Exploring the Gender-Based Violence Attitudes and Teacher Needs in Ireland

The Scope of Gender-Based Violence in Ireland

Before exploring the extent of gender-based violence as an issue in an Irish setting, it is highly pertinent first to note the definitional differences which exist between the definition of Gender Based Violence (GBV) which is utilized in an Irish context as compared to that put forward by the European Institute of Gender Equality (EIGE). Though the European wide definition is valid within a particular context, the Irish definition of GBV is much broader in scope. Within Ireland, the definition moves beyond viewing GBV through the somewhat reductive prism of being an "expression of power inequalities between men and women", and endeavours to encapsulate the complexity and diversity within the types of behaviors which represent GBV in the country. The National Office for the Prevention of Domestic, Sexual and Gender Based Violence in Ireland (Cosc) provides a definition which encompasses but is not limited to the following:

a) Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family, including battering, sexual exploitation, sexual abuse of children in the household, dowry-related violence, marital rape, female genital mutilation and other harmful traditional practices, non-spousal violence and violence related to exploitation.

b) Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring within the general community, including rape, sexual abuse, sexual harassment and intimidation at work, in educational institutions and elsewhere, trafficking and forced prostitution.

c) Physical, sexual and psychological violence perpetrated or condoned by the State and institutions, wherever it occurs.

The broad scope of the definition presented by Cosc is useful as it exhibits clearly the ubiquity of GBV behaviours, which can occur in the home, the workplace, the school, the community and in society at large. With regards to the victims of GBV in Ireland, the Second National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual & Gender-based Violence in Ireland (2016) emphasises that women are the primary sufferers of GBV in Ireland, a fact which is borne out within the statistics collated around GBV in Ireland over recent years. However, it is also important to recognise the growing acknowledgement of acts of gender-based and domestic violence being perpetrated against members of the LGBTQIA community and men in order to gain a more complete picture of the issue of GBV, as it exists within Irish society.

The Femicide Report (2017) contains many of the most relevant and recent statistics concerning the prevalence of gender related killings in Ireland, and is attributable to the Women's Aid organisation in Ireland. This most recent report indicates that 216 women have been killed in the Republic of Ireland since 1996, with a further 16 children dying alongside their mothers. In 2017 alone, eight women were killed in the Republic of Ireland and six out of eight of these deaths were found to have occurred within these women's own homes. These findings are striking and underline a worrying trend within the death of women in Ireland, whereby the scene of these deaths is regularly found to be the woman's own home. In all, since 1996, of the 216 female killings in the Republic of Ireland, 137 of these women (63%) were killed on their own property. The identity of the killers in these cases further highlights the urgency of the need to address the issue of GBV in Ireland as, in 88% of these cases, the killer is a person who is known to the victim (Partner or Ex-partner: 56%, Male relative: 12%, Known male: 20%). These findings are particularly troubling as they indicate just how pervasive a threat the issue of GBV is upon women's lives, as women's security cannot be assured even in the supposed safety of their own abode.

Whilst these figures represent the gravest outcomes of GBV against women within Ireland, they do not encapsulate the magnitude of the problem which exists within the country with regards to incidents of GBV. A Europe-wide survey investigating the prevalence of violence against women (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2014) goes some way to highlighting the widespread nature of the issue, as it revealed that 14% of Irish women had been subjected to physical violence by a partner, 6% of Irish women had experienced sexual violence by a current/former partner and 31% of Irish women had been the victims of psychological violence by a partner. In addition, Ireland emerged with the second highest rate of women avoiding situations or places for fear of being assaulted of all EU countries surveyed. Women's Aid Direct Services received 16,946 disclosures of domestic violence during 2016 including 3,502 instances of physical abuse, 695 instances of sexual abuse and 316 rape disclosures, while the Dublin Rape Crisis Centre noted that 76% of those calling their phone line service were female callers (Dublin Rape Crisis Centre, 2015). A study of students' experiences of violence, harassment and sexual misconduct within the University environment (Cosc & USI, 2013) provides further evidence of the prominence of the issue of GBV and discrimination across a range of areas in society as 30% of female and Other respondents declared that they had felt harassed or intimidated in their

current institution and 12-14% women reported experiencing being groped whilst on the university campus (Student Bar, Student Centre etc.).

From this data, it is evident that the issues of gender-based violence and discrimination are very common within Irish society, yet the true scale of the damage caused by GBV cannot be accurately mapped as the underreporting of incidents of physical and sexual abuse experienced by women is commonplace. Research has indicated that just 21% of incidents of physical and sexual violence against women by a partner were found to have been reported to the police service in Ireland within one year of the occurrence (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2014). 1 in 4 women also stated that when they did reach out for support, they did not receive the protection they required from further victimisation/harassment. 62% of women who sought assistance were left feeling dissatisfied with the moral support that they received. The police service in Ireland has been deemed to fall well short of the desirable standard with regard to the sensitivity and consistency displayed in dealing with domestic violence complaints, their level of training in dealing adeptly with domestic violence incidents, as well as the promptness in following up criminal investigations of complaints (Safe Ireland, 2018). The findings from this body of research indicate that women are being failed on two counts- in the process of initial prevention of incidents of GBV, but also in the response offered in the aftermath and follow-up of these incidents.

The impact of incidents of GBV is seismic across a multitude of facets of a GBV victim's life, as it can yield adverse effects upon the individual's physical and mental health, living situation, earning capacity and professional progression. GBV and, more specifically, domestic violence are inextricably tied to poverty and can make it virtually impossible for one to emerge out of impoverished circumstances (Safe Ireland, 2017). GBV can leave women and children without a secure and tranquil environment in which to live and lies silently at the root of the issue of female homelessness in Ireland. According to local authority practice, women who flee their home due to the violent behaviour of a cohabitant are not deemed as being homeless but rather out of home as they have a home to return to, albeit a turbulent, caustic home. This lack of "homeless" status leads to them being overlooked and forgotten within the current emergency housing initiatives, thus exacerbating the difficulty of their situation. In 2016, 1460 women and 2,206 received support and emergency accommodation from refuge services within Ireland,

while a further 3,981 requests from women for emergency accommodation could not be met as the refuge services were at capacity (Safe Ireland, 2016). In 2003, 26% of women who presented as homeless to the Irish Homeless Persons Unit had been rendered homeless due to cases of domestic violence (O'Connor & Wilson, Safe Home, Sonas Housing Association Model of Supported Transitional Housing, 2004). Finally, suffering domestic, sexual and gender-based violence (DSGBV) has also been associated with a range of psychological problems whereby victims are left to cope with feelings of helplessness, vulnerability, worthlessness, anxiety and depression as a result of the abuse (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2014). These issues can impose negatively upon other relationships in the individuals' lives and can also serve to create further obstacles around sufferers' capacity to reach their professional or academic potential and hamper their progression into leadership roles at work (Safe Ireland, 2017).

As outlined earlier, an increasing awareness has also been generated around the pervasiveness of DSGBV in the LGBTQIA community. In 2013, 88 LGB survivors (4% of all users) (transgender individuals were not included within the statistical analysis due to numbers being too low to safely do so) were engaging with counselling services within Rape Crisis Centres across Ireland. LGB survivors also disclosed increased incidences of multiple cases of sexual violence being perpetrated against them than heterosexual survivors. Rates of rape among GB men were also seen to be almost double those among heterosexual males (63% compared to 34%) (Rape Crisis Network Ireland, 2016).

The wide reaching and destructive impact of GBV within an Irish context has been laid bare from the research carried out in the field and the work of relief services such as Women's Aid, the Rape Crisis Network and Safe Ireland. In response to the obvious need for positive change towards its prevention and the provision of better protection for victims of GBV, the Irish Government has taken steps to combat the issue of GBV within Irish society through implementation of informational and policy initiatives around GBV, the launch of targeted awareness campaigns relating to GBV and the establishment curricular requirements around personal health and safety education amongst children.

National Policies on Violence Prevention

The primary Government initiative geared towards tackling the issue of gender-based violence and violence more generally within Ireland can be seen in the Second National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (2016-2021), which has been produced by the Department of Justice and Equality in conjunction with Cosc (The National Office for the Prevention of Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence). This strategy follows on from the first strategy which was commenced in 2010 which devised a five year plan to coordinate "whole-of-government" action towards combating the prevalence and non-reporting of incidences of DSGBV. The initial strategy adopted four high level goals based around the promotion of a culture of acknowledgement and understanding of DSGBV, to deliver appropriate services to those affected, to ensure increased effectiveness of policy and service planning and to implement the strategy effectively and efficiently. The initial strategy did yield some positive change and success in terms of victims' experiences of state services, policy making in critical organisations (the Health Service Executive (HSE) developed a policy document on DSGBV) and increasing awareness of the issues of domestic and gender-based violence among broader society. However, despite these markers of progress, further work was required to ensure that the issue of DSGBV was addressed with the appropriate level of responsiveness and sensitivity that the issue demands. Thus, the Second National Strategy was developed in order to build upon the progress across the duration of the First National Strategy.

The Second National Strategy outlines three core aims which the strategy action plan sought to satisfy across its lifespan. The first aim centres upon the desire to alter societal attitudes relating to domestic and gender-based violence, with a view to supporting a reduction in violence incidents of this nature. This involved the creation of a national awareness campaign entitled *What Would You Do?*, which revolved around the mobilisation of bystanders in incidents of domestic and gender-based violence. It posed a question of bystander with regards to how they would respond if they were a witness to a violent incident of this nature. The campaign was rolled out on national television and radio, and also via digital, social and outdoor advertising, and was accompanied by a campaign website and social media presence. Coyne research (as cited in the Action Plan for the Second National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-

Based Violence) initiated an exploratory research project in order to determine the initial impact of the *What Would You Do?* Campaign which revealed that 65% of those polled believed that the campaign would encourage witnesses to take action and 54% believed it would encourage those who had experienced domestic abuse to take action. 58% deemed the campaign content to be realistic, while 46% believed it promoted awareness of key points of contact if one witnessed/experienced domestic violence. Overall, 71% of those canvassed believed that the overall campaign could be deemed effective. This first aim also involves the development of age and diversity appropriate awareness and education programmes relating to DSGBV for use within at primary, second and third level education.

The next aim of the strategy involves the improvement in the availability and provision of support services to those who have been afflicted by DSGBV. This aim involves the up-skilling of members of the police force in terms of their ability to deal with issues of domestic and gender-based violence, as well as increasing the adeptness/capacity of the health and housing sectors with respect to meeting the needs of the GBV victims.

Finally, the strategy places an emphasis upon the need to hold perpetrators of acts of domestic or gender-based violence to account, as one of victims' primary needs in the aftermath of a DSGBV based crime has been identified as their need to have their sense of justice restored insofar as is possible. This aim is to be worked towards via the re-examination of both the criminal justice system and civil justice systems, as these are the channels through which perpetrators of DSGBV are made accountable for their crimes. In addition, the need to work with and treat sex offenders is outlined as it is work of this nature that best serves the long-term needs of the victim, perpetrator and society at large.

Though this strategy is highly detailed and outlines the route forward in terms of policy making and information provision in the area of GBV for society as a whole, the strategies contain only cursory references to how the issue of violence, and more specifically, GBV will be addressed and discussed with the young people of Ireland. The Children First Act (2015) and subsequent Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2017) set about outlining the national policy around ensuring the safety of children within Ireland. The Children First Act (2015) intends to promote awareness of child abuse and neglect, impose the obligation for mandatory reporting by key professionals, and

enhance child safeguarding practices in organisations which provide services to children and young people (early years services, schools, hospitals etc.). Such organisations are also required to conduct risk assessments to determine whether a child or young person could be harmed whilst in receipt of their service and must appoint a relevant person to be the contact point in respect of the organisation's Child Safeguarding Statement. The accompanying National Guidance document seeks to enhance the understanding and recognition of child abuse and outline the steps one should take around reporting incidents of child abuse should they be confronted with the issue. Within the document, gender and sexuality are explicitly outlined as factors which may render a child as being at greater risk of abuse, which is an important recognition of the issue of GBV within Irish society. This guidance document was produced by the Child and Family Agency (Tusla), which was established by the Irish Government in January 2014 with a view to enhancing wellbeing and improving outcomes for children via early intervention as well as the provision of family support and child protection services. Tusla has also been tasked with the responsibility of producing a range of services pertaining to DSGBV. Since its inception, Tusla has published a range of literature for both parents and children concerning how to cope with domestic abuse, bullying and parental separation. These resources provide valuable assistance to young people in relation to coping with their feelings around these issues, and also how to keep safe and respond to situations of this nature should they arise.

Another positive step taken towards the reduction of the levels of violence and harassment which the young people of Ireland are subjected to can be seen in the Irish Government's publishing of an Action Plan on Bullying (Anti-Bullying Working Group, 2013), which stipulated that all 4,000 primary and post-primary schools in Ireland were required to formally devise and implement anti-bullying policy which is in full compliance with the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (Department of Education & Skills, 2013). These procedures outline a clear definition of what constitutes bullying in a school context (including cyberbullying and identity based bullying), whilst also detailing the key aspects of best practice for the prevention and combating of bullying as the following: a) the creation of a positive school culture, b) effective leadership, c) a whole school approach, d) a clear and shared understanding of what constitutes bullying and the effects it can have, e) available supports for staff, f) effective supervision of students, g) consistent recording, investigation and follow-up of bullying behaviour and h) on-going evaluation of the effectiveness of anti-bullying policy. The

procedures demand that, in line with equality legislation of the country, schools must take the all implementable steps to ensure that pupils/staff do not sexually harass other pupils/staff members, and do not harass other pupils/staff members on the basis of any of the nine grounds for harassment including gender and sexual orientation. Again, the inclusion gender and sexual harassment within the parameters under which one can be harassed or discriminated represents a vital step towards tackling the issue of gender based violence within not just the school setting but also society at large. Tackling the issue at a young age is critical in altering the process of cultural perception of DSGBV and this zero tolerance policy in Irish schools is conducive to facilitating this desired attitudinal shift among the young people of Ireland.

Availability of Prevention Programmes/Good Practices in Ireland

Within Ireland, a number of highly positive practices around the collection and reporting of data pertaining to incidences of DSGBV have been created and initiated. The online work of the Rape Crisis Network Ireland (RCNI) has been recognised as an example of European-wide good practice in the area of combating gender-based violence by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE). The RCNI provided a secure online database which enabled authorised non-statutory sexual violence services within the country to compile anonymised data on the specific user requirements and use of services by individual service users. The collection and storage of this data has facilitated the generation of a broad range of publications detailing the extent of the use of sexual violence support services at both a local and national level, as well as the characteristics and circumstances of service users in relation to sexual violence. The system has proved vital to understanding the true extent of the issue of sexual violence as close to two thirds of the data contained within the system pertains to cases of sexual violence which have not been formally reported. Furthermore, while services from which the database is sourced work only with individuals older than 14 years, the incidents of sexual violence which they approach the service with may have happened at any age, thus the database provides rich data on sexual violence across the lifespan.

Another highly commendable practice to be found within an Irish context can be seen through the continued production of the Femicide Watch Report, which has been compiled by Women's Aid, a national organisation which aims to keep women and children safe from domestic

violence, since 1996 and has continued for the intervening 22 year period. Similar to the Finnish Homicide Monitor which also received commendation from the EIGE, the Femicide Report provides detailed information regarding the age profiles of women and perpetrators, method of killing, location of killing, relationship context with perpetrators, regional statistics for incidences of femicide, as well as the impact of femicide on children. The Irish Femicide Report could adopt further lessons for learning from the Finnish model, which incorporates considerably greater detail into the reporting of femicides including information relating to the motives of the individual crimes, the warning signs present prior to the crime being perpetrated and the prior criminal career of the perpetrator. This added depth assists in further contextualising the crimes and also highlights trends and warning signs which preceded the crimes, information which could make a significant positive contribution to the prevention of femicides within Ireland. The capacity to further extend the scope of this report is, however, hampered by the limited funding for the Women's Aid organisation.

The aforementioned issue of restricted funding is widespread among support services for DSGBV sufferers in Ireland, with many services and research endeavours in the field being hamstrung by a marked lack of funding. Government funding for the RCNI has been completely removed and Women's Aid experienced cuts in funding of 20% for 2015 despite the demand for their services reaching higher levels than ever. The Government have also shown a continued reticence to engage in an extensive update to State research upon sexual abuse and violence despite the obsolescent nature of the most recent nationwide report (Sexual Abuse and Violence in Ireland (SAVI), 2002). While the Government finally committed to engaging in the process of updating the SAVI report at the end of 2017, this prolonged failure to maintain a State led research initiative around the topic of DSGBV coupled with routine cuts to agencies which support victims of such crimes points to a lack of sensitivity to the issues of DSGBV within the country and represents a clear shortcoming in the national response to the issue.

Another component of cultivating a national culture which is sensitive to the issue of DSGBV involves the provision of adequate education and teaching in this area within schools nationwide. In Ireland, the primary source of learning for children in primary school is the Stay Safe programme, which exists as a mandatory teaching requirement within all primary schools throughout the country. The Stay Safe Programme is a personal safety skills programme which

seeks to boost children's self-protective capacities via participative lessons concerning safe and unsafe scenarios, bullying, inappropriate behaviours and touching, secrets, and stranger danger. Through partaking in these lessons, children become more equipped to recognise and resist abusive behaviours, and also possess the awareness and capacity to consult a trusted adult regarding any scenario which they deem to be upsetting, threatening or abusive. The Stay Safe programme was evaluated in a recent study examining the quality of school-based child abuse prevention programmes (Brassard & Fiorvanti, 2015) and received an overwhelmingly positive assessment from the evaluators. Stay Safe met many of the key factors outlined for by the authors as examples of good practice in the development of a child abuse prevention programme. The programme emphasises the crucial element that staff training plays in the implementation of an abuse programme and stresses the importance of training all staff within the school, not simply those who will be implementing the materials. This fosters a comprehension and acknowledgment of the issue of abuse within society amongst every member of the school staff, and sets about establishing a climate of prevention of abuse prior to its occurrence, and instant intervention in the case of reported abuse cases. The programme focuses upon skill development rather than solely enhancing the participants' knowledge around abuse and bullying. Participation in the programme was shown to yield significant improvements in children's safety knowledge and skills at three month follow-up when compared with a wait list control (MacIntyre & Carr, 1999). The programme is diverse in nature and examines many types of abuse and bullying through the utilisation of a varied set of activities and techniques (role playing, discussion, homework, repetition and narratives) which allow for the students to completely immerse themselves in the material. Familial participation is heavily encouraged within the programme, as parents are informed from the outset as to what is entailed in the programme and a parents' meeting is also included within Stay Safe framework. The participation of a child/student in the Stay Safe programme was seen to have ameliorative effects upon the level of knowledge and the nature of attitudes displayed by both parents of the child in question (MacIntyre & Carr, 1999), which in itself is testament to the value of including familial involvement in the education process. The programme also benefits from the schedule through which it is implements (brief 20-30 minute lessons on a regular basis). The sole major criticism of the programme offered within the evaluation emerged from the manner in which the materials were taught to younger grades, whereby Brassard and Fiorvanti believed that lessons were overly

simplistic and positive, serving little purpose other than to lay foundations for subsequent protective skill-building upon advancing to a more senior grade. All in all, the Stay Safe programme was deemed to be an abuse prevention framework of considerable utility which indicates that the Irish education system is going some way to informing young people around the issues of DSGBV, bullying and violence more generally.

In addition to the Stay Safe programme, an online initiative entitled Webwise has been established to address some of the more modern DSGBV issues which have developed in the online sphere as the increased digitisation of modern society has unfolded. This suite of online materials provides informational primary and secondary level teaching resources which encompass a variety of topics such as cyberbullying, image sharing and responsible social media use. This initiative signals a vital advancement in Irish educational provision as it familiarises teaching staff with the workings of a wide range of mobile applications (Snapchat, Kik, Yubo etc.) and serves to elevate levels of digital literacy and awareness among education staff .This enhanced knowledge empowers staff and renders them better equipped to broach sensitive digital-related topics such as safe online communication, the prevention and response to the sharing of explicit self-generated images of minors and cyberbullying. Evidently, the extensive primary provisions in the area of personal health and safety education coupled with the availability of Webwise resources to aid with the promotion of safe online behaviour do go some way towards providing young people with the requisite faculties to respond safely to potential threats in their environments. However, despite these examples of good practice within the Irish educational system, the secondary school provisions in Ireland require further examination to determine the extent of their efficacy in further building upon knowledge and skills exhibited by young people in relation to their own personal safety.

Teaching in the area of personal health and safety at secondary level is incorporated into the broad brackets of Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) at junior cycle and Relationships and Sexual Education (RSE) at senior cycle. A review examining the effectiveness of SPHE and RSE teaching at post-primary level (Department of Education and Skill, 2013) highlighted some clear areas for improvements within both curricula. The majority of the students were seen to display a willingness to partake in SPHE and the lessons themselves were shown to be successful in establishing an increased knowledge regarding the subjects being

discussed. However, the lessons were less successful in facilitating the acquisition and enhancement of important skills relating to the subject matter. Issues were also identified in relation to the assessment of learning outcomes within SPHE. 81% of schools surveyed indicated that there were no formally agreed assessment procedures for SPHE within their organisation, and 56% of schools polled believed that the weaknesses outweighed the strengths of their SPHE assessment procedures. In addition, though 96% of schools offered RSE to their senior cycle students, just 56% had a formal school policy on RSE in place, suggesting the presence of considerable variation in the quality of tuition offered in this area. The content within the current RSE curriculum has also been noted to be vastly outdated due to a failure to engage in any formal updating of the curriculum since its inception in the 1990s. This glaring oversight means that RSE content fails to cover vital legislative advancements of particular relevance to adolescents within Ireland, such as the introduction of the availability of emergency contraception without prescription in 2011. Plans are now being put in motion to completely refresh the RSE curriculum by the Minister for Education in Ireland. This overhaul will involve a thorough evaluation on the needs of professional development for teachers in this area as well as the extent of parental involvement included within the teaching process. This process of revamping the curriculum should offer the opportunity to look beyond the Irish context and incorporate instances of global good practice in the fields of personal health, safety and sexuality education into a modernised and evidence-based curriculum containing activities and strategies with proven prior efficacy.

One such example of international good practice can be seen in the form of a national multimedia campaign which was supplemented by additional school projects which was rolled out in Croatia entitled “Silence is not golden”. The venture pertained to the multitude of types of DSGBV (family violence, violence in relationships and human trafficking) and the manner in which they are linked. Though there was an aware raising component to the issues, the campaign sought to achieve more than increased acknowledgement of the issues among the target group and thus, incorporated training seminars to 64 second level teachers into its offering. Following these seminars, the trained group of teachers were tasked with leading creative endeavours with 1,200 pupils, ranging from the production of plays and films to the creation of comics and radio shows, the best of which were acknowledged at an awards ceremony. The outcomes of the campaign were noteworthy, as it was seen to prompt a level of civil engagement which is rarely

observed amongst pupils. 31% of involved pupils expressed a desire to join an organisation offering aid and support to victims of GBV. An average rise in self-reported knowledge and skills from 3.08 to 4.01 was also noted in students across the duration of the project. This innovative initiative offers a more immersive and engaging manner in which to broach the topic of DSGBV and the impressive results speak for the efficacy of the campaign and, particularly, its capacity to mobilise young males in the fight against DSGBV. A similar initiative of this nature in an Irish context has the potential to promote similar knowledge and skill development amongst the Irish student body, and should certainly be given consideration during the process of restructuring the Irish second level RSE curriculum.

It is also clear from the outlined statistics garnered from the Irish public that a pressing need exists for the implementation of further initiatives with students around gender norms, dating violence and sexual abuse before gender stereotypes become deeply seated in young adults thought patterns. The WHO (2009) indicated that the Safe Dates Programme from the USA and the Youth Relationship Project in Canada have generated some promising results in this area. Thus, it may be advisable for an adapted version, which is tailored to the specific needs of the Irish youth audience, to be devised and implemented in school settings throughout the country.

Gender Based Violence in the Media

The current project possesses considerable pertinence within the current news cycle in Ireland, as one of the most high-profile court cases in the history of the Northern Irish judicial system pertaining to an alleged perpetration of GBV has recently concluded. The case in question referred to the alleged rape of a young woman by two members of the Ulster rugby team, which was ultimately resolved with the acquittal of both men. Whilst excessive focus upon the intricacies of the trial may not be appropriate in the immediate aftermath of the case, the manner in which the trial has unfolded under the media spotlight, and the societal kickback to the verdict does mean that the case is of paramount importance for a research project of this nature.

The case came to the public attention due to the high profile nature of the defendants, both of whom had represented the Irish rugby team at senior international level. Contrary to regulations in the Republic of Ireland which offers anonymity to both complainants and defendants in rape

trials, the Northern Irish judicial system does not offer anonymity to defendants in such cases. Thus, as the news that two international rugby players stood accused of rape filtered into media consciousness, the case became headline news for both the front and back pages of the newspapers across the island of Ireland for its entire duration and beyond. The period following the acquittal has been awash with media commentaries pertaining to the myriad of issues raised by the outcome of the trial including educational provisions around sexual consent and sexual education, misogyny and toxic masculinity within Irish society, and the adequate protection of individuals in rape trials.

Measures are being taken to introduce sexual consent as a key learning outcome within sexual education, and the Minister for Education within Ireland has suggested that the entire curriculum for sexual education within the country will be re-examined and altered to ensure it meets the needs of the young people of Ireland. This would signal a progressive response to the case in question, as much of the detail within the case appeared to revolve around perceptions of consent. Further education relating to the issue of consent is a clear nationwide requirement to increase clarity around the issue of sexual consent and therefore help to ensure that fewer incidences of this nature arise in the future.

A further consequence of the trial in question can be witnessed in the emergence of the #IBelieveHer movement following the verdict. Substantial numbers of Irish people engaged in several nationwide protest marches to exhibit their solidarity with the complainant following the delivery in this high profile case. The movement developed out of a sense of frustration relating to the manner in which the legal system appeared to place the complainant on trial via intense scrutiny of her character throughout the nine weeks of court proceedings. The complainant's name had also appeared on social media sites during the court proceedings, which represented an open breach of her right to anonymity as a complainant. The protesters feel that the intensely negative experiences of the complainant would act as a deterrent for potential victims in filing similar complaints and have demanded that increased protection and sensitivity be extended to complainants in future cases related to sexual and gender-based violence.

Though there are many signs that this case has energized campaigners towards lobbying for improvements in the manner in which reports of sexual violence and rape are dealt with within the Irish legal system, the wide-scale impact of the verdict of this case has yet to unfold. This can

only truly be judged by extent to which the promises made in the aftermath of the verdict are followed through upon and efficiently implemented.

Another similarly high profile case pertaining to the issue of GBV in Ireland can be seen in the form of a familicide case which occurred at a family home in Co. Cavan, Ireland in August, 2016. The case involved a husband, who killed his wife and three sons using a kitchen knife before taking his own life in the hallway of his home. The family in question were well known to the broader community as both parents held positions in schools within the vicinity, with the mother of the family teaching in a local primary school and the father occupying the role of vice-principal in a nearby secondary school. The perpetrator was perceived as a "pillar of the community" and the media reported extensively on the shock the incident had caused amongst the residents of the town. Reports focussed upon the perception of contentment and happiness which had been present around the family unit amongst neighbours and friends, and indicated that the incident had come out of the blue, highlighting how the family had been planning an upcoming holiday to Italy.

However, in the aftermath of the murders, the husband's mental health came under the microscope, with the case inquiry drawing attention to his "troubled" mind and how he had become anxious about issues regarding his physical health to the point where these anxieties were labelled as "severe preoccupations" by a clinical psychiatrist in a report to the coroner. The perpetrator was described as fearful that the mask of perfection which his family bore was on the verge of slipping away and the sense of shame that would coincide with this fall from grace.

The case drew attention to the dearth of research which was being conducted into the issue of familicide in an Irish context. It was noted that incidences such as this case would continue to be completely unanticipated and shocking until this research oversight was addressed as, at present, an evidence base which could be utilised to assist in pre-empting or predicting cases of this nature does not exist within the country. The case also further elucidated the insidious nature of DSGBV. The victim's family sought to generate something positive from the atrocity by using the case as a means to further highlight the controlling and secretive nature of DSGBV. The victim's family also established a shelter, as a memorial to the victims of the case, to provide aid to those in similar familial situations to the victims of this familicide.

Conclusions

Many of the stereotypes which exist in Ireland in relation to DSGBV become distinctly apparent upon inspection of the manner in which high profile incidences of DSGBV are addressed, reported and reacted to within Irish society. The Femicide Report (Women's Aid, 2017) provided a series of recommendations with a view to improving the manner in which DSGBV incidents are reported in the media within Ireland. The research encouraged media outlets to avoid tunnel vision reporting where possible when detailing these incidents. Among the advice offered by the group concerning media reporting was the recommendation that the deceased victims of DSGBV be discussed in terms of their lives, achievements and the sense of loss that their death would evoke, rather than simply being painted in the role of victim. Women's Aid also emphasised the need to avoid stereotypes in reporting DSGBV, wherein perpetrators are often offered excessive sympathy and the incidents are routinely described as being a "once off". The portrayal of such incidents in this light suggests that they are entirely unpredictable and spontaneous, which minimises the role and responsibility of both perpetrators, as well as the agency of the justice system and policy makers in addressing the issue of DSGBV. Instead, it is encouraged that media outlets recognises serious incidents of DGBV resulting in grievous bodily harm as being part of a broader issue concerning gender-based discrimination and violence.

Perhaps the most pervasive stereotypes and attitudes which persist within the collective Irish psyche in relation to DSGBV pertain to the victim blaming culture which still remains in cases within the common response to cases of DSGBV. As seen in the high profile alleged rape trial referenced above, the onus is often placed upon the victims to prove themselves to be reliable complainants and worthy of being believed. The justice process often involves the victim becoming the subject of a rigid character investigation similar to that of anyone who stands accused of perpetrating a crime. Victims are also often perceived as having their own role within incidences of DSGBV in Ireland. A European wide attitudinal survey on the topics of DSGBV revealed some 18% of Irish respondents indicated that they believed incidences of violence against women were often elicited by the victims themselves (European Commission, 2016). 11% of Irish respondents stated their belief that the victim being intoxicated or under the influence of drugs provided justification for sexual intercourse without consent, with 9% of those surveyed stating that the victim being dressed provocatively provided similar justification

(European Commission, 2016). The survey also underlined the considerable barrier of doubt which sufferers have to overcome in reporting incidences of DSGBV. 23% of Irish respondents were recorded as believing that women regularly fabricated or exaggerated claims of abuse, violence and sexual assault. This scepticism is mirrored in research conducted with a student sample (Cosc & USI, 2013), wherein sufferers of harassment, violence and sexual assault were commonly seen to allow incidents of DSGBV to go unreported due to a perceived lack of gravity around such incidents, feelings that they would receive blame for the incident, as well as concerns that they would not be believed if they did put their claims forward. The aim of holding perpetrators to account as expressed in the Second National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence in Ireland is pertinent for precisely these reasons. Victims' faith in the justice system and society as a whole to provide them with the desired protection in the aftermath of cases of DSGBV has been eroded over time and requires replenishment via dedicated action being instigated towards ensuring the focus is placed upon perpetrators rather than victims in cases of DSGBV.

In order to tackle the issue of DSGBV, it is important to identify the existence of systems in a nation which perpetuate a culture of gender discrimination and oppression. Within Irish society, some longstanding institutional factors which continue to propagate a sense of disparity between genders within Irish society remain. The continued presence of statements within the Irish Constitution (Article 41.2) which outline that women should give priority to domestic duties over all other work outside of the home has the effect of continually stunting women's professional progress and allows for the persistence of the subtle and unspoken gender discrimination which remains within Irish workplaces and, more broadly within Irish society.

In addition to this, Ireland exhibits a greater level of gender segregated schooling than its European counterparts (with one third of secondary schools in Ireland being single sex schools). This practice has been linked to increases in gender stereotyping and, in turn, the potential legitimisation of gender discrimination, as boys in single sex schools have been shown to be strongly reticent to learning about the concept of sexism (Halpern et al., 2011; National Education Union & UK Feminista, 2017). Further research is required on the impact of this level of gender segregated schooling and the role this may play in accentuating harmful discriminatory attitudes concerning gender, which have the potential to manifest in incidences of DSGBV.

In all, it is clear that gaps in knowledge and understanding around the issue of DSGBV continue to exist within Irish society and many of these blind spots are unacknowledged as individuals remain unaware of the pervasiveness of unconscious biases which may be present within their own outlook. It may be beneficial to incorporate mandatory training around the issue of hidden or unconscious biases and gender diversity to teachers to enable them to better comprehend these matters and thus, pass on this learning to the young people under their tutelage. This training could be done in cooperation with relevant activist groups such as the Shout Out in Ireland, who are involved in running a range of workshops which teachers, educators and students about the LGBTQIA community and the issues they face. Similar input from representatives of groups with expertise in the DSGBV sector (RCNI, Women's Aid, Safe Ireland etc.) into the teaching and learning process via practical, skills-based workshops within schools could boost awareness and understanding of crucial the issue of DSGBV and impact positively on the emerging attitudes and actions of the youth in Irish society. This requirement for training in the area of DSGBV has been flagged by the National Women's Council in Ireland (O'Connor, 2016), who believe it is imperative that young people are extensively informed about abusive relationships in order to remove the stigma which persists around this issue. The need for young people to have healthy values around respect within close relationships instilled in them was emphasised. This can be achieved through the teaching of positive conflict resolution, self-regulation and communication skills in the context of close interpersonal relationships. The National Women's Council also asserted the requirement to increase teacher knowledge and sensitivity around the signs that a student or child is being abused or is living in an abusive environment. Trauma sensitivity training of this nature could offer another viable means to enhance teacher recognition of the potential impact of domestic violence and abuse on their students across numerous aspects of their behaviour (e.g. loss of appetite or excessive tiredness, concentration and attention problems, and emotional regulation issues). Such training would supply teachers with a range of evidence-based trauma-sensitive methods, which may be efficacious in providing valuable classroom support to students who have been, or continue to be impacted upon by DSGBV. The guidance provided by the National Women's Council help to emphasise the critical training requirements which Irish teachers require with regard to developing their knowledge and competencies in the area of DSGBV and providing an important reference point in devising how best to improve the provision of education around DSGBV to young people in Ireland.

References

Brassard, M. R., & Fiorvanti, C. M. (2015) School-based child abuse prevention programs. *Psychology in the Schools, 1*, 40-60.

Cosc (2017). *What is gender-based violence?* Retrieved from http://www.cosc.ie/en/COSC/Pages/WP08000147

Cosc, Union of Students in Ireland, and Department of Justice and Equality (2013). *"Say something": A study of students' experiences of harassment, stalking, violence and sexual assault.* Dublin: Union of Students in Ireland.

Cosc & Department of Justice and Equality (2016). *Second national strategy on domestic, sexual and gender-based violence 2016-2021*. Dublin: Department of Justice and Equality.

Cosc & Department of Justice and Equality (2017). Third progress report on the a*ction plan for the second national strategy on domestic, sexual and gender-based violence.* Dublin: Department of Justice and Equality.

Department of Children and Youth Affairs (2017). *Children First: National guidance for the protection and welfare of children*. Dublin: Government Publications.

Department of Education and Skills (2013). *Anti-bullying procedures for primary and post-primary schools.* Dublin: Government Publications. Retrieved from https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/Anti-Bullying-Procedures-for-Primary-and-Post-Primary-Schools.pdf

Department of Education and Skills (2013). *Looking at Social, Personal and Health Education: Teaching and learning in post-primary schools*. Dublin: Department of Education and Skills.

European Commission (2016). *Special Eurobarometer report 449: Gender-based violence*. Cologne: GESIS Data Archive.

European Institute for Gender Equality. *Good practices combating gender-based violence.* Retrieved from http://eige.europa.eu/gender-based-violence/good-practices on April 5th, 2018.

European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA). (2014). *Violence against women: An EU wide survey*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

Government of Ireland (2015). *Children First Act*. Dublin: Government Publications.

Halpern, D. F., Eliot, L., Bigler, R. S., Fabes, R. A., Hanish, L. D., Hyde, J., Liben, L. S., & Martin, C. L. (2011). The pseudoscience of single-sex schooling. *Science, 333*(6050), 1706-1707.

MacIntyre, D., & Carr, A. (1999). Evaluation of the effectiveness of the stay safe primary prevention programme for child sexual abuse. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 23*(12), 1307-1325.

McGee, H., Garavan, R., de Barra, M., Byrne, J., & Conroy, R. (2002). *The SAVI report: Sexual abuse and violence in Ireland*. Dublin: The Liffey Press.

National Education Union & UK Feminsta (2017). *"It's just everywhere": A study on sexism in schools – and how we tackle it.* London: National Education Union.

O'Connor, M. & Wilson, N. (2004). Safe Home: Sonas Housing Association model of supported transitional housing.

O'Connor, O. (2016). *National Women's Council forum for combating violence against women.* Presentation, Dublin.

Rape Crisis Network Ireland (2016). *Finding a safe place: LGBT survivors of sexual violence and disclosure in Rape Crisis Centres.* Dublin: Rape Crisis Network Ireland.

Safe Ireland (2016). *National domestic violence service statistics 2016.* Westmeath: Safe Ireland.

Safe Ireland (2017). *Changing culture and transforming the response to gender based violence in Ireland: Submission to the National Women's Strategy 2017-2020*. Westmeath: Safe Ireland.

Safe Ireland (2018). *Submission to the Commission on the Future of Policing in Ireland.* Westmeath: Safe Ireland.

Stay Safe. *What is Stay Safe?* Retrieved from http://www.staysafe.ie/index.htm on April 3rd, 2018.

Women's Aid (2017). *Femicide Watch 2017 Republic of Ireland.* Dublin: Women's Aid.

World Health Organisation. (2009). *Promoting gender equality to prevent violence against women.* Available at: http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/gender.pdf