CREATING ATTITUDINAL CHANGE TOWARDS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE THROUGH PARTICIPATORY PHOTOGRAPHY IN VENEZUELA

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Abstract

Numerous measures to reduce violence against women and its global prevalence have been implemented. Despite this drive, the effectiveness of programmes devised to address the issue has been weakened by a failure to produce the necessary attitudinal change towards women. This paper is set in Venezuela and looks at domestic violence through a post-structuralist lens and trials resources from a toolkit that aims to promote positive attitudinal change amongst young people across varying ages and social classes through a participatory photography intervention. Recommendations are made for using visual communication to engage pre-adolescent and adolescent students and create a deeper analysis of myths that relativise violence.

Key words: Domestic violence, Venezuela, post-structuralist, participatory photography.

Resumo
Criar uma atitude de mudança face à violência doméstica através da fotografia participativa na Venezuela

Inúmeras medidas têm sido tomadas para reduzir a violência doméstica e a sua prevalência global. Todavia, a eficácia dos programados implementados tem sido comprometido por não se ter conseguido a necessária mudança de atitude para com as mulheres. Este artigo reporta-se à Venezuela, abordando a violência doméstica numa perspetiva pós estruturalista e a partir dos resultados da aplicação de recursos que visam promover uma atitude positiva de mudança em jovens de diferentes idades e origens sociais através da fotografia participativa. Apresentam-se recomendações para o uso da comunicação visual para envolver estudantes pré-adolescentes e adolescentes e para proporcionar uma análise mais profunda sobre os mitos que relativizam a violência.

Palavras-chave: violência doméstica, Venezuela, pós estruturalismo, fotografia participativa.

Resumen
Creación de un cambio de actitud sobre la violencia doméstica a través de fotografía participativa en Venezuela

Numerosas medidas para reducir la violencia contra las mujeres y su prevalencia global siguen siendo implementadas. Sin embargo la eficacia de los programas contra este fenómeno ha sido reducida ya que no se ha logrado producir el cambio de actitud necesa-

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rio hacia las mujeres. Este texto está situado en Venezuela y se centra en la violencia doméstica a través de un lente postestructuralista y la aplicación de un *toolkit* destinado a promover el cambio de actitudes positivas entre los jóvenes de diferentes edades y clases sociales, a través de una intervención de fotografía participativa. Recomendaciones se hacen para el uso de la comunicación visual para involucrar a los estudiantes pre-adolescentes y adolescentes y crear un análisis más profundo de los mitos que relativizan la violencia.

Palabras clave: violencia doméstica, Venezuela, postestructuralismo, fotografía participativa.

1. Introduction

Violence Against Women (VAW) is a term used to emphasise that women as sex and as gender are disproportionately affected by violence. VAW is a global issue of pandemic proportions. Acts of VAW between 15 to 44 years old causes more deaths and disability than cancer, malaria, traffic accidents and war collectively (UN Women). This paper focuses on Venezuela and looks at how Domestic Violence (DV) manifests itself in society and how education can and should take action to break perpetuating cycles of violence. This is done by the design and trial of a participatory photography toolkit for schools.

The paper was born out of a larger study that was carried out for my dissertation at the Institute of Education, London. The main questions which will be answered in this paper are as follows:

1. What are the challenges in Venezuelan society that perpetuate DV?
2. How can photography be used in programmes to address VAW?
3. How do social settings and age affect adolescents' engagement with DV resources?
4. What considerations do future programmes for DV need to consider?

The research begins by describing the Venezuelan setting and by outlining the theoretical post-structuralist foundations for the study, followed by an analysis of DV in an international and Venezuelan context. An outline of the participatory photography methodology which underpins the design of the trialled toolkit for the intervention is presented, this leads to the analyses of the trialling of resources from the toolkit in classrooms with varying ages and socio-economic contexts. This research concludes with a reflection on how such resources should be implemented and the major adaptions that should be considered for future programming to tackle gender violence.

2. The Venezuelan landscape

Demographics

Venezuela's capital, Caracas, is home to nearly 3.1 million people and in 2011 reported the third highest homicide rate for a city in the world (UNOCD, 2011). In the last 20 years poverty has decreased considerably and since 1998 it has fallen over 20% (UN Data, 2012), the 2011 census showed 24.57% poverty, of which 6.97% is extreme poverty (INE, 2013).

Venezuelans own perception of their institutions is that they are hugely corrupt: people's distrust of authorities and government institutions is highlighted by the extremely low score in the Corruption Perceptions Index, ranking them 172 out of 182 countries (Transparency Organisation, 2011). This high level of corruption gravely affects all interaction with authorities and hinders people from reporting crime due to their lack of faith in the integrity of the system.

Domestic violence in Venezuela

Amnesty International (2008) estimated that on average, a woman is abused every 15 minutes in Venezuela. More recent reports suggest that in Caracas a woman dies every ten days from DV (SIGI, 2012). Like many crimes in Venezuela DV is thought to be hugely under-reported. In 2002 at least 40% of women who were treated in hospital emergency services had been beaten by their partner, of which 89% had been previously treated for issues related to violence.

In 2007 Amnesty International interviewed survivors of DV. Many of the women reported three main causes for continuing violence. (1) The culture of a society that retains the notion that marriage is for life and within marriage matters should be kept private. (2) The felt isolation enforced by the aggressor which blocks paths of communication with others. (3) The fear that the aggressor may find out if the abused woman tries to reach for help or escape resulting in more severe violence (Amnesty International, 2008).

Venezuela ratified the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1983 and has made steps towards the elimination of violence. However it has not been sufficient to reduce DV, or violence as a whole throughout the country. In 2006 CEDAW expressed specific concern regarding the level of DV in Venezuela, remarking that the persistence of DV is due to gender-based stereotypes and the widespread notion that the cause of such violence is a 'private' issue (SIGI, 2012). In reaction to this CEDAW has obliged states to re-think the boundaries between private and public, recognising that under international law the states' inaction to address VAW results in a failure to protect citizens (Titley, 2007).

3. Positioning Gender – The Post-Structuralist approach

The post-structuralist approach which forms the theoretical foundation of this study focuses on the concept of shifting identities and a fluid notion of gender together with the idea that potentially coercive norms come to bear on how we conceptualise gender. It does this by analysing the discourses that make choices impossible or contradictory. It perceives gender as an on-going process rather than a predetermined fixed state (Pilcher & Whelehan, 2004). Post-structuralist views have given birth to a wider approach to the complexities of gender inequality with Judith Butler as the most prominent exponent of the approach (1990).

Dominant codes of masculinity and femininity are established in everyday practices in society. These produce and reproduce differences in power and equality (Titley, 2007). Butler (1990) has extensively illustrated how people are educated into hetero-normative behaviour which fosters normative gendered identities. These gender norms operate in social practices as unspoken standards which affect daily lives, choices and opportunities. The gendered practices of how one should behave affects positioning within relationships and the seeking of opportunities and performances in both personal and professional life (Butler, 1999).

Gendered life is policed by certain habitual presumptions of subordination which often play out in violent behaviours that are generated in society. Such habitual choices are not a process of deliberate and open choice. The Foucaultian trail of thought considers the power of regulations with two cautions, (1) that regulatory power acts on pre-existing subjects which shape and form that subject, and (2) to become subject to a regulation is also to become subjected by it. The socially learnt dispositions are generated through normative performativity and sustain people in reproducing the structural hegemonies and hierarchies and consequently limit progress towards gender equality (Foucault, 1995).

This study applies the post-structuralist interpretation of gender detailed above to the prevalent gender issues in Venezuela; it informs the design of the toolkit and the analysis of its results.

4. Domestic violence

Recognising domestic violence through a post-structuralist lens

In keeping with the post-structuralist approach described above, this study regards acts of VAW and their recognition as deeply embedded within gender positioning. Recognising the presence of VAW is still contested as violence plays out in and through power relations in numerous formats which can act to shroud it. Acts of VAW occur in structural levels in society and in private homes, such as DV. However, «private» does not imply that the cause of the violence is not based in the structural positioning of normative behaviours in society (Titley, 2007).

Domestic Violence is one of the many forms of social control created within the social context via the hierarchical systems of power and oppression within race, gender and sexual orientation. Each system may work independently or interweaved within each other, creating the intersectionality of DV where the dynamics of each system may intensify the consequences of another (Bograd, 1999).

Research suggests that in a patriarchal society where sexual violence is taboo, especially within relationships, people tend to ignore the seriousness of VAW and believe myths surrounding the subject. These myths excuse the crime and further block actions that prevent violence and sustain gender hierarchy. This can be referred to as relativisation, whereby the criminal act is not judged in isolation but relative to the perceived behaviour and expectations of the victim (Titley, 2007). This relativisation perpetuates DV by making the perpetrators actions «understandable». For example, sexual violence in the private sphere is often related to denial of sexual readiness, denial of the sexual needs of the partner or the concept that a woman should assign higher priority to the well-being of others (McRae, 1996).

Applied research on DV in Venezuela

Research and interventions are designed and realized according to the conceptual approach to violence taken. Jenny Parkes and Jo Heslop (2011) delineate three main strands of research on violence. Firstly, acts and individuals, secondly institutions and social relations and thirdly interactions. This deals with daily experiences of violence in and through relationships, for example violence through inequality and discrimination in classrooms, homes and communities. It attempts to understand the resistance and interaction of girls and violence and how other key individuals may support or oppose the girl's resistance (Parkes & Heslop, 2011). The interactions approach to violence is appropriate to tackle violence that is deeply rooted into gendered normative behaviours that are encouraged through structural relationships in society. Using this approach complements the post-structuralist paradigm and allows for the design of interventions that look beyond the acts and towards the wider causes of violence.

In order to combat the persistent DV that has been occurring in Venezuela and in response to international treaties and pressure, Venezuela has implemented various programmes; however, the effectiveness of the interventions is in dispute.

In March 2007 the Organic Law on the Right of Women to a Life Free of Violence (ley organica sobre el derecho de las mujeres a una vida libre de violencia), came into effect. The law defines violence against women as a human rights violation and affirms that the eradication of DV is the responsibility of the state. However, the actual implementation of the law received criticism with com-

plaints over the lack of information and inefficient execution of related social programmes and structures. The law responds to research on violence as acts and individuals, punishing the individuals who commit the crime. The law does not react to the core reasons for high levels of VAW; it fails to focus on structures and attitudes that promote and accept VAW.

Another response to research on acts and individuals which gives support and relief to victims was the creation of free hotlines (0800 Mujeres) by the National Institute of Women (INAMUJERES). In 2001 BANMUJER, a Women's Development Bank was also formed, helping women living in poverty to become more financially independent. In 2001 the Law on Land and Agricultural Development prioritised allocation of land to women who were also heads of their household, recognising that the more financially independent women are, the more choices they have to leave abusive relationships. These measures respond to the concept that violence is institutional and therefore assists women in vulnerable economic situations, recognising the inequality that has formed through institutional regulations. However, the programme does not address the attitudes towards patriarchal hierarchy which propagate DV. The family planning association, PLAFAM began to mainstream DV into its programmes in 1997, training staff on how to respond when they encountered women and girls with signs of abuse, creating posters, bookmarks and booklets around the clinic with information to raise awareness (Guedes, Stevens, Helzner, & Medina, 2002). PLAFAM's intervention was a reactive service using the rationality of acts and individual violence, aiming at helping the specific women who are being mal treated and providing care and security for the victims.

All these interventions are government affiliated and not independent NGO's and are therefore likely to suffer from perceived high levels of corruption and distrust from the people.

As illustrated above, laws and organisations have been established in Venezuela to help protect women against acts of violence yet little progress has been made to actually challenge the attitudes and gendered power dimensions that create violent behaviours. In fact, the presence of laws and services does not necessarily translate into their actual availability or accessibility. Barriers can be caused by cultural, racial or economic privilege (Bograd, 1999), as well as the perceived corruption that lies within government social services and legal systems in Venezuela which deter people from using such services. Programmes to push for a change of social attitudes which condone or dismiss VAW and overcome the belief that DV is a private matter need to be implemented.

Amnesty International interviews with survivors, academics, government authorities, judges, police officers and women's organisations all revealed the need for education to raise awareness. Such educational interventions could then tackle the third strand of approaches to violence, interactions and institutionalised violence in social relations, enabling multifaceted, long term change. Raising awareness through educational programmes in schools is vital to create a long-

term shift and lower the number of incidents of DV; however, at the time of writing no such interventions have been documented.

5. Methodology of toolkit design

The following chapter provides a rationale of the toolkit methodology and raises ethical concerns that need to be considered when implementing a participatory photography based approach. The toolkit has been designed in light of the research on gender violence in Venezuela. It uses a post-structuralist approach and a participatory pedagogy interlaced with *photovoice* methodology to be used in schools to raise awareness of violence.

The toolkit in this study uses a *photovoice* methodology. Photovoice has been marked as a tool for change that allows often silenced voices to be heard through visual images. The term was first coined by Caroline C. Wang and Mary Ann Burris in 1994. The core methodology is that the participants are given cameras and taught basic photographic skills to depict their realities and communicate ideas and concerns to local or international communities. The participants use photography to transmit their values and perceptions and to critically evaluate sensitive issues (Denman, 2011).

The toolkit intervention has been designed to break down the barriers that block people from being able to address domestic violence in Venezuela, that is, to raise awareness of DV and dispel the reoccurring attitudes which replicate violent behaviours.

The intense silences and discomfort that can arise when discussing gender violence can start to be broken down in the absence of verbal language as art becomes engaging and personally relevant for the people involved who themselves become cultural producers (Mitchell, Walsh, & Moletsane, 2006). Using visual arts as a medium for promoting personal development can help participants engage with themes that once expressed artistically can pave the way for reflections and discussions, understanding and change. Images have the potential to disturb and excavate silences whilst creating imaginative platforms for social change. For this reason, the toolkit was chosen as a means of stimulating adolescents in schools to use photography as a medium to address gender violence.

Language

An important aspect of the trial is that in all higher-socio economic classes the activities will be conducted in English, meaning that students will be interacting in a second language. Languages have embedded within them cultural taboos and gendered positionings which may prevent students from discussing the subject. By using a second language there is a different set of cultural associa-

tion and distance from their habitual environment (Krashen, 1982). Interacting in English may create the opportunity for different identities to be played out that are not part of the student's daily life, creating distance between self and subject and facilitating interaction. However, it is also worth noting that English may hinder some students as it could restrict them from accurately expressing themselves.

Risks of creating sites of conflict

Exploring the very concept of VAW with young people and possible strategies for intervention brings imminent ethical concerns. This toolkit creates situations where active discussions and imagery are produced surrounding VAW. Therefore, there is also a potential space for conflict. Generating situations where symbolic violence and struggles may play out as students unravel and grapple with their own ideas and affiliations of gender and gender based violence could be argued as creating more risk rather than least harm. Yet, revealing dynamics of violence and allowing for disruptions which destabilise and contest violence to take place also allows for the sharing of, often unvoiced, opinions and understandings of violence and restrictive normative gendered behaviour. The benefits of such performances in a more public domain could outweigh the risks of experiencing conflict (Parkes, 2010).

This toolkit is built on the basis of listening to the students in an open and non-judgmental manner, creating situations where students can challenge and learn from each other through verbal and visual communication. Thus, revealing ideas that may, at times, constitute symbolic violence also allows for reflections and questioning of such ideas, breaking the consistently concealed attitude towards violence and normative gender behaviour which can later manifest in habitual behaviours and attitudes, continuing cycles of VAW.

6. The development of the toolkit

The activities chosen for the trial were those that were feasible in the limited time period of the classes, age appropriate and that kept in line with school regulations which varied from school to school.

The toolkit has been designed for students to begin by exploring violence as acts by individuals and to then move beyond the individuals to begin examining the intersectionality between those acts and the structures and relationships in society (Parkes & Heslop, 2011). This is developed throughout the course. The development of specific activities came from adaptations of those found in The Expect Respect Education toolkit (Women's Aid, 2008), Media Smart body image resources (Smart Media), the Gender Matters manual on addressing gender-based violence affecting young people (Titley, 2007) and Amnesty International

Gender Awareness Workshops (2004) which all use communicative approaches. The main adaptations aimed at:

- Enhancing interaction between students to encourage peer learning and participation
- Making activities more relevant to the Venezuelan context
- Introducing more visual aids to create more engaging and memorable activities

Throughout the piloting some adjustments were made to the materials due to noticeable difficulties with particular wording and interaction. More photographic elements were added to generate more visually stimulated conversations through photo-dialogues. This was in response to their initial difficulty with the subject and language and helped students reflect and visually engage with new concepts.

7. Trial audience

Selected activities were trialled in three separate schools in mixed sex classrooms. Initially activities that related to global issues of violence were trialled with multi-national students in the UK in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes. Students totalled at 54 and the nationality range was Bulgarian, Russian, Spanish, French, German, Austrian, Italian, Turkish and Portuguese. The piloting in Caracas, Venezuela also took place with privileged students in EFL classes at the British Council, located in one of the wealthier areas of the city. The students attending the British Council come from affluent families and live in prosperous areas of Caracas. As in the UK trial ages ranged from 15-17. Two classes were conducted with a total of 15 students. All EFL classes used visual research for dialogue and consultation; however, they did not include the actual taking of images. They also occurred in isolation, meaning there was no direct follow up on the subjects addressed.

The toolkit was also trialled in a *Fe y Alegria* School, located in San Agustin Del Sur, one of the most deprived slums in Caracas: a 200-metre high hill with an estimated 40,000 local residents. All students in the workshops lived in the local slum. A ten-week *photovoice* photography course was conducted as part of a Refocus NGO programme (Refocus, 2012). Although this was not enough time to conduct the complete toolkit, it has enabled a more on-going process to take place and the effects of photography as a medium to address VAW to be observed. In comparison to other trials the students were younger, aged 11 and 12 years old, and classes were conducted in their native language, Spanish. The group consisted of 12 students.

8. Trialling of DV activities

Issues of blame and challenging myths

Activities surrounding DV myths were intended to dispel the common defences that relativise VAW. These myths can block actions and prevent violence, sustaining a gender hierarchy. This is referred to as relativisation, whereby the criminal act is not judged in isolation but relative to the perceived behaviour and expectations of the victim (Titley, 2007). This relativisation perpetuates the cycle of violence by making the perpetrators actions «understandable».

Nearly all age ranges and social classes revealed notions of relativisation, emerging as the most common misconception that legitimises VAW. How women dress was one of the most prevalent topic of blame during the discussions, the vast majority of students in all social economic groups believed women invited violence depending on their attire. Comments were voiced such as «*dressing like a bitch, you're asking for it*», «*If she doesn't respect herself [when she dresses] then she can't ask for respect.*»

Adolescents inscribed blame on women and girls for not self-regulating according to normative gendered performance and «inviting» violence. Conversely, here lies a contradiction as normative dress codes for girls also promote provocative revealing clothing similar to the sexualisation of the girl child (Ringrose & Renold, 2011). Unfortunately the students did not look beyond individual acts to scrutinise the intersectionality between individual's behaviour and social structures. This element therefore went unchallenged and was a weakness of the material. Future programmes should consider deconstructing this concept further.

The success of the activity in the promotion of critical reflection was partly achieved. Older students learned and listened to each other which enabled full participation. The teacher did not have to intervene as the teenagers examined the ideas in relation to their own experiences. The participants discovered that with closer examination their ideas were common misconceptions of reality. They also projected a deeper understanding of how these myths may be preventing society from addressing the problem. A few comments that typify these views are:

> «They [myths] are excuses and if we have these excuses we ignore the problem».
> «It's important to talk about these issues because they create awareness and make us think about real life facts that sometimes we can't see clearly».
> «I've started to think about most of the concepts in which I was wrong».

However, ethical issues were raised regarding sites of conflict in classes with older students. During trials with international students, one participant revealed a particularly dangerous attitude towards a myth regarding rape which he considered to be true. «*Girls always say no, but they don't mean it.*» The myth reads:

Figure 1
Myth – example from Toolkit

Whilst derogatory comments can be difficult to challenge in this setting, what they do reinforce is the need for continuing education around VAW which aims to disperse stereotypical attitudes including those relating to blame. Further, since the trials within high socio-economic settings were one off sessions, it was difficult to gauge whether participants understandings or opinions had been challenged. However, to ensure a change of attitude two possible paths would need to exist, (a) a longer term programme that would allow for greater reflection, discussion and participation. Or (b), an earlier intervention to reach teenagers before puberty, that is, before becoming sexually active and establishing concrete opinions surrounding sex and relationships. The latter path was supported through findings following the recent 15th Venezuelan Congress of Sexology (XV Congreso Venezolano de Sexología)**.** These findings revealed adolescents in Venezuela engage in sexual activities between 12-14 years old. It would therefore be necessary to integrate into education interventions that address DV with pre-adolescents (Singer, 2012).

Recognising violence

One of the most significant differences between the two social class settings was that more affluent students were able to broadly define DV before beginning the class, understanding that such violence occurred at home or between family members. However, the lower socio-economic students had never heard of the term before and had no concept of such violence. For the children living in neighbourhoods with extremely high rates of violent crime, there had been no previous discussion or awareness. Consequently, if there is zero exposure to the

term DV then there is minimal consciousness of how to prevent or respond to incidences of DV and its prevalence may become normalised. Likewise, students in lower social classes thought the majority of myths were true, distinctly different from classes with more privileged children who had only considered a few myths to be true. In addition, the younger children were unable to explore the subjects without strong guidance and support from a facilitator. It was also apparent that discussing DV was more challenging for students living in the slum, the details of the myths appeared to make the students uncomfortable and they demonstrated more defensive behaviour. It seems that violence experienced by students in the neighbourhood becomes commonplace and the acceptance of the violence becomes unvoiced creating a void in knowledge and a silencing of the subject. These reactions indicate how programmes need to be tailored to the needs of socio-economic groups.

The reality of violence for students living in the slum areas was very apparent and violence is experienced through daily interactions. The opportunity for photography classes may enable a creative release. However, being asked to discuss and photograph subjects that they would prefer to forget about for a couple of hours took away some of the fun that had previously been observed. Children living within a more violent context may have less playfulness and creativity with the subject as they grapple to make sense of the void between knowledge and experience. In order to help address the theme, programmes may need to be wrapped in a more appealing fun package which addresses violence in short but frequent bursts.

In contrast, the higher social class students who encounter less violence could engage with the subject with greater ease producing more playful discussions. They quickly engaged with the material and their feedback reflected greater recognition and a new consideration for DV and the need to address the matter as a public concern, as this comment from the international classroom exemplifies: «When we just see a poster it's not enough, it doesn't help us understand, we also need to discuss this in schools.»

Interaction with photography

Despite difficulties in discussing the subject with younger higher-risk students they succeeded in taking images of what they had learnt with the aim of raising awareness in the school. Photographing a new and controversial subject caused some anxiety but once this had subsided students were able to work together and produced some simple images.

The very act of taking images to unravel the mystery of DV, and then seeing printed versions enabled a more memorable and rewarding experience which would indicate that greater retention of information should prevail (Choi & Johnson, 2010). The students' ability to interact with photography aided their perso-

nal development with the subject as they visually and creatively explored it. This supports the notion that the use of photography can help create an alternative form of expression to deal with the discomfort that can occur in taboo subjects.

In subsequent weeks students were able to discuss the issue and why they had taken the image with greater clarity and confidence. During the exhibition in the school library they appeared very proud of their accomplishments and passionate about all their images. This emotional engagement and the stages of the course are depicted in figure 2.

Figure 2
Responses in DV activities in Don Pedro
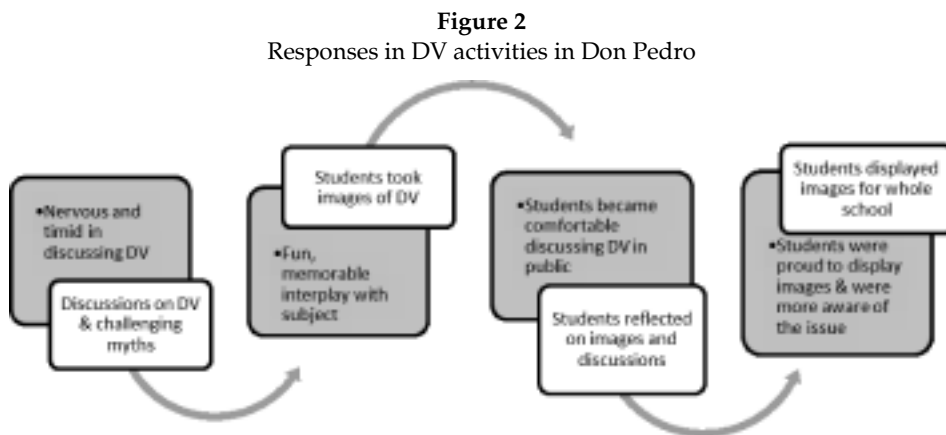
The students had not only raised their awareness of DV and dispelled common myths, they were more confident about talking to others and exhibiting images to address the subject in a public domain. For these reasons the main objectives of the activities were met, although on-going work should continue to address the issue on a larger scale.

The use of photographs in activities had been a successful tool used throughout all classes. The use of imagery in class to spring-board discussions motivated students and enabled a more thought provoking process which broke down language barriers and produced more memorable experiences. One comment that highlights this impact from a Venezuelan student was: «There was a picture that surprised me and I've been thinking about it. It was about the fact we can't always see physical violence so it can be much closer than we think. We have to be alert.»

9. Recommendations and conclusion

This final chapter will discuss the key findings with reference to the initial research questions that the dissertation intended to answer.

The first research questions aimed at discovering how domestic violence in Venezuela is perpetuated. The literature review found that violence needs to be tackled at the intersectionality between relationships and structures in society, and that the perpetuation of violence is entrenched in attitudes that promote hetero-normative behaviour and relativise violence. In addition, it was demonstrated that even though international and national recommendations advise programmes in schools to raise awareness of VAW and break the current cycles, no such programmes currently exist in Venezuela. Creating school interventions gives young people the opportunity to challenge existing attitudes which sustain patterns of violence.

The third research question explored how a participatory photography toolkit can address gender violence. It was found that using imagery in the toolkit to address VAW did enable greater interaction with the issues. Activities which included imagery received a more enhanced response from the students than those which had more written or oral content. The use of visual aids engaged all students and all classes. One reason may be because visual engagement breaks down language barriers, highly effective when the students have varying abilities in articulating. More imagery should be used when addressing concepts of VAW to (a) engage students, (b) create alternative means of expression and (c) to create memorable experiences which will help retain information for the students.

Identifying how activities are received by students in varying social-economic statuses in Caracas and how activities need to be adapted was a key aim of the study. The research demonstrated that toolkits need to consider the differing perspectives of gender and violence between the varying dynamics of social class settings. Hence, students living in more confined communities require a slower progression in order to be able to accept and identify with more diverse gender positioning. When addressing violence in schools the proximity of the violence for the students played a crucial role in how they were able to interact with the subject. Children living in highly volatile neighbourhoods seemed to be more sensitive and therefore needed shorter bursts of interaction and more time for self-reflection. There interaction was also greatly aided by a more creative input that gave distance between self and subject. By contrast, students living in more secure neighbourhoods and who encountered less daily violence demonstrated a more playful interaction with the subject of DV and were able to interact more directly and for longer periods. Toolkits dealing with violence need to be tailored for these variations in interaction.

The final aim of the research was to make recommendations for future programming. The trialling of this toolkit revealed many implications for future programmes on gender violence which are discussed in the paragraphs.

With regard to the language, the mode of communication is crucial to a toolkit, making the information accessible and digestible for the audience so that misunderstandings are reduced, and the subject becomes less intimidating. Toolkits must adjust for teenagers who may not be familiar with terminology. This

should be considered with regards to the specific context and age group in which it is being implemented as lower socio-economic classes who may encounter more acts of violence may have less vocabulary surrounding violence.

The language association may also account for the different emotional engagement that students have with the subject. All higher socio-economic class trials used English as the medium of communication whereas in the Don Pedro School their first language was used. Using a second language may have produced distance between self and subject (Krashen, 1982) and enabled students to break away from the gendered positioning of their first language. This would suggest that there is a space in EFL classrooms that could deal with human rights subject areas with greater ease and success.

With younger children there was a noticeable opening up of attitudes and acceptance towards VAW as they seemed to assimilate new information and alternative ideas. However, a longer term intervention and a mainstreaming of the subject into the curriculum could secure a lasting attitudinal shift as they navigate adulthood. By contrast, older students tended to acknowledge VAW and social attitudes which promote inequality, yet initially rejected the idea that they could change their own behaviours and predisposed opinions. To assess this long-term impact in each social group, a longitudinal study and a complete trial of the toolkit is needed.

By using participatory photography and addressing the subject with an innovative medium that is relevant to how students interact with today's hyper visualised society creates greater interest and deeper engagement with the theme. However, all programmes and toolkits need to be tailored to the context in which they are being employed. The success of the activities and the students' desire to embrace the subjects highlighted the readiness for children to learn and understand more about GBV, whilst at the same time brought to light the vast misconceptions surrounding the subject. However, a regular intervention is needed in order to sustain their knowledge, awareness and to ensure preventative measures remain at the forefront. Equipping teachers and facilitators with training and recourses for addressing gender violence is crucial to truly challenge gender inequality.

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