whole package of worksheets...”

In addition, follow-up sessions need to be planned as an integral component of the initial training programme, and not be perceived as something which participants can voluntarily participate in or as one informant suggested – as “an add-on”. Evidence that the participants have applied some of their learning in their workplace was considered as important material that participants brought to, and reflected on during the follow-up sessions and was considered a pre-requisite for certification:

“...I believe in follow-up as part of a course, so when you plan a course, you have to plan for the follow-up to be part of the course and when you sell the course to somebody, you (need to inform them that they are) not going to come to four sessions, but they are coming to six! The follow-up sessions must be seen as part of the course, otherwise people see it as an add-on and they won't come to the follow-up...For the follow-up they have to come with evidence that they have done so many hours of facilitation and feed this back to the group...For me the 'carrot thing' is that if you don't do the follow-ups, and the practice you don't get the certificate”.

Four to six weeks after the initial training programme was proposed as a reasonable timeframe to schedule the first follow-up meeting, and a month after that was proposed as a good timeframe for the next one.

Having the facilitator sit in on classroom sessions and review how teachers had designed and facilitated their own lesson was suggested as another way of providing follow-up support to participants.

One informant suggested that in the current educational climate - where teachers are having to operate in a context that is characterised by transition and change, offering support and encouragement to the teachers on an ad-hoc basis, could serve as further encouragement – or a gentle reminder - for teachers to apply what they have learnt in the training programme into their classrooms:

“You know they are in a phase of transition, they are very stressed at the moment and we need to accommodate them. Then what I also do is I phone or email people, or send them little support cards. It is a very gentle way of saying ‘hey get off your bum!’ Just something in the post, a strong – but gentle reminder. A phone call after the first week. That kind of thing I find helps a lot. It doesn’t take that much time...Some times when I phone, people say they just needed to hear my voice because that reminds them they are feeling guilty, or not doing this, or talking too much or whatever. So that acts as a trigger...because it’s easy to fall back and forget...”

DISCUSSION

This study, as part of the on-going work of the pilot GBV primary school teacher training Project, aimed to explore what some of the key issues were that were obstructing participating teachers from applying their training into a classroom setting. What emerged from the series of interviews was a rich collection of observations and insights which pointed to key weaknesses in the design of the formative research phase of the pilot project, as opposed to mere difficulties in participants applying their training to classroom practice.

Whilst this study was not designed in such a way as to evaluate the *effectiveness* of the pilot intervention as a *whole*, or specifically at the level of teachers, it was nevertheless able to identify specific elements that were missing from the original design of the initiative - particularly in relation to the classroom materials and the teacher training programme. Reflections about what needed to be changed in the future so as to make the existing intervention more effective were also provided by informants. As such, this study represents an important stage in the pilot phase of the project, and a critical step in what has been described as the rather “complex and slow” process of curriculum development (Tones et al, 1995).

Contextualising the programme within current educational practice

A pervasive theme that emerged from the interviews was that the pilot project failed to adequately take into account the dynamics of the educational setting or the *context* in which it was trying to locate itself. For example, in the current educational context where many of the basic principles or elements underlying Curriculum 2005 have become standard practice

in schools, and significant pressure is being placed on teachers to illustrate how they achieved specific learning outcomes and assessment standards, a programme like this one, ought at the very least to conform to some of these basic outcome-based educational approaches or methodologies. It became clear, during the course of the interviews, that the current format of the classroom materials was not as 'user-friendly' as it ought to be and would require considerable adjustment before being appropriate for use with learners. Faced with other competing demands and priorities, teachers remarked how they inevitably let the lessons "fall by the wayside" because they were not immediately accessible or compatible with their own teaching methods and existing programmes.

Coupled with this, the project gave insufficient direction about whether and/or how the classroom lessons could be adapted for use in other learning areas - outside that of life orientation; how the activities could be adapted for different age groups and learning abilities, and given the time constraints within the syllabus, which of the ten lesson plans proposed were *essential* to use, and which were superfluous. Listening to the informants 'voices' it became evident that unless the classroom materials are transformed in such a way as to acknowledge the reality of the classrooms in the district: the size of the classes, the required learning outcomes and the kinds of experiences that local children face at different ages in relation to GBV, the preventative messages embedded in the current lessons will have little chance of being transferred to those at risk in school. Prior pre-testing of the materials with a small number of future 'users' (ie. teachers and learners) and with curriculum advisors would have helped to test age-appropriateness and the style and language of the lessons and possibly averted some of the problems that were experienced with the lessons at this stage in the pilot (WHO,1996).

Wight & Abraham (2000), in considering some of the practical difficulties involved in translating research-based sex education programmes into acceptable, replicable and potentially effective classroom lessons, note that theoretical ideas must be carefully embedded in lessons which are informed by an awareness of classroom culture, and the needs and skills of teachers. They also note that materials must be tailored to recipients' circumstances. These findings are ones that mirror some of the shortfalls in the original design of the GBV pilot project, and ones which the project ought to have paid closer attention to from the outset.

Establishing an equal partnership with the Education Department

Another critical theme to emerge, related to the issue of context, was the sense that the pilot project “felt like it happened in the middle of nowhere”. Although the project was endorsed, and to some extent introduced into the district by The Safer Schools Project, an initiative of the Western Cape Education Department, the collaboration between the University and the Education Department around the GBV pilot project was not one of an equal partnership, and this became evident as the training programme got underway: staff from the Safer Schools Project failed to attend the certification ceremony at the end of the training course, they expressed little interest in the results of the pre-and post-training evaluation study, and were unwilling to consider how to collaborate with the project following the initial training programme (Abigail Dreyer - personal communication, 12/08/02). It is thus not surprising that the GBV pilot project was experienced by teachers as something that was “external” or “additional” to the regular syllabus or departmental activities.

The implications of not involving key stakeholders (for example, principals, teachers, curriculum advisors, members of the school governing bodies, learners) more integrally in the development of the project – and specifically in the design of the teacher training programme and lessons, whilst not intentional, has given rise to a situation in which the innovation is not ‘owned’ by the local schools or by the WCED, and is very likely to cause some delay in its adoption in the future. Tones, Dixey, and Green (1995), reflecting on the dynamics of change and using the *Communication of Innovations Theory* (Rogers & Shoemaker, 1971) as a model, suggest that the extent to which an innovation is ‘owned’ by a school, coupled with the nature of the school system, the characteristics of the individual teachers and those acting as change agents, and the attributes of the innovation itself will determine whether the introduction of the new curricular initiative is adopted or not. By not paying sufficient attention to the issue of ‘ownership’ and the associated principles of inclusion and participation, the project has inadvertently mirrored aspects of what Kruss (1998) has suggested was the Department of Education’s approach to developing Curriculum 2005: that of handing down to teachers a ‘blueprint’ to be implemented, rather than involving them in the process of its development. What this also raises is a slightly broader question – and that relates to the extent to which a project like this one, originating and facilitated by an agency operating *outside* the Education Department, will in fact be able to exercise sufficient influence over the future in-service teacher training activities or practice in the area of GBV – particularly if it has left some of the critical stakeholders involved in curriculum design and policy-making on the periphery until this point.

Facilitating transformation within a discriminatory environment

In addition, as Wolpe, Quinlan and Martinez (1997) have noted, schools are settings in which sexism, as well as racism and other forms of derogatory discrimination occur and are reinforced. GBV is inextricably linked to issues of sexuality and power. If, as some of the informants have suggested, the organisational culture of their school is inherently 'sexist', how easy will it be, under these circumstances, for an innovation such as this to be adopted? Commitment to action, in other words, commitment to changing the existing patterns of GBV in a particular setting, will to some extent depend on whether GBV *is* perceived to be a problem in that setting, and how *ready* the governing body or institution is to accept some form of responsibility in initiating change – even if it means challenging some of the existing power relationships.

Recognizing that personal barriers might hinder facilitation

Lastly, and somewhat paradoxically, one of the other critical issues which appeared to act as a barrier to application – and one which the project will have to reflect on in the immediate future as it considers issues of replication and sustainability - is the issue of the teachers themselves: individuals who, as one informant suggested “have their own baggage and their own stuff” and “might have gender issues themselves”. It is likely that those who have had direct experience of GBV, either as a survivor or a perpetrator, will find it difficult to engage objectively in the training process - and in some instances might not be able to constructively contribute to the learning process in the classroom.

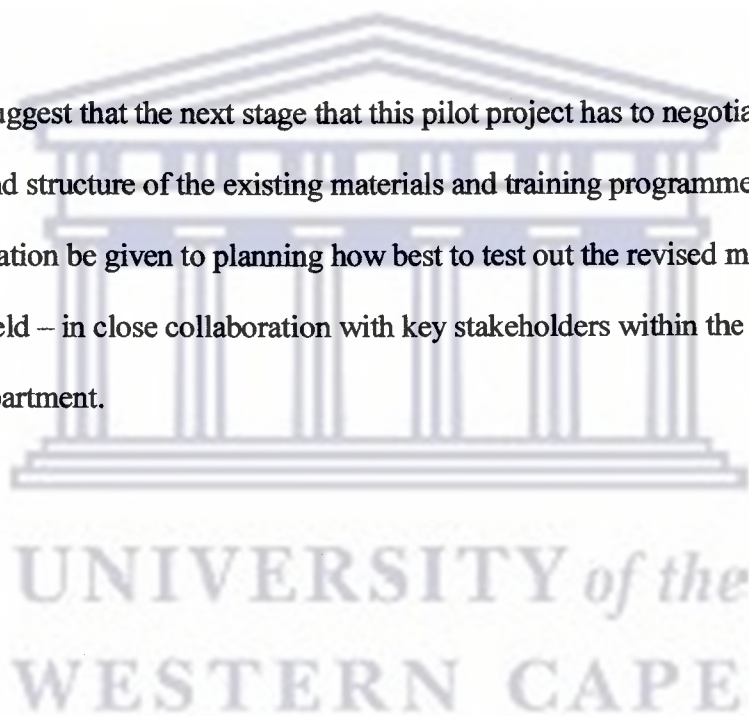
Given this dynamic, and the fact that time for in-service teacher training is limited, it raises the question as *to whom* ought training like this be targeted, and *how* ought it be

incorporated into continuing professional education for teachers? Similar questions have been raised by Kim and Motsei (2002) in relation to incorporating GBV input into the continuing education of health care workers.

One alternative for health care workers, proposed by Kim (1999, quoted in Kim & Motsei, 2002), which could be considered as an option for teachers, was a “two-tiered education model”: the first focusing on raising the awareness and sensitivity amongst all health care workers towards the prevalence, nature and consequences of GBV – and ideally incorporated into their standard curriculum at an early stage; and the second tier of more advanced training available to those who expressed both the capacity and the motivation to gain further skills. Another alternative would be for the Project to investigate how the content of its current GBV teacher training programme could be incorporated more comprehensively into the HIV/AIDS and Lifeskills Education curriculum developed by the National Department of Education, or into the existing in-service teacher training programme which focuses on mediation and conflict resolution skills – a flagship project of the Safer Schools Project, Western Cape Education Department. In relation to the former initiative in particular, a comprehensive set of teacher and learner support materials have been developed – investigating how these could be strengthened with the inclusion of more focused information on GBV could be an important consideration in the future. Likewise, ‘marrying’ the essential components of the model GBV teacher training programme with the content of the mediation and conflict resolution training – both of which have as their basis the issue of *lifeskills* – could only but benefit both programmes.

Finally, one issue which has not been considered in this study is that there was a proportion of teachers who *did* implement the learner lessons in their classrooms – a few of whom participated in this particular study. Gaining a deeper understanding about what made it possible for them to apply the training in their classes would be useful to explore in the future as it might shed some light on the possible options around the selection of participants for future training programmes, and the factors which *enable* (as opposed to impede) application in the field.

Clearly the results suggest that the next stage that this pilot project has to negotiate is one in which the content and structure of the existing materials and training programme are refined, and careful consideration be given to planning how best to test out the revised model programme in the field – in close collaboration with key stakeholders within the Western Cape Education Department.



CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The recognition that schools can be an unsafe place for young people, in particular for girls, is only recently being recognized by policy makers, planners and development agencies striving to increase educational participation (Leach, 2002).

Jewkes et al (2002), based on their research findings from the 1998 South African Demographic and Health Survey, have suggested that the rape of girls, especially in schools, is a “substantial public health problem” in this country. The particular vulnerability of girls to male sexual aggression within the school setting has also been highlighted in other African countries, for example, in research conducted in junior secondary and secondary schools in Zimbabwe (Leach and Machakanja, 2002; Shumba, 2002), and in a co-educational school in Uganda (Mirembe, 2002) – all of which reveal the existence of extensive gendered practices at school, and which in turn, the authors note, constitute a risk to the sexual health of girls, particularly in the light of the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

Apart from placing young girls at increased risk of HIV/AIDS, a school environment which tolerates gender-based violence also compromises the right of girl children to access education on an equal basis to boys – a situation which is inconsistent with South Africa’s constitution and international legal obligations. In the present context it is thus essential that, along with the enforcement of legislation that serves to protect learners, the custodians or facilitators of education are now provided with the necessary information and skills to take greater responsibility to prohibit and protect girls against sexual harassment, abuse and violence within the school community.

A programme like this, whilst requiring refinement, represents a small attempt to begin to address this. It has to however recognise that in order to be perceived as a necessary complement to broader anti-violence and lifeskills projects currently being initiated within schools, it now needs to form a closer working alliance with the Education Department, and so begin the process of developing a more suitable model intervention for schools in the local communities.

It in order to ensure that the current model GBV teacher training initiative is transformed so as to make it more compatible with the needs and requirements of the local education context, it is recommended that:

1. The teacher training programme be revised so as to accommodate, and make the necessary links, between its current content and the GBV-related content that has been incorporated into the learning area of life orientation in Curriculum 2005 and the revised national curriculum statement. In this process it is also proposed that consideration be given to making the link between the proposed GBV content and that of the national HIV/AIDS and lifeskills programme. In addition, it is recommended that a series of follow-up sessions be structured into the revised training programme so as to provide teachers with mentoring support post the initial training workshop.
2. A basic GBV awareness-raising workshop be developed which can be used to introduce the rationale for the teacher training programme to school principals,

school governing bodies and members of the Education Department prior to programmes being implemented in a particular school community.

3. The existing classroom lessons be adapted so as to make them more compatible with the outcomes-based education approach adopted by the National Education Department (ie. that they contain clearly articulated learning outcomes and assessment standards); that a range of age-appropriate activities be developed for each of the lessons so that teachers can adapt each lesson according to the particular needs of their classrooms; and that the current and local experiences of teachers be considered as important material which can be used in the development of case studies and stories.
4. Further consideration be given to the most suitable way in which existing teachers can be selected to participate in such GBV training programmes, and that the possibility of training student teachers be considered as an avenue to explore by the Project in the near future.
5. Once the necessary refinements of the training programme and materials have been completed, the Project considers piloting these in another district so as to assess their suitability for further replication. It is recommended that this pilot be done in close collaboration with the Western Cape Education Department, and that considerable preparatory work be done with key stakeholders in that school district to ensure that sufficient time is set aside within the school programme to accommodate the intervention.

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