D2.3.
Consolidated Research Analysis

Report

February 2019

Table of contents

1. INTRODUCTION

The ***Systematic Approaches For Equality of GendeR (SAFER)*** project is funded by the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014 - 2020). The main goal of SAFER is to prevent, encourage reporting and combat gender-based violence (GBV) against children.

The project is based on collaboration and input of consortium partners from 6 countries: from Cyprus (SPAVO, Institute of Development and GrantXpert Consulting), from Ireland (ICEP - Europe), from Lithuania (Vilnius University), from Greece (HAPPSY), from Italy (CESIE) and from UK (YouAct).

The consortium's efforts focus on fostering a systematic approach to cultivating life skills, building healthy relationships, adopting and maintaining values, (such as, respect, justice) and increasing resilience and personal strength. The project aims at sensitizing and increasing awareness of GBV amongst primary school teachers, students, parents and other relevant stakeholders. Implementation of SAFER involves the provision by partners of important materials to teachers enabling them to discuss about GBV in their classroom, to challenge existing gender stereotypes and to ultimately prevent GBV.

Expected long-term results of the project
- Teachers: Enhancement of competences and awareness raising about the issues of GBV, and possible ways to tackle the issue.
- Children: Improvement of knowledge and skills to prevent and to react to GBV, development of assertiveness to counteract and develop resilience and adequate coping.
- General public (e.g. parents, stakeholders etc.): Development of a more unprejudiced society, able to understand and prevent GBV actions.

Main/specific objectives
- To educate and raise GBV awareness amongst girls, boys and teachers and to develop their skills to tackle and prevent GBV early in childhood.

- To educate people on matters of gender equality, healthy relationships, and values such as respect
- To build positive skills and character strengths, values, behaviours and positive role models, that will empower girls and boys to claim their rights, and thus, be able to prevent incidents and encourage reporting of GBV, while protecting and supporting victims.
- To train teachers of children and enable them to identify and prevent incidents of violence or bullying.
- To develop age and diversity appropriate educational materials for children in primary and second level schools in relation to domestic, sexual and GBV.

2. AIM AND METHODOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH

Aim. This research aimed to explore key stakeholders' attitudes towards, and experiences of, GBV in order to inform the development of a culturally sensitive training package for educations designed to raise awareness of, and help prevent, gender-based violence.

Duration. This research was conducted between May-December, 2018.

Design. The research involved both quantitative and qualitative methods. Quantitative analyses were conducted to explore attitudes and reactions to gender-based violence (GBV) amongst teachers and children, whilst qualitative analyses provided in-depth and culturally sensitive insights into key stakeholders' beliefs, attitudes, and motivations.

Measures:
- Printed questionnaire for students.
- Online questionnaire for teachers.
- Focus groups for teachers.
- Semi-structured interviews for principals
- Semi-structured interviews for policymakers.

All research materials were translated into the five national languages.

Participants. Participants included: policymakers, school principals, teachers and students. We aimed to recruit at least 130 participants in each of the five participating countries (Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Ireland, Lithuania) (e.g. 60 teachers, 50 students, 10 principals and 10 policy makers per country). In total, 715 participants took part in the research including: 46 policy makers, 44 principals, 351 teachers and 274 students aged 8-12 years.

Data analysis

Statistical Package for the Social Sciences SPSS for Windows 23.0 was used for the quantitative analysis. One-way ANOVA with post-hoc Tukey HSD Test was used for multiple comparisons of scales' results among countries. Chi-squared analyses were also used to

determine whether there was a significant difference in percentage distribution in the category of the items.

Focus group discussions and interviews with the participants were recorded and transcribed verbatim. Thematic analysis was carried out in order to identify key themes and patterns within the data. The national results were summarized and comparative analysis completed to consolidate the findings all participating countries.

3. COMPARATIVE RESEARCH ANALYSIS. STUDENTS

Across the five participating countries a total of 274 students (51% boys, 49% girls) aged between 8 and 13 years (mean age 10,6 years) took part in the research: 55 from Cyprus (mean age 9,4 years; 46% boys and 54% girls), 45 from Greece (mean age 10 years; 62% boys and 38% girls), 54 from Ireland (mean age 11,6 years; 46% boys and 54% girls), 67 from Italy (mean age 11.,7 years; 52% boys and 48% girls) and 53 from Lithuania (mean age 9.,9 years; 49% boys and 51% girls). Most students lived with their mothers (99%), while 87% lived with their fathers. The vast majority (82%) had at least one sibling.

The questionnaire was created in a simple child-friendly way. Several questions were asked to explore the following:

1. *Gender-Stereotyped Attitudes:* In total, 4 questions explored children's typical gender stereotypes towards girls and 4 questions explored gender-stereotyped attitudes (e.g. "Is it acceptable for boys to cry" or "*Is it acceptable for girls so play football*"). Students responded 'no' were coded as 1 and aggregated across the 4 items to create a summary gender-stereotyped attitudes score (scores: min 0, max 4). Two summary variables were generated: (i) gender stereotyped attitudes towards boys; and (ii) gender stereotyped attitudes towards girls.

2. *Non-Stereotyped Attitudes Toward Gender:* Eleven items explored students' non-stereotyped attitudes and required children to compare boys and girls (e.g. "Who is smarter?"; "Who likes school more"). A *Non-Stereotyped Attitudes Toward Gender* was generated by summing the positive responses of students to these items (i.e. if students marked "There is no difference" / "Both" in response to these questions) (scores: min 0, max 11).

3. *Attitudes Toward Gender-Based Violence:* Attitudes towards gender-based violence (GBV) were assessed by two items relating to tolerance, or perceived acceptability of, teasing (e.g. "Is it acceptable for boys to tease girls?" and "Is it acceptable for girls to tease boys?").

4. *Experience of GBV:* Five questions were asked to assess students' exposure to gender stereotyping and GBV (e.g. "Have you ever heard a child saying to a boy, "You look like a girl" or "this is girly"). The total number of 'Yes' responses for all five items

(Yes = 1, all other responses = 0) was summed to create an *Experience of GBV* score for each student.

Students' Gender Stereotyped Attitudes

In total, 43% of all students (36% girls and 51% boys) held a stereotyped attitude towards boys (i.e. gave a stereotyped answer to at least one of the four questions). The lowest gender-stereotyped attitudes towards boys among the students were found in Ireland, the highest gender stereotyped position was in Greece. The gender-stereotyped attitudes toward boys vary statistically significantly among the 5 countries (see Figure 1). There were significant differences between Greece and the other four countries, as well as between Cyprus and Italy, and Cyprus and Ireland (see Table 1).
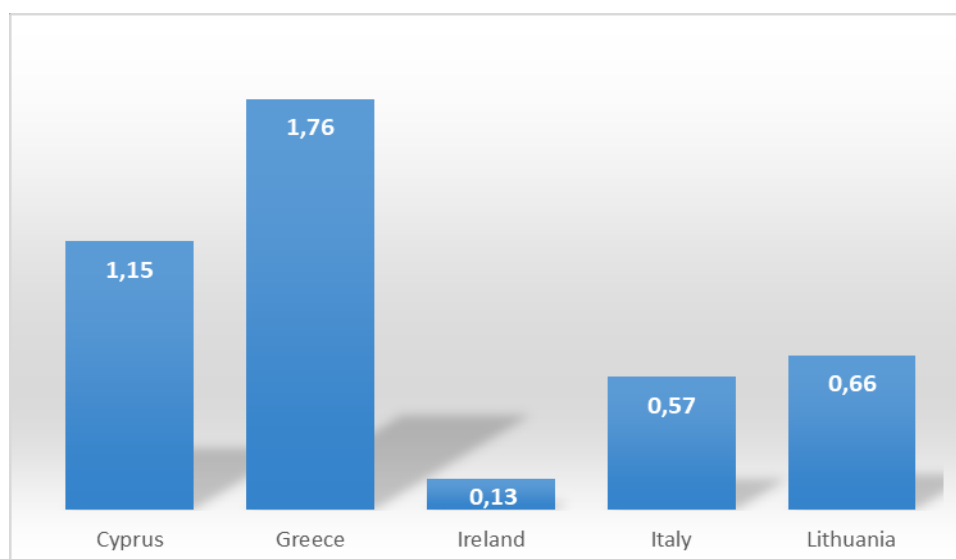
Figure 1. Gender Stereotyped Attitudes Towards Boys among countries

Table 1: Summary of Student Gender Stereotyped Attitudes using Analysis of Variance

	Mean (SD)						
	Cyprus (n=55)	Greece (n=45)	Ireland (n=54)	Italy (n=67)	Lithuania (n=53)	*F*-statistics	Significant Multiple Comparisons, Tukey HSD
Gender stereotyped attitudes towards boys	1,15 (1,2)	1,76 (1,4)	0,13 (0,52)	0,57 (0,74)	0,66 (1,07)	*F*=17,937, *df*=4, *p* < 0,001	Cyprus-Greece, p = 0,028 Cyprus-Ireland, p < 0,001 Cyprus-Italy, p = 0,019 Greece-Ireland, p < 0,001 Greece-Italy, p < 0,001 Greece-Lithuania, p < 0,001
Gender stereotyped attitudes towards boys by boys	1,56 (1,3)	2,36 (1,5)	0,04 (0,2)	0,51 (0,5)	0,96 (1,2)	*F*=20,207, *df*=4, *p* < 0,001	Cyprus-Ireland, p<0,001 Cyprus-Italy, p=0,002 Greece-Ireland, p<0,001 Greece-Italy, p<0,001 Greece-Lithuania, p<0,001 Ireland-Lithuania, p=0,019
Gender stereotyped attitudes towards boys by girls	0,8 (1,1)	0,76 (0,5)	0,21 (0,7)	0,63 (0,9)	0,37 (0,8)	*F*=2,345, *df*=4, *p* = 0,058	No significant differences
Gender stereotyped attitudes towards girls	0,39 (0,9)	0,64 (1)	0	0,06 (0,3)	0,23 (0,7)	*F*=7,854, *df*=4, *p* < 0,001	Cyprus-Ireland, p=0.002 Greece-Ireland, p<0,001 Greece-Italy, p<0,001 Greece-Lithuania, p=0,018
Gender stereotyped attitudes towards girls by boys	0,4 (0,8)	0,96 (1,1)	0	0,06 (0,3)	0,42 (0,9)	*F*=7,114, *df*=4, p < 0,001	Greece-Ireland, p < 0,001 Greece-Italy, p < 0,001
Gender stereotyped attitudes towards girls by girls	0,38 (0,9)	0,12 (0,3)	0	0,06 (0,3)	0,04 (0,2)	F=2,914, *df*=4, *p* = 0,024	Cyprus-Ireland, p=0,025
Non-stereotyped attitudes toward gender	3,32 (2,6)	2 (1,5)	5,97 (3,5)	2,96 (1,4)	3,34 (3,1)	*F*=10,508, *df*=4, *p* < 0,001	Ireland-Cyprus, p<0,001 Ireland-Greece, p<0,001 Ireland-Italy, p<0,001 Ireland-Lithuania, p<0,001

As significant differences were found in the summary score for gender-stereotyped attitudes towards boys among countries, further comparison across all 4 items were conducted using the Chi-Square test. The results show that the highest gender stereotyped position for all 4 attitudes

was in Greece (it is not acceptable for boys to cry – 36%, to wear pink - 49%, to have long hair - 31%, to play with dolls - 60%), the lowest ones were in Ireland (see Table 2).

Table 2. Comparison of Gender Stereotyped Attitudes Towards Boys among countries

Item	Gender stereotyped attitudes towards boys, percentage of students in the country					Significant differences
	Cyprus	Greece	Ireland	Italy	Lithuania	
It is not acceptable for boys to cry	22%	**36%**	<u>2%</u>	33%	6%	$\chi^2 = 30,084$, $df = 4$, $p < 0,001$
It is not acceptable for boys to wear pink	35%	**49%**	<u>4%</u>	5%	23%	$\chi^2 = 47,745$, $df = 4$, $p < 0,001$
It is not acceptable for boys to have long hair	26%	**31%**	<u>4%</u>	6%	9%	$\chi^2 = 25,825$, $df = 4$, $p < 0,001$
It is not acceptable for boys to play with dolls	33%	**60%**	<u>4%</u>	13%	28%	$\chi^2 = 47,577$, $df = 4$, $p < 0,001$

* The highest percentage of stereotyped attitude is marked in bold, the lowest ones are underlined.

In total, 36% of girls and 51% of boys across all countries held gender stereotyped attitudes towards boys. The results by gender among the different countries are presented in Figure 2. Boys in Greece held the most stereotyped attitudes towards boys, followed by Cyprus, Lithuania and Italy. Boys in Ireland held the least stereotyped attitudes towards other boys. However, girls in Ireland were somewhat more likely to hold stereotyped attitudes, although these scores were lower than those of girls from other countries. There was very little difference between the genders in Italy. In Lithuania, Cyprus and Greece boys were 2 to 3 times more likely to hold gender-stereotyped attitudes towards boys than girls.
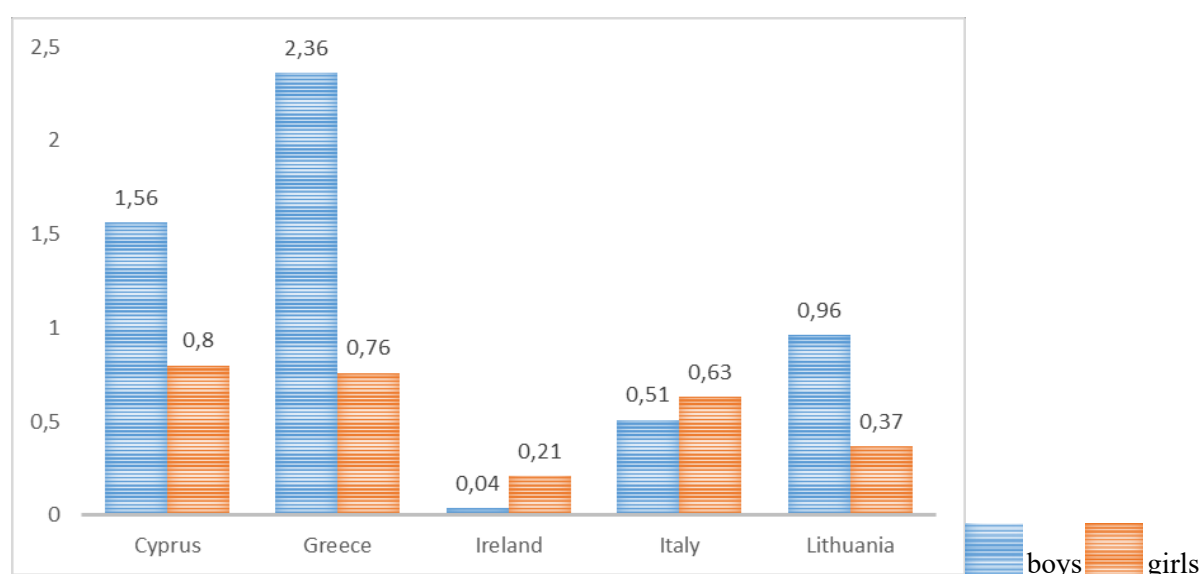
Figure 2. Gender Stereotyped Attitudes Towards Boys by gender among countries

Cross-country comparisons did not show any statistically significant differences in gender-stereotyped attitudes towards boys amongst girls; however, boys in Cyprus and Greece reported more stereotyped attitudes than those in Italy and Ireland. In Lithuania, boys were significantly more likely to report stereotyped attitudes towards boys when compared to Irish score, but their scores were statistically more significant than those of boys in Greece (see Table 1).

Gender Stereotyped Attitudes Towards Girls. In total, 13% of all student participants (7% of girls and 18% of boys) held a gender-stereotyped attitude towards girls (i.e. gave a stereotyped answer to at least one of the four questions); however, there were statistically significant differences between the countries (see Figure 3).
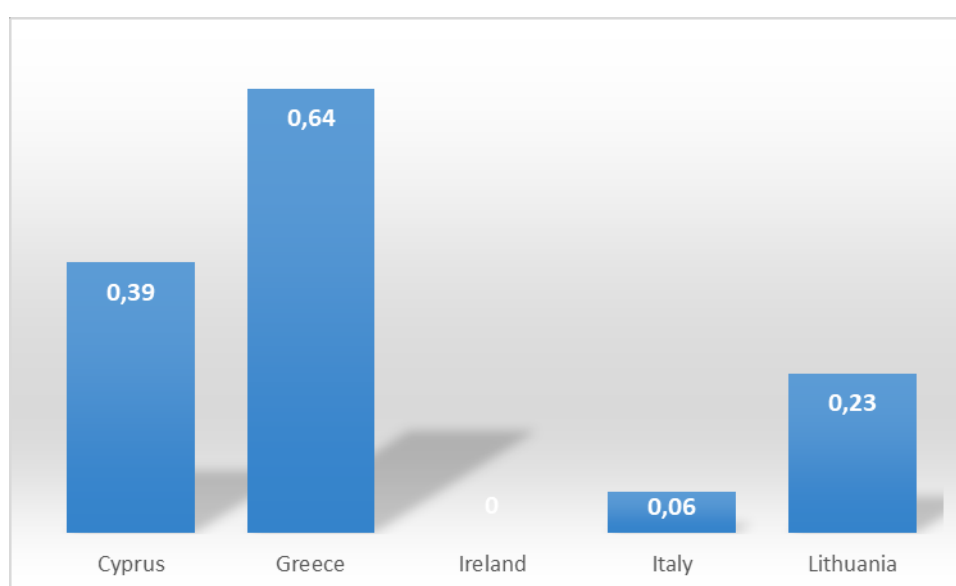
Figure 3. Gender Stereotyped Attitudes Towards Girls among Countries

Analyses revealed that students in Greece, on average, reported more gender-stereotyped attitudes towards girls, whilst their scores differed significantly from Ireland, Italy and Lithuania (see Table 1). Statistically significant differences were also found between Cyprus and Ireland. Interestingly, students in Ireland did not report any gender-stereotyped attitudes towards girls.

As between group significant differences were found in the gender stereotyped attitude towards girls among countries, Chi-Squared analyses were used to compare students' responses on each of the 4 items. In Greece, a significantly higher proportion of students responded negatively to the question regarding whether it is acceptable for girls to play football and to play video games, whereas in Cyprus, more students held stereotyped attitudes regarding the questions about whether it is acceptable for girls to have short hair and to be physically active (see Table 3).

Table 3. Comparison of Gender Stereotyped Attitudes Towards Girls among Countries
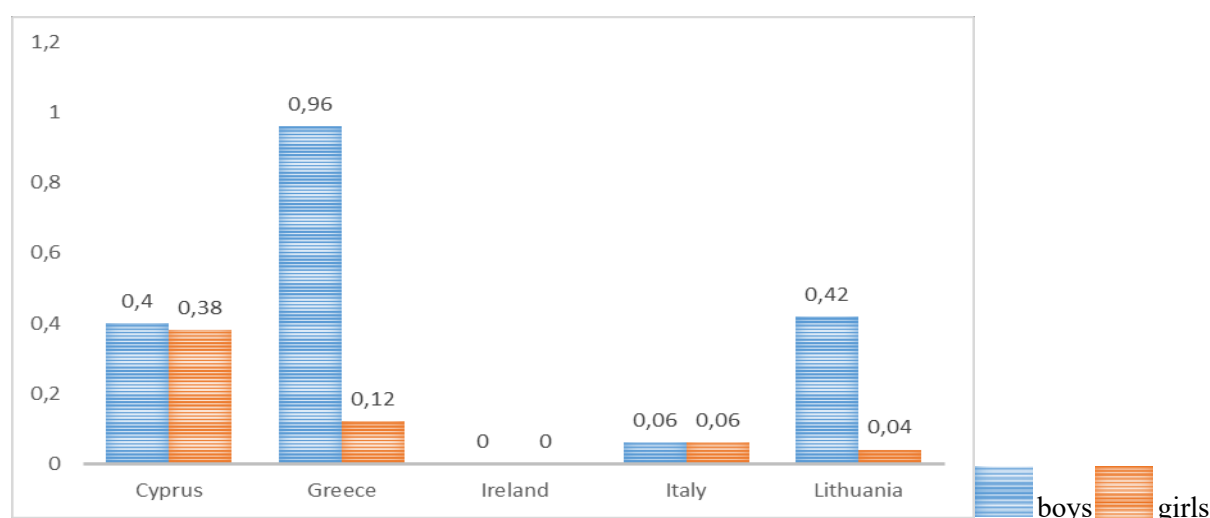
Items	Gender stereotyped attitudes toward girls, Percentage of students in the country					Significant differences
	Cyprus	Greece	Ireland	Italy	Lithuania	

|						
It is not acceptable for girls to play football	2%	**24%**	<u>0%</u>	2%	9%	$\chi^2 = 32{,}768$, $df = 4$, $p < 0{,}001$
It is not acceptable for girls to have short hair	**15%**	11%	<u>0%</u>	2%	6%	$\chi^2 = 14{,}592$, $df = 4$, $p = 0{,}006$
It is not acceptable for girls to play video games	11%	**20%**	<u>0%</u>	2%	4%	$\chi^2 = 22{,}198$, $df = 4$, $p < 0{,}001$
It is not acceptable for girls to be physically active	**11%**	9%	<u>0%</u>	2%	4%	$\chi^2 = 10{,}883$, $df = 4$, $p = 0{,}028$

* The highest percentage of stereotyped attitude is marked in bold, the lowest ones are underlined.

Gender stereotyped attitudes towards girls were more prevalent amongst boys than girls (7% of all girls and 18% of all boys held at least one gender stereotyped attitude towards girls). The breakdown of scores between genders is presented in Figure 4. On average, boys in Greece have the most stereotyped position toward girls, followed by Lithuania and Cyprus. However, amongst girls, the average scores on the measure of stereotyped attitudes towards girls were highest in Cyprus. In both Greece and Lithuania, there was a greater difference in attitudes towards girls between the two genders, as compared to the other countries. ANOVA also revealed statistically significant cross-country differences for both boys and among girls in regards to gender-stereotyped attitudes towards girls (see Table 1). The gender-stereotyped attitudes towards girls held by boys are statistically significantly higher in Greece than in Italy and Ireland. However, girls in Cyprus had statistically significantly higher gender-stereotyped attitudes toward girls in comparison with Ireland.

13

Figure 4. Gender Stereotyped Attitudes Towards Girls by gender among countries

Non-stereotyped Attitudes towards Gender

Analyses of non-stereotyped attitudes reveal that students in Ireland are more likely to report non-stereotyped attitudes towards gender (see Figure 5) and the difference is statistically significant in comparison with all the rest countries (see Table 1).
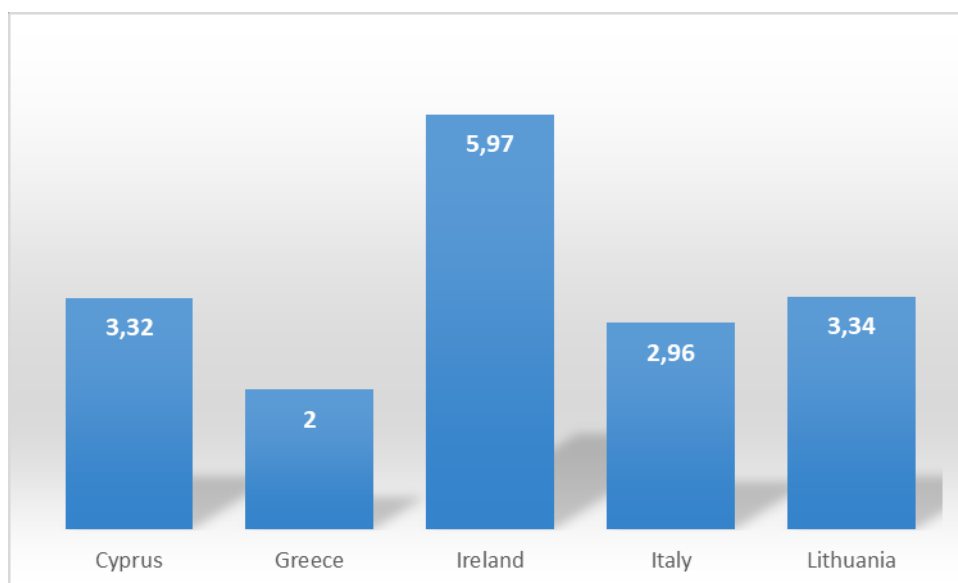
Figure 5. Non-Stereotyped Attitudes Toward Gender among countries

Descriptive statistics on separate stereotypical items about characteristics of girls and boys show, that boys were considered to be more competitive than girls, and girls were considered to be more caring, more sensitive and weaker than boys in all countries (see Table 4). These results could be interpreted with caution given the relatively small number of participants involved.

Table 4. Students' Perceptions of Gender Equality

Who is … ?	CYPRUS		GREECE		IRELAND		ITALY		LITHUANIA	
	Girls n=30	Boys n=25	Girls n=17	Boys n=28	Girls n=29	Boys n=25	Girls n=32	Boys n=35	Girls n=27	Boys n=26
	%									
smarter	13	13	20	13	6	0	13	0	13	11
more caring	35	13	22	20	35	0	46	6	49	4
weaker	44	2	64	7	13	0	27	8	53	2
more sensitive	62	6	71	11	24	2	40	3	57	8

14

more competitive	4	73	7	76	0	37	8	52	2	55

Attitudes toward gender-based violence

A higher proportion of students in Lithuania (45%) reported tolerance of teasing perpetrated by boys towards girls, whilst 40% of students in the same country felt that it was acceptable for girls to tease boys (see Figure 6). Students in Italy were significantly less likely to report tolerance of teasing by boys or girls. Interestingly, the descriptive statistics indicate that in Greece and Cyprus there was a greater proportion of boys who held tolerant attitudes towards teasing, particularly perpetrated by boys towards girls - rather than in the opposite direction.
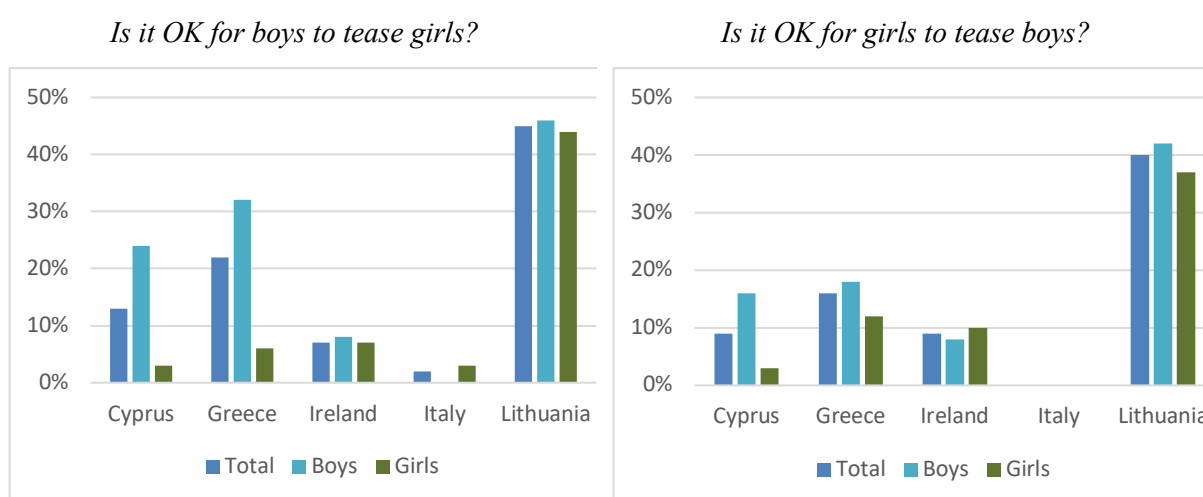
Figure 6. Attitudes toward Gender-Based Violence among Countries

Experience of Gender-based violence

The frequency with which students had experience of gender-stereotyped attitudes are shown in Table 5. Overall, students in Italy most frequently heard others saying stereotyped things about girls and boys. However, differences between countries should be interpreted carefully, as the gender stereotyped phrases explore here may be very sensitive to translation, and other national expressions not assessed here may be more prevalent.

Table 5. Students' Experience of Gender-Stereotyping

Items	CYPRUS		GREECE		IRELAND		ITALY		LITHUANIA		Total
	Boys n=25	Girls n=30	Boys n=28	Girls n=17	Boys n=25	Girls n=29	Boys n=35	Girls n=32	Boys n=26	Girls n=27	n
	%										
Have you ever heard someone saying "boys will be boys"	26	10	8	3	22	**33**	**28**	32	17	22	134
Have you ever heard a child saying to a boy "You look like a girl" or "this is girly"	14	28	25	10	7	17	**38**	**32**	17	12	169
Have you ever heard a child saying to a girl "You look like a boy" or "this is boyish"	15	25	24	15	11	17	**38**	**34**	13	9	148
Have you ever heard someone saying "they are just girls"	13	15	28	16	16	23	**30**	**25**	13	21	156
Have someone ever told you that you are weird	15	22	22	9	**27**	28	24	**30**	12	10	126

* The highest frequency of stereotyped attitude is marked in bold.

Brief summary

In summary, the results show that students in Greece and Cyprus, on average, reported more gender-stereotyped attitudes, whilst students in Ireland reported the least gender stereotyped position (no stereotyped attitude toward girls at all). Typically, stereotyped attitudes were stronger toward boys than toward girls. In Lithuania, Cyprus and Greece boys were up to three times more likely to report stereotyped attitudes toward boys than towards girls. Italian students were the most likely to report experiences of gender-stereotyped expressions about boys and girls, however, Italian students were very unlikely to report tolerance for teasing. The highest tolerance for teasing, regardless of child gender, was found in Lithuania.

4. COMPARATIVE RESEARCH ANALYSIS. TEACHERS

4.1 Quantitative findings

In total, 286 teachers completed an online questionnaire explore teachers' attitudes and perceptions in relation to GBV: 54 from Cyprus, 64 from Greece, 51 from Ireland, 53 from

Italy and 64 from Lithuania. 15 percent (42) of the teachers were men overall and two Italian participants chose not to state their gender. The mean age of participants was 41 years (ages ranged from 19 to 65 years). Teachers held, on average, 17 years of teaching experience (range = 0 - 43 years).

The questionnaire covered four topics:
-   Gender stereotyped attitudes
-   The role of teachers
-   Teachers' competence to deal with GBV
-   School Policy on GBV

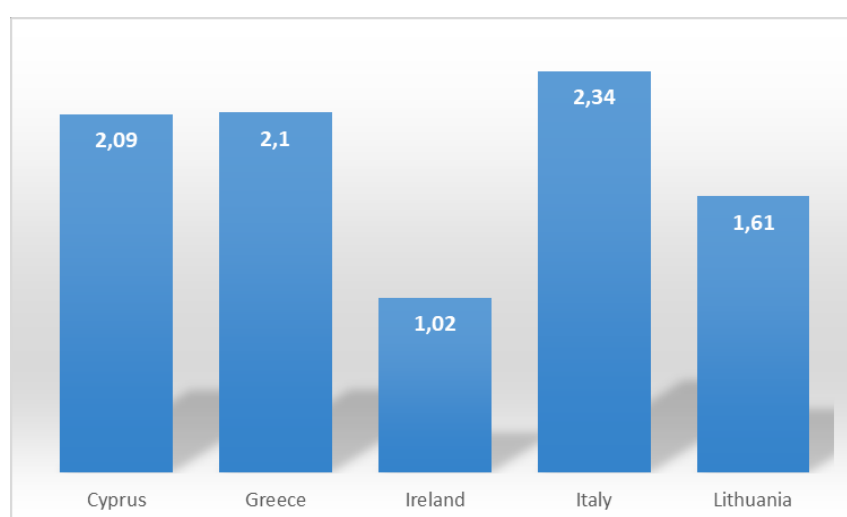### *Teachers' Gender Stereotyped Attitudes*

Teachers were questioned about their attitudes towards gender equality and GBV using a series of statements (e.g. "*Girls like it when boys tease and make fun of them*", "*Men have the primary responsibility to financially support their families*") and asked to rate their agreement (agree, disagreed, unsure). In total, 22 items were used to measure teachers' stereotyped attitudes toward gender and perceptions of gender equality (e.g. "*Boys and girls should be encouraged to take part in same activities*", "*Both parents should have equal rights in decision-making about the education and care of their students*"). The gender stereotyped attitudes expressed by teachers were summed to generate a total ***Gender stereotyped Attitude*** score (i.e. Response of 'Yes' scored as 1; All other responses = 0[1]; min 0, max 22). Higher scores reflect more stereotyped attitudes. Between country differences were explored using ANOVA (see Table 6).

Comparatively, teachers in Ireland reported the least gender stereotyped attitudes, whereas the highest scores were reported in Italy. Post hoc analyses revealed statistically significant differences between Ireland and Cyprus, between Ireland and Greece and between Ireland and Italy. There were no differences between the other countries (see Figure 7).

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[1] Items were reverse scored if necessary

Figure 7. Teachers' Gender Stereotyped Attitudes among countries

Table 6: Summary of Teachers Responses using ANOVA

	Mean (SD)					*F*-statistics	Significant Multiple Comparisons, Tukey HSD
	Cyprus (n=54)	Greece (n=64)	Ireland (n=51)	Italy (n=53)	Lithuania (n=64)		
Gender stereotyped attitudes	2,09 (1,9)	2,12 (1,9)	1,02 (1,4)	2,34 (1,7)	1,61 (1,5)	F=5,083, df=4, $p < 0,001$	Ireland-Cyprus, p=0,013 Ireland-Greece, p=0,006 Ireland-Italy, p=0,001
Competence to deal with GBV	13,59 (4,2)	13,84 (3,8)	10,94 (3,3)	13,04 (4,2)	11,86 (4,7)	F=4,997, df=4, p=0,001	Ireland-Cyprus, p=0,009 Ireland-Greece, p=0,002
School policy on violence	3,5 (2,9)	3 (2,7)	2,78 (2,7)	2,23 (2,5)	5,75 (3,1)	F=14,512 df=4, $p < 0,001$	Lithuania-Cyprus, p<0,001 Lithuania-Greece, p<0,001 Lithuania-Ireland, p<0,001 Lithuania-Italy, p<0,001

Responses to the individual items and any statistically significant attitudes between countries are shown in Appendix 1. In comparison to other countries, more teachers in Cyprus responded that it is not acceptable for a girl to act or dress like a boy and vice versa, and students should be encouraged to do things that are typical for their gender. More teachers in Italy than in other countries felt that it is more important for boys than girls to perform well in school. Italian teachers were also more likely to feel that women should have the last say in the decision-making about whether to have a child or not, and parents should spend more time teaching girls to take care of their appearance in comparison to boys. More Greece teachers, as well as Italian

18

ones, think, that men have the primary responsibility to financially support their families, in comparison with colleagues from Cyprus, Lithuania and Ireland.

One item explored attitudes in relation to gender-based violence in minorities (*Some forms of gender-based violence are more common among certain ethnic groups or minorities in society)*. There were significant differences in different countries teachers' attitudes ($\chi^2 =$ 26,235, *df* = 4, *p* = 0,001): 81% of teachers from Greece, 80% from Cyprus, 65% from Ireland, 51% from Italy and 47% from Lithuania responded that some forms of gender-based violence are more common among certain ethnic groups or minorities in society.

Teachers' perceived role in dealing with gender-based violence

Teachers' perceptions of their role in dealing with gender-based violence were assessed by means of four items on the online questionnaire (see Table 7). Almost all participants felt that teachers have a role in helping students learn about gender equality. This rate varies from 89% in Lithuania to 100% in Cyprus (the difference is not statistically significant among countries). In total, 97% of teachers in Greece think that it is the responsibility of a teacher to take action to eliminate sexual violence in the school; however, only 65% of teachers agreed with this position. Almost 80% of teachers in Lithuania agree that teachers should have to contact the parents when they notice the child's confusion due to his or her gender identity, however, in both Ireland and Italy, less than half of teachers agreed with this position.

Table 7: Teachers' Perceived Role in Dealing with Gender-Based Violence

|	Agreement with the statements, percentage in the country					Significant differences
	Cyprus	Greece	Ireland	Italy	Lithuania	
Teachers have a role in helping students learn about gender equality	**100**	95	98	96	<u>89</u>	$\chi^2 = 9,459$, *df* = 4, *p* = 0,051
It is the responsibility of the teacher to take action to eliminate sexual violence in the school	89%	**97%**	<u>65%</u>	72%	77%	$\chi^2 = 24,628$, *df* = 4, *p* < 0,001
Teachers should have to contact the parents when they notice the child's confusion due to his or her gender identity	59%	64%	<u>39%</u>	40%	**78%**	$\chi^2 = 24,518$, *df* = 4, *p* < 0,001

More men should teach in elementary schools	33%	38%	**75%**	70%	38%	$\chi^2 = 34{,}526$, $df = 4$, $p < 0{,}001$

* The highest percentage of attitude is marked in bold, the lowest ones are underlined.

Perceived competence of teachers to react to gender-based violence

Teachers were asked how competent they feel in dealing with issues of gender-based violence in the classroom by means of an 18-item scale (e.g. "*I know and can recognise the forms gender-based violence can take*" or "*I correct a student when she/he makes a gendered comment about homosexuals*") (min 0, max 18). Higher scores on this scale reflect higher levels of perceived competence. Teachers' scores from participating countries are shown in Figure 8 (see also Table 6).
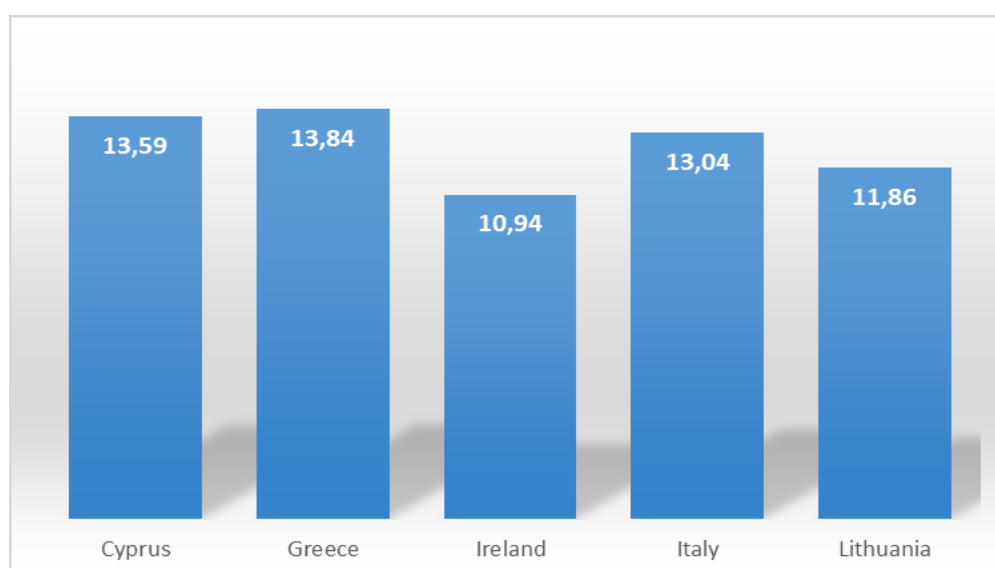
Figure 8. Teachers' Competence to deal with GBV among countries

Despite demonstrating the lowest gender-stereotyped attitudes, on average, teachers in Ireland report statistically significantly lower levels of competence in dealing with gender-based violence than teachers in Cyprus and Greece (see Table 6). Teachers responses to individual items on this scale are presented in Appendix 2. Overall, a greater proportion of Irish teachers felt that they needed more information on the effects of gender-based violence, whilst more teachers in Lithuania felt they needed greater competence correcting a student for any gendered comment or working with students from different population groups and social backgrounds. There was no correlation between teachers' gender-stereotyped attitudes and perceived competence in dealing with gender-based violence.

Teachers' perceptions of school policy

Teachers' perceptions of school policy regarding gender-based violence and violence in general were also assessed via 9 items on the teacher questionnaire (e.g. "*There are violence-prevention programmes implemented in my school*", "*I refer to the school policy on gender-based violence because it allows us to have a common strategy with the school's staff towards gender-based violence incidents and behaviours*"). 'Yes' responses were summed to generate a total score for teachers' perceived investment in **school policy on violence** issues. Teachers' scores are shown in Figure 9.
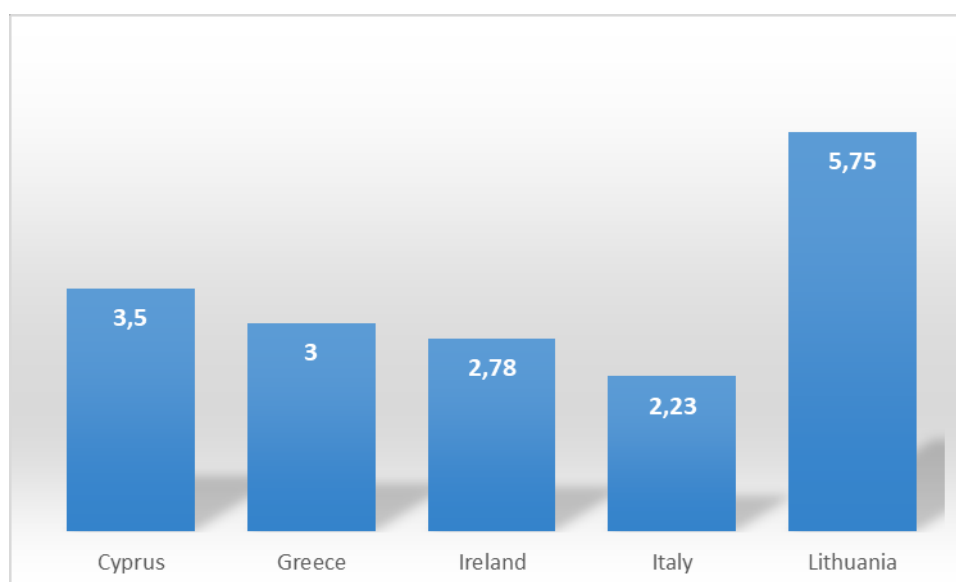
Figure 9. School policy on violence among countries

Teachers in Lithuania, on average, reported having a stronger school policy on violence, and these scores were statistically significantly different when compared to those of teachers in the other participating countries (see Table 6). In total, 91% of Lithuanian teachers reported the implementation of violence-prevention programmes in their schools, in comparison with only 15% of Italian teachers. Further detail is available in Appendix 3. A weak correlation between investment in school policy on violence and teachers' competence to deal with gender-based violence was found ($r = 0{,}325$, $p < 0{,}001$).

21

4.2 Qualitative analysis

Focus groups were used to explore teachers' experiences of, and attitudes towards, inappropriate behaviour of boys and girls towards each other. Two focus groups were conducted in each country involving 65 participants (age range from 25 to 62 years).). This included: in Cyprus, 3 men and 8 women; in Greece, 4 men and 7 women; in Italy 2 men and 22 women; In Ireland 1 man and 7 women; in Lithuania 1 man and 10 women. Collectively, their teaching experience ranged from 3 to 43 years.

These focus groups provided interesting and valuable insights into teachers' perceptions of GBV within a school setting; however, the small number of participants involved in some of the focus groups should be noted as a limitation. Nevertheless, detailed and rich accounts were provided and participants were practicing in different school types and with different levels of experience. Differences in the perception of the extent and prevalence of gender-based violence (GBV) in a school context emerged across not only different countries, but also between the two focus groups in the same country. These variations in the perceived extent and prevalence of GBV across school settings may be influenced by the age range of students taught by the participating teachers, with those educating younger age groups having less experience of inappropriate or aggressive gender-based behaviours. The extent to which GBV was perceived as problematic within participants' classrooms may also have been influenced, at least in part, by sociocultural expectations/norms within the region, as well as the socioeconomic contexts of families and students attending the teachers' schools.

Teachers' perceptions of differences between the behaviour of boys and girls in a school context

Teachers' perceived considerable differences in the behaviours, interests and thinking patterns of the girls and boys they teach. The findings from the focus groups suggests that teachers generally thought of boys as being more active, preferring sports and competitive games, starting physical fights, acting out and as engaging in riskier behaviour. Boys were also portrayed as being less engaged in school and as less attentive in the classwork. Overall, boys were seen as expressing themselves more frequently through physical actions and behaviour than verbal.

Whilst boys were seen as being more motivated by immediate goals and less competitive, girls, on the other hand, were viewed as more socially and emotionally mature, having greater verbal skills and as having a more complex way of thinking than boys. The faster socioemotional maturation of girls was seen as problematic and contributing to difficulties in later primary school years in Ireland.

Overall, differences between boys' and girls' expression of emotions were noted across the various focus groups. Typically, boys were perceived as expressing their emotions more directly, whilst girls keep emotions inside and express them later. Although, Italian teachers felt that expectations regarding the behaviour of boys were beginning to change and that boys are allowed to become more sensitive (to cry) nowadays. Overall, teachers perceived their female students as being calmer, and more likely to avoid action and competition. They were also seen as being more likely to participate in and engage in school-based activities. Importantly, girls were seen as being more likely than boys to seek out help from a teacher if experiencing any difficulties. Girls were also perceived as tending to engage in more attention seeking behaviours and being more appearance-oriented in relation to the opposite sex than boys.

Some contradictions across the findings emerging from the different countries should also be noted. On one hand, whilst both boys and girls were seen as using both physical and verbal aggression, boys were seen as being more likely to use physically inappropriate behaviours than girls, whilst girls were seen as being more likely to use verbally inappropriate/aggressive behaviours. However, findings from the focus groups within Ireland pointed to teachers feeling that girls could be more comfortable engaging more physically with boys, than boys would be towards girls, whilst some of the behaviours engaged in by girls were identified as being more socially acceptable if enacted by a girl than if done so by a boy. This finding was also echoed by the Lithuanian participants, who stressed, that, because the behaviour of girls was perceived as more socially acceptable, school staff often built better relationships with girls. Italian teachers also felt that the behaviour of girls tended to be more violent in more disadvantaged schools.

24

Overall, teachers noted the important role of gender stereotyping in shaping the behaviours of boys and girls. That is, the manner in which students behave towards members of the opposite sex was seen as being influenced by the gender stereotypes they learn in their home environment, as well as in their wider social circles. However, despite the perceived differences between the behaviour of boys and girls, it should be noted that teachers, particularly within the Greek focus group, also felt that the personal characteristics, interests and social skills of students were also a factor in their behaviour (particularly misbehaviour) within the classroom and that all students can engage in inappropriate, aggressive and conduct disordered behaviours, regardless of gender.

Unpleasant or inappropriate things students are doing or saying in regard to gender

Within the school setting, incidences of GBV which were identified by teachers included the use of physical and verbal aggression, exclusion and malicious commenting and teasing of other students. Teachers felt that age was an important factor in the emergence of inappropriate behaviour in the classroom and that the behaviour of younger children tended to less influenced by stereotypes and more comparable with regard to GBV (regardless of gender). Overall, however, boys were characterised as being more active-aggressive when they try to exercise power or express their hidden sexuality, whereas girls tend to be more passive-aggressive, employing bossy behaviours, teasing or gossiping and badmouthing. The use of offensive language was considered a widespread issue and as prevailing across both genders.

Unpleasant or inappropriate things boys are doing or saying to girls

Inappropriate behaviours perpetrated by boys identified by teachers included physical and verbal aggression (e.g. cursing pushing, pinching, hitting, kicking) and this was seen as a means of exercising power over others. Inappropriate behaviour carried out by boys against boys was perceived as being more physically, whilst towards girls, boys were seen as using inappropriate psychological or verbal bullying behaviour. In particular, teachers from Cyprus noticed, that when a boy behaves violently to a girl, he does not expect that the girl will react violently. Making fun of, or teasing the physical appearance or lack of hygiene of girls was also identified as an issue by teachers. Additionally, teachers reported incidents of boys engaging in sexualised

25

behaviour, such us sexual commenting, sexualised language, sexually aggressive behaviours and using inappropriate looks, drawings or language to shock girls. Teachers who participated in the Lithuanian focus group felt that inappropriate behaviours (e.g. physical and verbal aggression) were motivated by emerging of hidden sexuality at this age. That is, they become violent towards a girl they like. Teachers from Ireland also felt that inappropriate boys' behaviour towards girls may be not as obvious from a teacher perspective and may be happening online. Nevertheless, despite reports of unpleasant and inappropriate behaviours teachers noticed that boys will also show protective behaviours towards girls.

Unpleasant or inappropriate things girls are doing or saying to boys

Girls inappropriate actions towards boys included verbal teasing and mocking, as well as domineering behaviours during play times. Teachers felt that girls are usually not directly violent towards boys, although teachers in Lithuania suggested that girls are becoming more physically aggressive towards boys. Nevertheless, girls were viewed as using more psychological violent behaviour, such as gossiping or making fun of boys, using relational forms of bullying and employing passive-aggressive behaviours to express their dissatisfaction or exercise their power. The inappropriate behaviours of girls were also described as provoking in nature (e.g. seeking to get a reaction) and as being targeted, particularly towards those who are seen as more vulnerable or socially excluded.

The consequences of misconduct for students

Overall, GBV in a school setting was seen as having a significant impact on the student regardless of gender, as well as on the school environment. Consequences of GBV which were identified by teachers were generally negative and traumatic, either psychological/emotional (mistrust, depression, anxiety, humiliation, diminish self-confidence and self-esteem issues, etc.), or physical (bruises, stomach aches, headaches) and social. GBV was also seen as feeding into an escalation of violent and antisocial behaviours and contributing towards the use of further and/or retaliatory aggressiveness and violence, either publicly or privately. Teachers also felt that GBV could negatively impact student engagement with school, contributing to the loss of interest and inattention in the classroom. Knock-on or long-term implications in

terms of reduced active participation, school attendance, future aspirations and even choice of profession were also described.

Differences in the responses of boys and girls to GBV were highlighted within the focus groups. For instance, when the recipient of the misconduct is a boy, teachers identified further aggression as a key or likely consequence. Boys were also perceived as being more liable for upset at younger ages if they were abused by a boy; however, boys were also seen as resolving conflicts with each other quickly. On the other hand, teachers felt that when girls are abused, their reactions often depend on who the perpetrator was. That is, girls were seen as more likely to respond they become more violently towards other girls, but become more sensitive and self-conscious when bullied or victimised by a boy. Teachers felt that, for boys, being victimised or abused by a girl, can lead to emotional upset; however, this tend to be expressed in private and not in a school setting. Boys were potentially being told to by adults to "man up", to cop on/not to make it into such a big deal, if they are abused by girls.

Teachers identified socioemotional and/or self-esteem difficulties and aggression as potential consequences for girls are abused or victimised by a boy. Teachers felt that exposure to GBV could potentially reduce sensitivity in girls and increase the likelihood of disordered and risky behaviours, as well as sexual activity, thereby increasing their risks of exposure to further bullying and victimisation. At a younger age, the effects of abuse were seen as being more detrimental for girls if perpetrated by another girl. Girls were also seen as being subject to exclusion and bullying behaviours (from other girls) and may become more violent towards other girls who abuse them, either actively or passively. When girls are abused by other girls, they may be excluded from a group and unaffiliated. Or become more violent towards other girls who abuse them, either actively or passively.

Overall, the consequences of GBV were also seen as being influenced by the characteristics of the child, developmental stage, and social skills as well as the nature of the event itself. In one focus group possible positive consequences of misconduct for students were discussed, in that such misconduct was viewed as potentially enabling students to understand their own desires

and needs, as well as make providing young students with an opportunity for learning about themselves and their identity.

Causes of inappropriate behaviour among students

The root causes of GBV which were identified by teachers included prevailing cultural norms, attitudes, social experiences and media exposure, as well as child developmental stage and capabilities. In particular, teachers felt that young people are influenced by, and imitate, the behaviours they see. Thus, their inappropriate behaviour shaped by their experiences and the role-models they adopt. In particular, teachers perceived student aggression and stereotypical attitudes as being learned from family (experienced at home), social environment and culture, media and virtual reality and fairy tales. Overall, family and media were seen as playing a central role in shaping inappropriate behaviour amongst both boys and girls; however, computer games were identified as a potential cause of this behaviour in boys only. Parents, particularly fathers, were identified as negatively modelling stereotypical behaviours and attitudes about women and their respective roles in society. Additionally, insufficient parental supervision or control over students' access to social media, games and/or television content was also identified as problematic in the development of negatively-oriented and/or harmful attitudes towards gender. Peer groups were also understood by teachers as having influence over the emergence of negatively oriented gender attitudes and behaviours towards others. Notably, participants felt that, at least in some regions (e.g. urbanised area) negative gender stereotypes were declining. Thus, community conditions were also identified as influencing the prevalence of gender-based violence and sociocultural norms.

The role of the school, and approaches from the teachers, particularly in the early school years, was considered to be central to the tackling the issue of gender-based violence. However, teachers noted that stereotypes can often be perpetuated by teachers in their interactions with, and expectations, for the students they educate, whilst gender stereotypes may also be reproduced and unconsciously rewarded or punished by teachers. Expectations are formed from a young age and teachers are important role models for children and can shape their behaviour in positive or negative ways. Social prejudices held by teachers, therefore, may have a significant deleterious effect. Moreover, participants reflected on the general lack of training

for teachers in this area, which may contribute to lack of prevention and/or ineffective teacher responses in relation to gender-based violence.

Typical adults' reactions to inappropriate behaviour of students

Typical adults' responses toward inappropriate behaviour of students were also described by teacher participants. Notably, the use of harsh or negative disciplining strategies, such as giving out, reprimands, humiliation were identified as ineffective approaches to dealing with GBV, whilst potentially problematic approaches which reinforce gender-stereotypes in students were also described (e.g. girls should be treated "*like ladies*"; boys need to "*man up*"). In most cases, teachers noted that adults can be more tolerant of girls' inappropriate behaviours. Teachers described parents' efforts in dealing with inappropriate behaviour as involving scolding and/or punishment for boys for inappropriate behaviour. Teachers, also felt that parents frequently attempted to justify the inappropriate behaviour of their children as provoked, whilst the axiom that boys should never treat girls badly was perceived as often being reinforced by parents (*"We never hit a girl, not even with a flower"*). Overall, the responses of teachers, and other adults, to inappropriate behaviour were described as being themselves informed and shaped by gender stereotypes, and as therefore, reinforcing these attitudes in students. That is, boys were potentially being seen as being told to "man up", whilst girls may not be believed if they reported experiences of GBV in a school context. Thus, cultural attitudes / prevalent gender stereotypes were seen as compounding the personal challenges experienced by students in relation to issues of GBV, preventing them from coming forward and revealing the occurrence of inappropriate behaviours and/or interactions with others.

Actions at schools to reduce the inappropriate behaviour of students

Below we highlight teachers' perceptions of current and/or other necessary actions to reduce and/or prevent inappropriate student behaviour:

Teachers' attitudes towards reduction of prejudicial and discriminatory behaviour amongst pupils

- No inappropriate behaviour of students should be tolerated, regardless of a pupil's gender

- All students should be treated equally, regardless of their gender
- Every child should be respected and valued, and encouraged to be themselves

Concrete actions that are being implemented in schools to reduce discriminatory behaviour among pupils

- A clear policy regarding the consequences of GBV with the aim of cultivating an environment where inappropriate behaviour is not tolerated
- Government approved policies to be implemented by all schools
- A policy to guarantee the implementation of Social Personal and Health Education and Relationships and Social Emotional programmes
- Guidelines for managing instances of GBV

Recommendations at School Level

- A school-wide awareness of GBV
    - Employ a member of staff who has received training on gender equality and conflict mediation
    - Redefine the objectives of school events (national/public/historical). For example, substituting aspects that may be based on gender stereotypes (pink for girls, blue for boys etc.) with more inclusive elements
    - Organise family days instead of Mothers' Day or Fathers' Day, so as to include the more than just parents
    - Promote cultural diversity (as many students come from different cultural backgrounds and have various gender characteristics)
- Staff should act as role models
    - Emphasise diversity and inclusion
    - Avoid gender segregation
    - Lead by example
- Educate Staff
    - Increase awareness and training of all Educational facilitators (Principals, teachers, directors, education policy makers, etc.)
    - Organise training for all staff on GBV, gender stereotypes, equality misconducts, and personal issues

- Increase teachers' willingness to learn more and to understand GBV by organising more empirical and practical workshops instead of relying on theoretical training
- Support teachers and other school staff in dealing with inappropriate and aggressive GBV
- Involve parents
  - Build home-school liaison and positive parent-teacher relationships
  - Provide information to parents about GBV
  - Communicate with parents after every incident of GBV

Recommendations at Classroom Level

- Resolve every case of GBV.
  - Following an incident, educate students and their parents regarding acceptable behaviour and standards set by the school's policy
  - Use an individualised approach and continuous dialogue with a child to tackle adverse behaviour and determine the possible causes of such behaviour
  - Allow the child to explore new gender perceptions that it would not be able to explore in a family environment
  - Provide moral support for students and help them deal emotionally with their experiences of inappropriate behaviours
- Engage students.
  - Make educating students about GBV more accessible by using technology and external experts
  - Avoid frontal lessons, use modern technologies
  - Use positive reinforcement techniques.
  - Use action-learning methodologies (e.g. case studies, role plays, group study, mixed teams, activities that contradict stereotypes)

Brief summary

In summary, statistically significant differences were found comparing the gender attitudes of teachers among five countries. The most gender stereotypes were found in Italy; followed by Greece, Cyprus and Lithuania respectively. Whilst, the least gender stereotyped attitudes were

reported by teachers in Ireland, this group also felt the least competent in dealing with issues related to GBV when compared to their counterparts in other countries. Lithuania differed from the other participating countries in having a well-defined, national school policy on violence, but this does not contain any specified focused on GBV. Indeed, qualitative findings point to a general lack of policy and guidance in this area for teachers and schools. Notably, teachers' responses toward the inappropriate behaviour of students may be ineffective and can potentially reinforce gender stereotypes and GBV and a lack of specialised training for teachers may make them unprepared to face, or prevent, GBV arising in a school context.

5. COMPARATIVE RESEARCH ANALYSIS. PRINCIPALS

In total, 44 principals (e.g. heads of schools in which 8-12-year-old students are taught) from 5 countries took part in the research: 10 principals from Cyprus (5 men, 5 women), 7 principals from Greece (3 men, 4 women), 10 principals from Ireland (5 men, 4 women, 1 preferred not to indicate sex), 7 principals from Italy (3 men, 4 women) and 10 principals from Lithuania (3 men, 7 women). Age of participants varied from 35 to 64 years (mean age was 52 year). Participants' number of years work experience as a principal ranged from 4 months to 30 years, whilst school size varied 7 to 150 teachers and 55 to 1200 students.

	Cyprus	Greece	Ireland	Italy	Lithuania
Age mean (year)	50,7	51,6	49,4	54,7	54,8
Work experience as principal (mean; year)	7,8	18,7	8,8	12,9	10,5
Teachers at school (mean)	19	21	-	95	61
Students at school (mean)	176	297	-	809	707

The purpose of interviews was to explore the principals' attitudes and understanding in relation to gender-based violence. The majority of interviews were conducted face-to-face, although a small number were done via phone or an online platform. Principals were asked about the violence prevention policy in place in their schools, prevention of GBV and supports and/or training opportunities for teachers in this area.

School policies and activities on violence prevention

Some conflicting findings emerged from the interviews with principals. In particular, some principals noted their schools had in place well-established and publicized (e.g. on websites, information for parents) written policies on how incidents of violence should be responded to by school staff. However, this was not in the case in other schools, and an absence of school policy on violence and reliance on national guidelines was noted by other principals. In cases where schools had policies in relation to the prevention of violence, they very seldom included specific actions regarding GBV. Indeed, it should be noted that the term "GBV" was not very clearly understood by the respondents. Further detail on the findings from each country is provided below:

CY. Schools usually to not have written policies on gender-based violence but there are national guidelines for all the school of Cyprus where GBV is mentioned.

GR. Some private schools have their own protocols on responding to cases of violence, but they are not specific to GBV. Protocols on responding to school violence are rare in public schools' protocols.

IE. The majority of principals reported no specific policy in place designed to prevent or respond to incidents of gender-based violence within their school setting. Respondents indicated that gender-based violence was dealt with in the same manner as any violent incident (e.g. via the school anti-bullying policy, the school code of conduct/discipline or the Dignity at Work policy).

IT. Some principals reported that their schools have specific protocols on how to address school violence and other schools do not have such policies. All school principals agreed that it was important to take an action to prevent gender-based violence in schools. The preventive work should include the work with teachers and parents.

LT. Most respondents felt that that schools had a written school anti-bullying policy describing appropriate responses to bullying and incidences of violence, but did not specify GBV. The presence of "Students Welfare Commissions" to examine cases of bullying and violence was noted, as well as more general bullying/violence prevention activities undertaken by schools (although there were not seen as GBV specific).

Participation of teachers in GBV-related training

Only a small number of participating principals, regardless of country, reported that the teachers in their school had not attended or received any specific training on the prevention of GBV. Others, however, noted that school staff had received support or training in relation to tackling and reducing school violence more generally.

CY. Most of the school principals could not clarify whether their school staff (teachers) has attended any training on gender-based violence.

GR. There are opportunities for teachers to attend gender equality and anti-bullying training; however, principals felt that teachers were often not motivated to participate in, or attend, such provisions.

IE. All indicated that there were no provisions in place within Ireland to provide information on, or training for school staff around the issue of GBV.

IT. Principals identified some of their school staff as having participated in/received GBV prevention training. However, barriers to training uptake amongst school staff were noted including limited financial resources, a lack of interest/readiness amongst teachers, and prevailing prejudicial attitudes/cultural barriers. One Italian principal described his/her school policy to gender-related issues which included the implementation of activities with students addressing gender roles and stereotypes.

LT. Principals reported that, in general, school staff did not take part in any trainings specifically focusing on GBV, although anti-bullying training was available in some schools.

Role of schools in prevention of GBV and supporting students (aged 8- 12 years)

Although most school principals agreed that schools played an important role in the prevention of GBV, this was not always the case and some (particularly in Ireland) were hesitant if GBV should be addressed in schools. The majority of participants also felt that additional training opportunities for staff aimed at cultivating positive attitudes and tackling gender inequality were needed. Principal's suggestions for addressing the issue of GBV with 8 - 12 year old students are described in more detail below:

CY. The activities with students should be age appropriate and based on a non–formal methodology which can be implemented by school staff during existing Health Education teaching hours.

GR. Principals commented that education on GBV should include awareness-raising initiatives (e.g. providing definitions and examples) and aim to change gender stereotypes. Specific suggested activities included, mixed sports teams, task delegation irrespective of gender, task rotation, and equality initiatives.

IR. Overall, principals felt that GBV was a particularly challenging issue to address with this age group, due to its sensitive and evocative nature. Participants felt that interventions in this area should be positive in focus, honing in on the skills necessary to build positive, healthy relationships and build self-awareness, as well as an understanding of the impact gendered discrimination, stereotypes. Group workshops were seen as a potential method through which

such training could be implemented and the use of role play was also encouraged as an active method through which lessons around equality and stereotypes could be taught.

IT. Principals suggested prevention approaches targeted at students aged 8-12 using artistic expression as a tool, approaching history from a gendered perspective identifying important women in history and science, raising awareness on the sexualisation of women, focusing on non-violence and the development of intercultural competences in general.

LT. The integration of gender-oriented themes into existing educational curricula and specific lessons and the empowerment of teachers in addressing GBV in a school setting were suggested as important undertakings.

Brief summary

Findings from interviews with principals suggest a lack of systematized guidelines and mandatory training in relation to GBV within school. The pressing need for both a multi-level educational approach which is rooted in a positive-ethos and addresses the needs of teachers, students and parents is evident. In some countries there is a significant practice gap between the private and the public sector; private schools have numerous, specific and sophisticated initiatives for violence prevention and social skills education, whereas public schools rely on, often lacking or insufficient, governmental initiatives and guidelines. A number of school principals felt that GBV-relevant training and support for their teachers and students accordingly was needed. Nevertheless, others come across as indifferent or defensive which may be indicative of potential challenges to efforts to address the issue of GBV in schools.

6. COMPARATIVE RESEARCH ANALYSIS. POLICY MAKERS

Interviews with key stakeholders with responsibility for informing and developing policy in relation to gender equality. In total, 46 policy makers from 5 countries took part in the research: 9 from Cyprus (2 men, 6 women, 1 preferred not to indicate sex), 9 from Greece (2 men, 7 women), 10 from Ireland (4 men, 5 women, 1 preferred not to indicate sex), 8 from Italy (2 men, 4 women, 2 preferred not to indicate sex) and 10 from Lithuania (4 men, 6 women). These policy makers worked state agencies (e.g. members of Parliament, ministers, vice-ministers, their advisory staff), or at the regional or municipal level (e.g. mayors, members of city councils, their advisory staff). The age of participants ranged from 33 to 68 years (mean age was 47 years).

Semi-structured, qualitative interviews were conducted to explore the positions (attitudes and understanding) of policy makers in relation gender-based violence. These were largely conducted face-to-face; however, some were conducted by telephone or online. The interviews policy makers' perceptions of the prevalence of GBV is their own country/region, the underlying causes of GBV/ contributory factors, prevention efforts/strategies within the country and the role of school within such prevention efforts with specific reference to students in primary schools (8-12 year-olds).

Policy makers' perceptions of GBV

Scale and prevalence of the problem. Significant disparities emerged across policy makers' perceptions of GBV. Indeed, in Lithuania, policy makers felt that GBV was better understood as a component of violence more generally, whilst other perceived GBV as a significant and pressing issue with high prevalence in society (Cyprus, Greece, Ireland, Italy). Moreover, a lack of attention to the issue by government was also highlighted, as well as inadequate recording/statistical data regarding GBV.

Causes of GBV. Policy makers reported a broad array of causes of GBV. Overall, GBV was perceived as a learned behavior and prevailing cultural norms and gender stereotypes, particularly those arising from a strong patriarchal culture and/or religious influences. Social perceptions of 'traditional' femininity and masculinity with families and in society as a whole,

and the reinforcement of these through education/school systems were also highlighted potential root causes. A lack of education for students in issues of gender equality was further highlighted. Social factors, such as substance misuse that contribute to violence, either in the home or community, exposure to violence and poor role models was also seen as perpetuating a cycle of violence and reinforcing negative stereotypes.

Actions taken to prevent GBV

Notably, some respondents did not feel that they could identify specific focused system response in relation to GBV within their country/region, whilst others felt that reactive systems were in place, but that there was a lack of preventative efforts in this area. Some respondents mentioned the ratification the Istanbul Convention and adoption of other laws on gender equality as the measures implemented at the national level. National action plans on gender equality, and state-funded institutions with responsibility for dealing with GBV were also identified, as well as the role of non-governmental initiatives in the field of prevention of GBV and provision of services for the victims of GBV were also described. Further detail is provided below:

CY. The role of the Ministry of Education and Culture is important: implementing Health Education as a subject in Primary and Secondary Education Schools; National Strategy for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in Schools (2018-2022). Also, ratification of the Istanbul Convention, preparation of a new bill on harassment and stalking for voting in Parliament, the National Action Plan on Equality between Men and Women, National Referral Mechanism – a guide for handling human trafficking cases (2016). The role of NGOs in providing services, raising public awareness, and conducting research on GBV, is highlighted.

GR. The General Secretariat for Gender Equality has unfortunately limited impact on society, due to limited financial resources and a lack of governmental support. Raising awareness through lectures and campaigns are usually private initiatives (i.e. initiated by Corporate Social Responsibility activities, NGOs, Parents' associations, City Councils' plans, etc.). Actions are usually relevant to bullying and/or racism and/or gender equality, i.e. not specific to GBV, and are reactive, not proactive, without a systematic approach.

IR. The National Strategy on Domestic & Gender-Based Violence, National Strategy for Women & Girls, and LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy are seen as positive initiatives towards

achieving equality of gender. However, the actions being taken at a national level in Ireland are not sufficient. Public awareness campaigns are efficient, but they have not been plentiful or prominent enough. The slow shift away from single-sex schooling signalled a positive move towards a more inclusive and tolerant society.

IT. More attention is payed to stalking, femicide and legal penal procedures. The National action plan regarding violence against women and initiatives by regional authorities in the prevention and protection of survivors of GBV have been updated. Regulatory measures by the Ministry of Education targeting schools and teachers, such as Law 29/2017 n.71, for the protection of minors and prevention against cyberbullying, have been implemented. Gender was included in the law for a good school, which caused some controversy.

LT. The Institution of Controller of Equal Opportunities and the adoption of the Law on Protection of Violence in Close Environment (Laws on domestic abuse, against women and children) were mentioned, though, some respondents did not see any prevention of GBV and that only prevention of violence, in general, is taking place. Others said that there is no prevention of GBV but that there is a system of responding to cases when violence happens (intervention). The existence of non-governmental initiatives in the field of prevention was also mentioned.

Prevention of GBV and the role of the school

Overall, respondents identified a need for national initiatives/programmes and awareness raising campaigns in order to adequately address the issue of GBV which would be targeted at various sectors and settings including schools, the justice system and workplaces. Some of the participating policy makers felt that education of students played a key role and that the education system needed to be reformed in order to make it less gendered, whilst enhanced implementation/delivery of sexual education in schools was needed. A more responsive law enforcement system was also identified as a priority strategy for prevention of GBV, as well as effective legislation in the area.

Overall, there was general agreement amongst the participants that school and education was central in the prevention of GBV. Some policy makers highlighted specific educational/school-based resources that specifically addressed gender stereotypes and differential forms of

violence, whilst adequate training of teachers to equip them in dealing with GBV and the integration of preventative, educational material on gender equality with existing curriculum were also highlighted as priority areas for development.

Policy makers' perceptions of school-based activities to prevent GBV

The responses varied from unspecific activities to various specific activities addressing GBV in schools: lesson plans for schools with information on GBV, sexual education, manuals and protocols for schools on addressing GBV.

CY. The lesson on Health Education (which includes modules on gender stereotypes, forms of violence, self-empowerment, citizenship, life skills, social values, etc.) has been introduced in the school curriculum of both Primary and Secondary education since 2011. The Ministry of Education and Culture has conducted initiatives and seminars for the training of teachers on gender issues. Some training programmes were held in cooperation with NGOs. Educational Psychology Service had offered training for parents.

GR. Actions at schools in most cases rest upon Teachers' or Principal's sensitivity, interests, knowledge and reactions. Most actions are re-active and ad hoc; no systematic / proactive example was mentioned.

IR. Very little being done at primary School Level in Ireland. Social Personal & Health Education (SPHE)/ Relationships & Sexuality Education (RSE) and the Stay Safe Programme. do touch upon some of the related issues, but are not seen to address the key components of the issue head on. In terms of responding to incidents of GBV, all schools are required to put a Code of Behaviour in place. However, rarely do these codes include direct reference to the appropriate response to GBV.

IT. More attention and collaboration of school staff to gender violence situations is paid. Regulatory measures and specific project financing which target schools and teachers, as well as trainings in collaboration with local associations expects on the field of interest took place. Awareness campaigns are, but it is a need for continuity, systematization of these issues in education.

LT. There is a programme for sexual education but it is not widely implemented. There are Guidelines at school how to react to abuse, some programmes for violence prevention that are being implemented in schools. Children Welfare Commission is in every school and joint work of school specialists and parents is being implemented.

Brief summary

In summary, policy makers identified a range of interacting factors as underlying GBV and noted the role of culture and education in reinforcing and transmitting gender inequality. Contributing factors included, gender stereotypes, stereotypes on sexual orientation and on specific social groups, patriarchal structure of society, poverty, social perceptions on femininity and masculinity in family and in society, gender perceptions in education, work- and sexual-life, normalization of violence in everyday life, difficulties with emotional regulation and anger management, and a history of prior exposure to abuse or violence. However, a lack of adequate knowledge regarding the extent of GBV was identified. According to policy makers, the role of school and education plays a fundamental role in GBV prevention and improved educational efforts are needed to adequately address this pressing issue. Recommended reforms included structural change in the educational system is needed to develop a gender-sensitive and child-focused approach to education, as well as increased attention towards the prevention of violence against women and girls. Widely available awareness raising initiative which target the population as a whole were perceived as important in achieving progress in the field of GBV prevention, whilst greater cooperation and collaboration amongst key stakeholder was also identified as an important priority.

7. LIMITATIONS

Some study limitations should be noted. Firstly, education systems across the participating countries differed and also limited the access of the relevant research team to schools and participants. Student motivation and responses may have been impacted by setting and/or time (during the lesson, after the lesson) when data collection occurred. It was also not possible to collect data from children in younger age ranges (8 – 10 years) in both Italy and Ireland leading to some discrepancies in the age range of the participating students, potentially comprising the comparability of the data.

The questionnaire for teachers administered on-line and may have involved those who were not working with 8-12-year-old students. Focus groups for teachers were initially designed so that participants within a group would be unfamiliar with one another; however, recruitment challenges meant that some groups were recruited from within the same school and teachers knew each other. The size of the focus groups also varied and one focus group was very large, whilst another involved only three participants. These differences may have influenced the type and nature of the teachers' responses and engagement with the focus group topics. Also, the number of participating principals and policy makers was smaller than intended and it was challenging to recruit these key stakeholders to the research. Some of the interviews were conducted over the phone or via online platforms and this may have affected participants' responses. Finally, all key research materials (e.g. questionnaires, interview and focus group topic guides) were translated into five native languages and there may have been some differences and/or inaccuracies in the translation of their wording.

8. FINAL COMMENTS AND CONCLUSIONS

The Systematic Approaches For Equality of GendeR (SAFER) project's in-depth approach to exploring GBV, which involved both qualitative and quantitative research methods, provided detailed insights into attitudes, experiences and issues relating to gender-based violence (GBV) in schools. The research involved large numbers of participants from a range of different backgrounds including policy makers, educators, teachers and children.

The quantitative findings shed some interesting light on inter-national differences in gender stereotyped attitudes in teachers and their students. In particular, the least gender stereotyped attitudes were reported in Ireland, whilst the most stereotyped attitudes in students were found in Greece and Cyprus, and amongst teachers in Italy. We also found that stereotyped attitudes were stronger toward boys than toward girls, and boys held more gender stereotyped opinions than girls. The acceptability of GBV (i.e. teasing the other child) was highest amongst both male and female Lithuanian students; however, a very small proportion of students in Italy thought it was acceptable for girls and boys to tease one another.

Overall, the findings of the research highlight the complexity of GBV. A combination of societal, cultural, family-related and policy factors were seen as reinforcing gender inequality. The education system also emerged as playing a fundamental role in tacking the issue of GBV. Structural reforms in the educational system were perceived as necessary, including a more gender sensitive and child focused approach to education. Indeed, a lack of GBV-prevention efforts, initiatives and programmes was highlighted, as well as insufficient guidelines and training in this area for school staff.

Finally, this research provided insight the issue of GBV and how it is perceived across the different participating countries. In particular, this research provided a platform for teachers, as trainers and other role models to voice their opinions, attitudes and experiences in relation to the prevention of gender-based violence. Though there are some limitations, this research is one of the first broad comparative studies on gender-based violence in different cultural

contexts and may to inform further research, intervention and preventative strategies, as well as policy development in this area.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE TRAINING

This research explored students', educators' and policy makers' attitudes towards GBV and provided in-depth insight into these key stakeholders' attitudes, perceptions and experiences in relation to this pressing issue. Whilst there are some positive findings, including some indications that gender stereotypes are changing. Several gaps in current provisions in relation to GBV also emerged and are noteworthy, including a lack of awareness/understanding amongst key stakeholders, a perceived lack of competence amongst some educators, and an absence of focused training/training opportunities for educators. This research, therefore, helps to generate key recommendations for the development of a teacher training initiative focused on the issue of GBV including, (i) recommendations regarding organisational structure, (ii) training materials; (iii) content; and (iv) delivery style. Further detail is provided below.

- ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE
  - Prevention of GBV should become an integral part of schools' violence prevention activities and should be started from an early age
  - Non-formal education/ awareness raising activities are needed (e.g. events, campaigns)
  - Collaboration between governmental and non-governmental organizations is needed
  - Foster participation of parents and students/children in school-based GBV prevention
  - Provision of evidence-based, evaluated and supervised training for all school's staff, including principals, in GBV
- MATERIAL should be:
  - age appropriate
  - interactive (artistic expression, role plays, case studies, daily activities and one day events in primary schools, etc.)
  - user friendly and easy to adapt within a classroom

- adjusted for students to do tasks together with parents (if possible)

- target boys specifically (boys found to be more likely to hold gender stereotyped attitudes and are more likely to be stereotyped)

- incorporate the use of modern technologies, as well as behavioural and social learning techniques

- TOPICS to cover:

General:

- gender equality

- human rights

- social roles

- healthy relationships

- emotional intelligence and self-regulation

- personal growth

- non-violent conflict resolution and help-seeking

- intercultural competences

- self-awareness

- "Creating an improving our Social Self"

Specific:

- Definition of GBV, forms

- Explanation the difference between gender stereotypes and GBV

- Identification of GBV

- Ways of respond to the cases of GBV

- TRAINERS should:

- Build awareness and understanding of GBV

- Address inappropriate behaviours of Role model for teachers – respect and treat all equally

- Be sensitive to/ aware of own stereotyped gender attitudes

- Use the language teachers can learn and model with students

- Be sensitive to potential personal (traumatic) experiences of participants

- Be prepared to provided necessary information for participants' assistance, if needed

45

10. APPENDICES

Appendix 1

	Gender stereotyped attitudes, percentage in the country					Significant differences
	Cyprus	Greece	Ireland	Italy	Lithuania	
It is more important for boys to perform well in school than girls	0%	5%	0%	**30%**	2%	$\chi^2 = 55{,}164$, $df = 4$, p < 0,001
It is not acceptable for a girl to act or dress like a boy	**41%**	27%	8%	30%	27%	$\chi^2 = 15{,}08$, $df = 4$, p = 0,005
It is a problem for a boy to act or dress more like a girl	**57%**	50%	16%	53%	45%	$\chi^2 = 23{,}044$, $df = 4$, p < 0,001
Boys should be encouraged to do things that are stereotypically considered masculine, and vice versa	**20%**	6%	6%	6%	17%	$\chi^2 = 11{,}545$, $df = 4$, p = 0,021
Men have the primary responsibility to financially support their families	7%	**20%**	0%	17%	3%	$\chi^2 = 20{,}228$, $df = 4$, p < 0,001
Parents should spend more time teaching girls to take care of their appearance in comparison to boys	6%	3%	2%	**19%**	2%	$\chi^2 = 20{,}403$, $df = 4$, p < 0,001
Women should have the last say in the decision-making about whether to have a child or not	30%	47%	35%	**59%**	17%	$\chi^2 = 25{,}26$, $df = 4$, p = 0,031

* The highest percentage of stereotyped attitude is marked in bold, the lowest ones are underlined.

Appendix 2

	Feeling of competence in dealing with gender-based violence, percentage in the country					Significant differences
	Cyprus	Greece	Ireland	Italy	Lithuania	
I know and can recognise the forms gender-based violence can take	**72%**	66%	49%	70%	<u>47%</u>	$\chi^2 = 13,514$, $df = 4$, p = 0,009
I am constantly vigilant for any signs that gender-based violence is occurring and I can recognise behaviours that show these signs	**80%**	**80%**	<u>43%</u>	76%	61%	$\chi^2 = 24,579$, $df = 4$, p < 0,001
I understand the immediate effects of gender-based violence on the victims	**80%**	78%	<u>26%</u>	57%	64%	$\chi^2 = 43,761$, $df = 4$, p < 0,001
I understand the immediate effects of gender-based violence on the perpetrator	65%	**67%**	<u>18%</u>	47%	44%	$\chi^2 = 34,715$, $df = 4$, p < 0,001
I understand the long-term effects of gender-based violence on the victims	67%	**84%**	<u>37%</u>	66%	69%	$\chi^2 = 28,519$, $df = 4$, p < 0,001
I understand the long-term effects of gender-based violence on the perpetrator	60%	**70%**	<u>16%</u>	49%	41%	$\chi^2 = 38,267$, $df = 4$, p < 0,001
I know and can recognise the forms cyber harassment can take	67%	**83%**	69%	74%	<u>52%</u>	$\chi^2 = 15,313$, $df = 4$, p = 0,004
I feel competent to adequately deal with violent emotions in the classroom	65%	66%	<u>37%</u>	68%	**77%**	$\chi^2 = 20,425$, $df = 4$, p < 0,001
I feel competent having pupils from different population groups and social backgrounds working together	83%	78%	**94%**	83%	<u>72%</u>	$\chi^2 = 9,989$, $df = 4$, p = 0,041
I correct a student when she/he makes a gendered comment about men	93%	**97%**	88%	89%	<u>66%</u>	$\chi^2 = 30,857$, $df = 4$, p < 0,001
I correct a student when she/he makes a gendered comment about women	94%	**97%**	92%	93%	<u>70%</u>	$\chi^2 = 29,234$, $df = 4$, p < 0,001
I correct a student when she/he makes a gendered comment about homosexuals	94%	92%	**98%**	94%	<u>73%</u>	$\chi^2 = 25,481$, $df = 4$, p < 0,001
I set perpetrators apart from the group, and explore with her/him what happened and then take measures	**87%**	72%	<u>67%</u>	85%	84%	$\chi^2 = 10,974$, $df = 4$, p = 0,027

* The highest percentage of competence in dealing with GBV is marked in bold, the lowest one is underlined.

Appendix 3

	Investment in school policy on gender-based violence, percentage in the country					Significant differences
	Cyprus	Greece	Ireland	Italy	Lithuania	
There are violence-prevention programmes implemented in my school	61%	39%	59%	15%	**91%**	$\chi^2 = 74{,}144$, $df = 4$, p < 0,001
There are clear instructions how to report incidents of gender-based violence (e.g. available guidelines, templates)	22%	20%	31%	17%	**64%**	$\chi^2 = 42{,}252$, $df = 4$, p < 0,001
I have been informed by the school about the policy on gender-based violence	33%	20%	26%	11%	**64%**	$\chi^2 = 45{,}840$, $df = 4$, p < 0,001
There are possibilities for teachers at my school to attend trainings on prevention of gender-based violence	37%	28%	16%	23%	**63%**	$\chi^2 = 34{,}902$, $df = 4$, p < 0,001
I refer to the school policy on gender-based violence because it allows us to have a common strategy with the school's staff towards gender-based violence incidents and behaviours	46%	42%	24%	28%	**69%**	$\chi^2 = 30{,}129$, $df = 4$, p < 0,001
I refer to the policy on gender-based violence, because it includes proactive actions to create a non-violent environment and to address the causes of violent incidents	50%	44%	24%	30%	**66%**	$\chi^2 = 25{,}741$, $df = 4$, p < 0,001
Parent representatives are actively involved and support the school in the reduction of gender-based violence in and around our school	11%	19%	16%	17%	**33%**	$\chi^2 = 10{,}323$, $df = 4$, p = 0,035
The school advises parents/carers on non-violent ways to resolve conflict and manage any angry outbursts in the home	54%	55%	49%	30%	**72%**	$\chi^2 = 20{,}619$, $df = 4$, p < 0,001
Parents/carers generally support the school's actions to reduce gender-based violence	35%	33%	35%	51%	**55%**	$\chi^2 = 10{,}161$, $df = 4$, p = 0,038

* The highest percentage of investment in school policy on violence is marked in bold, the lowest one is underlined.

49