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Research Evaluation of The Manuela Programme Sexual Violence Prevention Programme for Secondary School Students

Final Report, May 2020

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List of Acronyms

ACHA	American College Health Association
ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
CSE	Comprehensive Sexuality Education
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
DSGBV	Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
GLM	Generalised Linear Models
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HSE	Holistic Sexuality Education
IPPF	International Planned Parenthood Federation
IPV	Intimate Partner Violence
ITGS	International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education
LGBTQ	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer
NCCA	National Council on Curriculum and Assessment
PBC	Perceived Behavioural Control
RSE	Relationship and Sexuality Education
SEI	Sexuality Education Initiative
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infection
SPHE	Social Personal and Health Education
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
TNB	Theory of Normative Social Behaviour
TPB	Theory of Planned Behaviour
TRA	Theory of Reasoned Action
TRUST	Talking Relationships, Understanding Sexuality teaching
TY	Transition Year
YMOT	Your Moment of Truth
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.
UNFPA	United Nations Family Planning Agency
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UUK	Universities UK
WHO	World Health Organization

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Executive Summary

This report describes and interprets the findings of the independent research evaluation of the large scale piloting of the Manuela Programme that was rolled out in four regions across Ireland from 2018 to 2020. The research team was led by Dr Pádraig MacNeela and Ms Maureen D'Eath at the School of Psychology, NUI Galway. It was commissioned by the Tusla Child & Family Agency programme on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence following a tendering process. The research was an integral part of the Manuela Project co-funded by the Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme of the European Union. It presents an analysis of the effectiveness, acceptability, and sustainability of the Manuela Programme using a mixed methods quantitative and qualitative research design.

The programme is relevant to a number of important developments in Irish society and educational provision that have come to the fore in recent years. There has been a growing recognition of gender equality and sexuality, coming not simply from positive developments in equality-related legislation and policy making but also from extensive media coverage of high profile trials, increased public awareness of sexual violence and harassment.

The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment review of Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) in primary and post-primary schools involved extensive consultation of students, parents, teachers, and stakeholder organisations. It is set to transform the coverage in RSE of topics such as consent and sexual violence, and to shift the focus to outcomes such as empowerment, self-assertion, peer support, and personal confidence in negotiating relationships and intimacy. Initiatives such as the Manuela Programme therefore have the potential to contribute to an identified gap in provision, although a number of questions arise in relation to resourcing, sustainability, the involvement of teachers, provision of training, and partnerships with statutory agencies and NGOs.

The Manuela Programme

The Manuela Programme is named to honour Ms Manuela Riedo, a 17 year old Swiss student who was raped and murdered in Galway City in October 2007. The programme is the culminating action of the Manuela Riedo Foundation Ireland, which was founded in Galway in 2009 in Manuela's memory. It is an education programme delivered over 12 hours that focuses on attitudes, awareness, critical thinking, and skills relevant to sexual violence prevention and the promotion of active consent among 15 to 17 year olds. It is designed to be delivered in six two-hour group sessions. It is predominantly delivered in traditional school settings, but is also suitable for alternative and other community-based settings.

This report focuses on its delivery in secondary schools within timetabled teaching hours. The manual promotes a delivery style based on empowering, facilitative methods to support young people's understanding of negative and positive aspects of sexual health, and to promote confidence and practical skills in exercising agency over intimacy. The theoretical basis to the programme is derived from the Theory of Reasoned Action (Ajzen, 2014), social norms (Berkowitz, 2002) and scripting theory (Simon & Gagnon,

2002). The content builds on the teaching and education resources developed by Rape Crisis Centre education programmes across Ireland. The programme theory, content, and delivery strategies were consolidated in 2016 through a collaboration of the Manuela Riedo Foundation Ireland, the 16 Rape Crisis Centres, and Rape Crisis Network Ireland, facilitated by Dr Sue Redmond.

Extended Pilot Roll-Out

In 2016, Tusla's Domestic, Sexual, and Gender Based Violence (DSGBV) Programme successfully secured funding to conduct an extended pilot roll-out and evaluation of the Manuela Programme. The overall aim of the Manuela Project was to target students in Transition Year in Irish post primary schools and in some out of school settings to assess the evidence for programme impact and to support capacity in the education sector for this work. The Project partners comprised Tusla and four Rape Crisis Centres. Galway Rape Crisis Centre was a beneficial partner with Dublin, Kerry and Wexford Rape Crisis Centres as associate partners.

Four project workers were recruited on a half-time basis to support the piloting, hosted by the Rape Crisis Centres in Galway, Dublin, Kerry and Wexford. Coordination was provided by the Galway Rape Crisis Centre. The project workers engaged with schools and with alternative education settings to recruit students to participate in the programme. The project manager for the programme was based in Tusla. The programme plan was to involve teachers directly in delivery in order to build capacity within schools, thereby enhancing the sustainability of the programme beyond the pilot phase. Teachers were supported to co-facilitate the Manuela Programme initially to build their skill in independent programme facilitation. This was complemented by facilitator training on the content, facilitation skills, and receiving disclosures. The pilot project commenced in September 2017 and concluded in March 2020. During this time the Manuela Programme was delivered to 2,701 young people in 63 schools and 8 alternative education settings across 10 counties.

The Manuela Programme was advised by a group of key stakeholders drawn from Tusla, HSE, Rape Crisis Centres, Rape Crisis Network Ireland, the Department of Education and Skills, and the Department of Justice and Equality. It also contributed submissions to the Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) review, facilitated by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA).

Research Team and Methodology

The evaluation team was led by Dr Pádraig MacNeela and Ms Maureen D'Eath, and comprised Dr Siobhán O'Higgins, Dr Chris Noone, Dr Lorraine Burke, and Ms Laura Tierney. Ms D'Eath coordinated and led the delivery of the research evaluation strategy. Ethical approval was granted by Tusla Research Ethics Committee. The independent evaluation was supported by a Research Steering Group and further supported by the key stakeholders on the Manuela Project Advisory Group.

The learning outcomes identified in the programme manual were developed into testable research questions to focus the evaluation. The research strategies were used to assess if the programme was effective in reducing negative attitudes that contribute to a culture of perpetrating and tolerating sexual misconduct and

violence, while increasing positive attitudes aligned with a respectful and mutual approach to engaging in active consent for intimacy. The evaluation also sought to assess the acceptability and sustainability of the programme by exploring the programme process and delivery systems. A review of the RSE policy of ten schools, five of which had participated in the Manuela Programme was conducted to provide further context for the evaluation.

The research evaluation used a mixed methods research design comprising a quantitative Pre and Post Programme survey based on standardised measurement tools concerning:

- Sexual consent self-efficacy and attitudes.
- Behavioural intentions for using verbal and passive consent.
- Rape myths.
- Beliefs about heterosexual scripts, and
- Attitudes to pornography and sexting.

A total of 707 of the students who participated in the Manuela Programme were included in the research evaluation (52% male, 47% female, 1% non-binary gender identification; over 90% aged 15-16 years). These students were recruited from 40 schools and one alternative education setting. All the students completed the Pre and Post Programme survey, before the first session and at the end of the sixth and final session. A waitlist control design was employed to compare the effects of the intervention, with 626 students taking part in the Manuela Programme between the two surveys and 81 students in a control group which received the Manuela Programme after completion of the Post Programme survey. Qualitative research strategies were used to follow up on the experience of taking part in the programme, and also to explore the views of stakeholders drawn from subject experts and teachers. A total of 134 students took part in one of thirteen participatory focus groups, including one with a Youthreach group. Eleven teachers, one chaplain, and one school principal were interviewed for the evaluation. Interviews and focus groups were held with project workers and members of the Project Advisory Group.

Pre and Post Programme Survey Findings

The analysis of Pre and Post Programme quantitative survey responses revealed significant positive changes that were specific to the Manuela Programme participants. While control group responses did not change over the six week period, there were significant changes in the scores of programme participants on almost all of the measures used. The greatest changes were in consent preparedness (which relates to self-efficacy and peer perceptions regarding consent) and rape myth endorsement, which relate to the enhancement of positive development and reduction in negative beliefs addressed in the programme objectives.

The changes noted in the programme participants are illustrated below and also serve to provide a useful baseline figure on the attitudes, beliefs, and confidence of young people more generally. For example, self-appraisal of self-efficacy in consent began at a relatively low baseline. The figures below demonstrate the

percentage of programme participants who 'strongly agreed' with consent preparedness statements before and after the intervention:

	Female		Male	
	Pre	**Post**	**Pre**	**Post**
I have all skills to deal with sexual consent	14	58	26	57
I am well informed about consent	22	80	24	67

While rising to percentages ranging from 57-80% on these items after the programme, the baseline prior to intervention was only 14-26%, suggesting relatively low confidence in relation to knowledge and skills. Responses to other sections of the questionnaire corroborate this finding, with only 31% of females and 32% of males 'moderately / strongly agreeing' on the Pre Programme survey that they were confident asking for consent from a new partner. This figure rose by 16% for females in the Post Programme survey, but only by 5% for males. Item-level changes on intentions to engage in verbal consent were more notable for female participants than for males, as illustrated in the percentages of participants who 'strongly agreed' with the items below:

	Female		Male	
	Pre	**Post**	**Pre**	**Post**
I would ask my partner if they are interested in engaging in intimacy	24	46	44	49
I would talk about it with my partner	40	53	41	44

There were substantial increases in females' agreement they would engage in these assertive, verbal strategies, but again the Pre Programme percentages were rather low (24-40%). The changes in male responses were less evident. Overall, while there was a small but significant increase in intentions to engage in verbal consent, there was no significant decline in the intention to use passive consent strategies.

Traditional heterosexual scripts help to perpetuate gendered roles in relationships such as male entitlement and inequality. There was a significant decrease in endorsement of these attitudes for programme participants, as illustrated in the percentage of males and females who 'somewhat / strongly agreed' with the items below:

	Female		Male	
	Pre	**Post**	**Pre**	**Post**
It's only natural for guys to make advances on someone who he finds attractive	41	27	44	35
Most guys do not want to be "just friends" with a girl	18	13	32	20

In each case the percentage endorsing these sentiments dropped by between 5-14% after the programme. The smallest reduction can be seen in females' belief about guys not wanting to be just friends, but only 18% agreed with this idea before the intervention. However almost one-third of male students agreed with this

idea before taking part in the programme, and over four in ten agreed with the belief that it is natural for guys to make advances on girls they find attractive.

Consistent changes in responses to the rape myth items were observed for programme participants, particularly in relation to beliefs that girls have done something to invite rape, that guys do not intend to commit rape, and that some acts of rape are not really so. These are illustrated below in the percentage of programme participants who chose 'agree / strongly agree' response options:

	Female		**Male**	
	Pre	**Post**	**Pre**	**Post**
When girls go to parties wearing slutty clothes, they are asking for trouble	15	1	25	13
If a girl initiates kissing or hooking up, she should not be surprised if a guy assume she wants to have sex	17	8	42	22
When guys rape, it is usually because of their strong desire for sex	37	22	50	37
A lot of times, girls who say they were raped agreed to have sex and then regretted it	11	9	41	24

Pre-programme responses to items on rape myths indicate that beliefs clearly tolerant of assault still have a disturbingly high level of acceptance in a relatively large sample of young people, particularly among teenage boys. For instance, over 40% of the male programme participants agreed that guys can rape because of their sex drive, some girls claim rape after regretting having taken part in sex, and that guys can assume a girl wants sex because she took part in other forms of intimacy. Endorsement of these beliefs by males declined by 13-22% after the programme. The percentage of males who endorsed myths fell back to an improved but still unacceptable level. Acceptance of rape myths, in combination with heterosexual scripts, are a foundation for sexual and gender violence. Fewer females agreed with these myths before the programme, but still declined afterwards. Many students continued to be 'neutral' in regard to rape myths, highlighting the continuing and most likely systematic approach needed to counter these false narratives. This may indicate that rape myth beliefs are established by the time of engagement with the programme in Transition Year, and points toward the importance of delivering the programme earlier in secondary school.

The normalisation of pornography was addressed in the Manuela Programme and was reflected in the emergence of more critical perspectives on porn after the intervention. For instance, about half of the Pre Programme participants disagreed with the idea that pornography portrays realistic sex, rising afterwards to over 80% for females and 65% for males. There was less evidence of a change of views on sexting. The percentage of males who disagreed with the idea that sexting is harmless remaining more or less unchanged (12%), while the percentage of females who disagreed with this idea increasing, but only to 29%.

	Female		Male	
	Pre	**Post**	**Pre**	**Post**
Porn portrays realistic sex	57	83	49	65
Sexting is relatively harmless	18	29	12	15

All six sessions of the Manuela Programme were rated moderately or strongly positively by at least 70% of the students, with the "Prevention" (76% of students), "Action and Integration" (74%), and "Consent" (77%) sessions garnering the most positive ratings. In relation to the programme delivery components, participants rated the programme facilitators most positively, with 87% rating them moderately or strongly positively. Lower ratings were given to the use of scenarios in the programme (62%) and the length of the programme sessions (61%).

Ratings of the programme impact suggest that approximately three quarters of the male participants and four fifths of females identified with having experienced several positive outcomes as a result of taking part. For instance, nearly 80% of students said the programme had a significant or very significant impact on their respect for personal boundaries, how healthy relationships differ from unhealthy ones, and their understanding of what is meant by sexual violence.

There were gender differences in ratings of the programme sessions, delivery components, and impact, with males consistently providing less positive feedback. The difference in appraisals of the sessions was relatively small, but was somewhat larger in ratings of some of the delivery components (e.g., a 22% gender difference in the acceptability of scenarios, 15% difference in acceptability of session activities). The gender difference in percentage of students attributing a significant impact to the Manuela Programme was generally 5-10%, depending on the outcome.

Qualitative Findings

Follow up qualitative research with stakeholders and students showed that the programme delivery process was successful in many respects. The findings were nuanced in that students expressed a preference for external subject matter experts to facilitate the programme, whereas there was some evidence that teachers felt their professional peers would be acceptable to students in providing facilitation. While generally supportive of the programme delivery and materials, male students who took part in the programme expressed less positive evaluations of particular components within the programme and were sometimes described in the focus groups and other sources as less engaged in the programme process compared with female students. The following examples from the focus groups with young people illustrate the experiences young people had in taking part in the Manuela Programme:

Awareness of consent and sexual violence	*I think it's good for people to know that you are allowed to change your mind after you initiate sex or just say that you can't say that to me or do that to me. Because a lot of people feel manipulated by their partner. For it actually to be said, you know this is your right, you can do this if you are in a certain situation, that's really important for everyone to know* (SFG10) *Some people might think that they are weak or whatever or some people might think that they were at fault sometimes for what they wear or what they do. And the more you do the programme the more you realise that it's not their fault if they get attacked like even if they are too drunk to do anything when they get attacked or situations like that* (SFG2) *I think, you realise there's consequences to your actions. You know if you are on a night out like and you're just like messing around there or whatever but it's just it's not like, you can really hurt someone by the things you do. I think people need to know that* (SFG10)
Critical thinking and discussion	*Sometimes people, like, raise ideas that you hadn't thought about and that might make you move to the other side* (SFG10) *I liked arguing and sometimes changing my mind about different topics* (SFG1)
Interactive, engaging	*I liked how interactive the classes were. We weren't just sitting there listening the whole time* (SFG5) *It's better than just sitting in the classroom reading a book about it like. If it was done like that, no one would listen to it, it'd be really boring* (SFG11)
Uncovering knowledge	*I learned a lot during the programme, some things I had no knowledge on and I feel well educated on the topic now* (SFG5) *Learning about topics that aren't talked about in school like porn* (SFG12)
External facilitation	*You won't see them around again, so won't be that embarrassed.* *They don't know you and you don't know them* (SFG4) *They don't know you and they can't really judge you* (SFG1) *He knew what he was talking about ... Because you think what he's saying is true* (SFG9)
Concern with standing out	*Well like, you don't want people to think about you in a certain way by standing out on the other side of the room and, you know like, it's more male so it's kinda hard, like walking on eggshells* (Male) (SFG10)

While agreeing on the value of the programme and its utility in the emerging space in Irish education for innovative programmes of this nature, stakeholders expressed a range of views on future sustainability. Some stakeholders took a pragmatic approach, describing challenges in securing on-going financial support, uncertainty in the scope for establishing a sustainable strategy for facilitating the programme, and a need to review the scope and length of the programme. The stakeholders were responsive to the opportunities that present in the Irish secondary school system for a programme of this type, suggesting that, with curriculum revisions and timing to be considered, there is an argument to move the programme forward to the Junior Cycle and identify how it can be an on-going, age appropriate offering extending into the Senior Cycle.

The Manuela Programme is grounded in expertise and sectoral commitment across education, child welfare, and sexual violence, the extensive network that has developed around it, and the evidence that has emerged

for its effectiveness. With these strengths, it can play an important role in the rapidly changing niche for sexual health education in Irish secondary school education. Identifying how the programme can develop in its contribution to the emerging ethos of consent education will be important, given the scope to accommodate both growth-oriented aspects of sexual health along with harm avoidance and preventative dimensions of sexual health.

The remainder of the Executive Summary provides a synthesis of the learning that has taken place through this evaluation, identifying key recommendations that will assist in future decision making and directions for the programme.

Programme Opportunities

There are a number of opportunities that could be engaged in to ensure sustainability of a programme that has a demonstrated evidence base, clear articulation of programme learning, and which has the potential for accommodating developmental changes arising from this evaluation.

The Wellbeing and SPHE curriculum is currently being developed extensively in the Junior Cycle. This suggests an opportunity to adapt the Manuela Programme content and delivery, placing the programme in the Junior Cycle or at least staging the delivery to begin in the Junior Cycle. The Pre Programme questionnaire identified levels of rape myth and heterosexual script endorsement that suggests a need to engage with students at a younger age. The Pre Programme survey findings have value as a baseline survey of young people's attitudes. There are many young people who support untenable and misinformed views on sexual violence and gender roles, as well as those who lack confidence and agency with regard to assertive, active consent.

The NCCA review of the provision of RSE promises a long term structure for initiatives such as the Manuela Programme. The programme is strongly positioned given its credibility in the sector through association with the Rape Crisis Centres, Tusla, and a high level of research evaluation. Clearly articulating the niche of the programme and how it could articulate with other components of a holistic sexual health curriculum will be important to enable this opportunity to be maximised.

The professionalisation of teachers in terms of SPHE teaching is beginning through the provision of specialist training and programmes. therefore, it will be important to see this as an opportunity to set out teacher training in programme facilitation and indeed to link it to a broader level of preparation in sexual health education delivery for teachers.

There is clearly an opportunity to mobilise the teacher resource that exists already in the educational system. Many teachers feel strongly about the need to engage young people on sexual health, including sexual violence and consent. They see resources such as the Manuela Programme as important tools in achieving the goal of better preparing students in the future. Clearer signposting and recognition of supportive roles for teachers will be important to take advantage of this opportunity. This speaks to the need to identify a whole of school approach to supporting sexual health and wellness in schools, to formally acknowledging the role

of teachers who contribute to RSE, and in offering them professional support, training, and advancement associated with this route.

The partnership that has been developed between Tusla and Rape Crisis Centres has been important to the delivery of the Manuela Programme. The complementarity of these groups provides links to national policy and decision making, along with the reach and recognition that Rape Crisis Centres have in local communities. Continuing to develop partnerships between agencies will be an important part of the future development that could take place to ensure the Manuela Programme is a conduit for partnership between statutory agencies, education providers, the voluntary sector, researchers, and policy makers.

Programme Threats

The Manuela Programme pilot project had an ambitious agenda to develop an engaging and informative curriculum, to provide for pilot implementation across four regions, and to develop teachers as an ongoing resource for future delivery. These goals were largely delivered on, but there are several threats to building on these achievements in the next stages of programme development.

Maintaining fidelity to a manualised programme is critical to ensuring quality and minimising risks to participants. Making the programme available for schools to implement independently represents a threat to fidelity. There should therefore be a clear strategy to maintaining fidelity and quality assurance, potentially by shortening or simplifying the programme itself to ensure there are fewer components, and having a strategy to monitor ongoing delivery and outcomes. Teachers could find it challenging to move to a facilitation mode of engaging with students, and therefore require access to training and ongoing support.

It could be said that all the topics covered in the Manuela Programme are highly sensitive. However certain topics have an especially high level of sensitivity. Covering topics such as pornography use and sexual assault could be most difficult for teachers, requiring a high level of skill, with a clear need to identify how best to support delivery of topics that could benefit from external expertise and innovative approaches.

The clear threat to sustainability is accessing resources and the implementation model to be used in the future. This threat could be addressed by developing a model of partnership between programme supporters across different sectors in the community, welfare, education, policy and academic sectors. The Department of Education and Skills traditionally does not have a role in promoting particular programmes. Therefore there is a risk posed to the sustainability of the programme if a clear funding and support strategy is not agreed. Identifying the goals of the Manuela Programme within the framework of the Brighter Futures, Better Outcomes strategy for supporting youth (Department of Children & Youth Affairs, 2018) would promote interagency partnership in establishing a network of support.

The possibility of moving at least part of the Manuela Programme curriculum to the Junior Cycle (with adaptation) is an opportunity. Yet there is an associated threat in moving from a Transition Year delivery model to one based in the Junior Cycle – to potentially compete for space in timetables and carry out the development work required to adapt content and strategies to the Junior Cycle. There is also a high level of

uncertainty in the sector given the review of RSE by the Department of Education and Skills informed by the NCCA. Reviewing the programme delivery model and revising programme materials will be essential steps in ensuring that these threats can be responded to in an effective manner.

Key Recommendations

Recommendations can be suggested in key areas arising from the evaluation findings and implications for programme strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. It is recommended that the key strategies outlined below are supported by a stakeholder advisory process that ensures there is continued development of the key partnerships that have initiated the Manuela Programme, along with input from key agencies and Government departments that can ensure the programme is well articulated with funding and collaboration opportunities.

Content

The programme content is largely supported by the findings of the evaluation, with the recommendation to enhance consent skills programming and practical skills with relation to negotiating situations that pose a risk for sexual violence.

The content should be reviewed and updated where relevant, particularly in light of more recent research evidence and with input from young people to ensure that scenarios, audio-visual materials and activities are current, credible, and refreshed on a regular basis.

Format

The engagement and learning strategies used in the sessions were generally supported. A high level of positive feedback was provided that suggests the programme is distinctive and appreciated by the students. However a review in light of student feedback on certain strategies should be undertaken concurrently with a review of content. Sustainability and acceptability are threatened through the use of a 12 hour format delivered in two-hour sessions. With expert input, the core elements of the content should be reviewed to reduce the overall amount of programming, thereby reducing the number of sessions or hours of delivery. A more modular format could be explored, with core and optional modules that would provide maximum flexibility while mindful of coherent programme learning outcomes.

Delivery Model

The involvement of project workers was a distinct advantage in the model of delivery, and should be continued as a source of expertise and an essential aid to planning, mentoring, and delivery. Nevertheless, this resourcing model involves significant amounts of funding. Clearly the involvement of teaching staff will also be required to scale up the programme. The evaluation did not include examples of teacher-only delivery of the programme, but there are risks in this approach without sufficient training and ongoing support. This was apparent from the students' negative anticipation in relation to a programme delivery system that relies on teachers. It is recommended that the delivery model retains an appropriate level of input from specialists and experts, at least in a mentoring role. A further recommendation is to support teachers to

collaborate between schools as a shared resource to could make teacher-led delivery more feasible, and contribute to a community of practice among teachers.

Delivery Window

The Junior Cycle represents a key opportunity for securing a sustainable future for the Manuela Programme that could better address the entrenched nature of negative rape myths and traditional sexual scripting at an earlier stage. Nevertheless, moving to the Junior Cycle delivery window would require extensive adaptation of the programme over and above the revisions to content and format needed for continued Senior Cycle delivery. Moreover, given that many students are becoming sexually active post-Junior Cert, it would be critical to ensure there is 'top up' and progressive programming in the Senior Cycle. Therefore a staged model of delivery is recommended, whereby adaptation is made for age appropriate materials. Planning for a developmental approach to engaging with adolescents on consent and sexual violence could draw on sexual health promotion as a guiding framework.

Training and Education

The concerns that students voiced, combined with the perception of some teachers that they will not be able to deliver to the same quality as project workers, calls for a considerable development in the training and education that teachers will receive. Traditionally, schools have relied on external delivery of sex education, but more direct involvement will be required if it becomes a mainstream aspect of student experience. Moreover, ongoing top up training and CPD would be required for teachers once they have completed initial training as a facilitator. It is recommended that the training and education programme for teachers is therefore expanded and manualised, with the potential to seek further educational partners and accrediting organisations.

It is further recommended that the whole of school approach is supported by making available an appropriate level of awareness raising education for other staff in schools and in relevant organisations. Consideration should be given to devising an outreach programme to enable parents to support the learning outcomes of the programme. The adoption of a more ecological approach would require additional resourcing, and involve awareness raising among all teachers with principals providing leadership on ensuring the approach is well integrated and sustained.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The pilot programme was relatively well supported by specialised project workers. Even with continued support for equivalent posts in the future, the intense nature of support to date will be difficult to sustain if the goal of greater levels of take up is to be achieved. Therefore, it is important to have a fidelity monitoring system to ensure that the programme delivery continues to be of high and consistent quality. This links with the recommendation of ensuring there is a multi-level training programme. The ongoing evaluation of the Manuela Programme will be essential for continued funding applications and for outcomes assessment. The research survey instrument is too long and complex for routine use. A 'core indicators' adaptation of this instrument is required along with the development of innovative ongoing student feedback strategies.

Moreover, with the recommendation to expand the scope of the programme to address key stakeholders, ongoing evaluation of any novel strategies such as enhanced training and outreach would also be required.

Conclusion

The research evaluation of the Manuela Programme involved over 700 students, approximately one-third of the total number of students who took part in the extended pilot roll-out of the programme overall through partnership between Tusla, Rape Crisis Centres, and schools. The quantitative findings demonstrated that participating in the programme led to significant improvements in relation to positive consent attitudes and confidence, and lower levels of rape myths and negative gender stereotypes. Nevertheless, this was in the context of baseline attitudes and beliefs that suggested worrying trends for Irish adolescents of Transition Year age. Qualitative research with students and stakeholders underscored the value of the programme, supporting the idea that the programme leads to positive changes and has a delivery process that is engaging and youth-appropriate. This is a promising result given the relevance of supporting confidence consent and personal agency alongside tackling the ongoing problem of sexual violence. The conclusion of the pilot phase of the programme provided the scope for reflection on the next steps to support the sustainability of the programme. Opportunities for future development can be identified arising from national policy changes in RSE, yet navigating these opportunities and associated challenges will required concerted focus and partnership. The promising roll-out positions the Manuela Programme as a potential core offering in relation to consent and sexual violence for schools in Ireland, which is clearly much needed and timely.

Background

The Manuela Programme is a comprehensive, evidence informed education programme delivered over 12 hours. It focuses on sexual violence prevention and the promotion of negotiated consent in healthy relationships. The programme targets 15 to 17 year olds and is typically delivered in six two-hour sessions. The Manuela Programme was developed in 2016 through a collaboration between the Manuela Riedo Foundation Ireland and the Rape Crisis Centres, facilitated by Dr Sue Redmond.

Funding awarded to the Tusla's Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (DSGBV) Programme by the European Justice Commission supported the rollout of a pilot initiative of the Manuela Programme with an evaluation as an integral part of the delivery.

Four project workers were recruited on a half-time basis to support the pilot roll out. These workers were based in the Rape Crisis Centres in Galway, Dublin, Wexford, and Kerry, with coordination provided by the Galway Rape Crisis Centre. The project workers engaged with schools and with alternative education settings to recruit students to participate in the programme. The Manuela Programme was designed to involve teachers directly in delivery in order to build capacity within schools, thereby enhancing the sustainability of the programme beyond the pilot phase. Teachers were supported to co-facilitate the Manuela Programme initially to build their skill in independent programme facilitation. The pilot project commenced in October 2017 and finished in March 2020. The Manuela Programme was delivered to 2,701 young people in 63 schools and 8 alternative education settings across 10 counties.

The pilot initiative of the Manuela Programme was supported by an advisory panel drawn from Tusla, Rape Crisis Centres, Rape Crisis Network Ireland, and statutory agencies. The independent research evaluation of the programme described in this report was commissioned through a tendering process and commenced in October 2018. It included 707 young people from 40 schools and one alternative education setting. The evaluation was led by Dr Pádraig MacNeela and a research team at the School of Psychology, NUI Galway, comprising Maureen D'Eath, Dr Siobhán O'Higgins, Dr Chris Noone, Dr Lorraine Burke, and Laura Tierney. Ms D'Eath coordinated and led the delivery of the research evaluation strategy. The independent evaluation of the programme was supported by a Tusla Research Steering Group and further supported by the Manuela Programme Advisory Group that comprised key stakeholders.

This report on the independent research evaluation presents an analysis of the acceptability, sustainability, and effectiveness of the Manuela Programme based on a mixed methods research design. It is structured by chapters. Chapter 1 sets out a review of relevant literature, Chapter 2 describes the methods used in the evaluation, Chapters 3 and 4 present the research findings, and Chapter 5 presents the conclusions and discussion of findings.

Chapter 1: Literature Review

This chapter explores the context in which the Manuela Programme was developed and delivered. It reviews the literature on sexual consent promotion and sexual violence prevention in education settings, and the provision of relationship and sexuality education in Ireland. The chapter also contains an analysis of the Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) policies of ten Irish secondary schools in order to further situate the Manuela Programme in the current environment of sexuality education.

Background

The World Health Organization (2006) defines sexual health as:

> *A state of physical, emotional, mental and social well-being related to sexuality; it is not merely the absence of disease ... Sexual health requires a positive and respectful approach to sexuality and the possibility of having pleasurable and safe sexual experiences, free of coercion, discrimination and violence. For sexual health to be maintained, the sexual rights of all persons must be respected, protected, and fulfilled* (p. 5).

This definition signals a departure from a traditional understanding of sexual health as "the absence of disease", towards a framework inclusive of the basic right to freedom from negative outcomes *and* the right to pleasurable experiences founded on positive relationships and mutual respect (Harden, 2014). Accordingly, international health authorities have come to recognise the importance of providing high-quality, school-based sexuality education that supports young people to attain positive sexual health. In line with current understandings of positive sexual health, the aim of sexuality education as defined by UNFPA is to empower young people through a comprehensive curriculum to develop the capacity to:

> *Realise their health, well-being and dignity; develop respectful ... relationships; consider how their choices affect their own well-being and that of others; and ... ensure the protection of their rights throughout their lives* (UNFPA, 2018, p. 16).

This understanding of sexual education identifies young people's right to develop capacities and values that keep them safe from harm, as well as being empowered to develop healthy, equitable, and respectful relationships. Further, in light of the growing body of evidence in support of sexuality education programmes that incorporate these aims, best practice amongst educators is moving towards more holistic sexuality education approaches, illustrated in the principles set out by UNESCO (Haberland & Rogow, 2015; UNESCO, 2016).

Despite these developments, current sexuality education practices are characterised by a lack of development in adequately addressing the topic of sexual consent. Information on sexual consent is required in order for young people to fulfil their basic human right to high quality sexuality education (IPPF, 2010; UNFPA, 2018). Education on sexual consent is endorsed as important for young

people's development into autonomous individuals who respect one another's boundaries and engage in relationships marked by active communication, equality, and sexual fulfilment (UNFPA, 2018).

Arising from these observations, the primary objectives of this targeted literature review are to:

1. Provide an introduction to youth sexual violence prevalence.
2. Identify relevant health and behaviour change frameworks.
3. Examine the meaning of sexual consent and the factors that influence consent negotiation.
4. Describe the main approaches to sexuality education and the features of effective sexuality education.
6. Examine school-based sexual violence prevention and sexual consent initiatives.
7. Provide an overview of RSE standards in Irish post-primary schools.
8. Assess current third level and second level consent training practices.

The review provides context for the evaluation of the Manuela Programme, an Irish school-based sexuality education programme centred on sexual consent and violence prevention, with the aim of examining how the Programme sits alongside current international sexuality education standards.

Based on the headings above, the review sets out key concepts, best practice statements, and relevant research evidence. The review accommodates the literature on sexual violence and sexual consent, although it should be noted that the research on these topics is distinct. Studies of sexual violence typically do not accommodate assess positive, active consent as well. Similarly, studies of consent do not integrate sexual violence. It should also be noted that research on sexuality education is developing in relation to consent in particular and is largely limited to studies of young adults in college settings.

Sexual Violence Prevalence

Sexual violence is a serious public health issue. Young people are particularly vulnerable, with U.S. research indicating that approximately one in five women and one in ten men will be sexually assaulted during the period that they attend finish college, with assaults most often committed by a male acquaintance (Muehlenhard, Peterson, Humphreys, & Jozkowski, 2017; Rennison, 2002). A recent Department of Education and Skills report defines sexual misconduct as unwelcome behaviour of a sexual nature, which includes but is not limited to:

> *Crimes of sexual violence, sexual cyberbullying of any kind including non-consensual taking and/or sharing of intimate images, creating, accessing, viewing or distributing child pornography material online or offline, stalking behaviours whether online or offline in a sexual context, and any verbal or physical harassment in a sexual context* (DES, 2019, p. 14).

Females' heightened risk of sexual assault typically begins during mid-adolescence, with as many as half of sexual assaults being committed against girls under the age of 16 (Black et al., 2011; Breiding

et al., 2014). Male adolescents are also at risk with research indicating that approximately 7% of boys under the age of 18 may be subjected to some form of sexual violence (Pinheiro, 2006). LGBTQ students are an at-risk group, with one study finding that 15% of LGBTQ students experiencing non-consensual penetration since enrolling in university (Cantor et al., 2015). Further, a recent crime report published by the Irish Central Statistics Office (2019) serves to highlight the magnitude of adolescent sexual violence on a national level, with findings indicating that 83% of all victims of historic sexual violence crimes reported in 2018 were under 18 years old at the time of the offence.

The consequences of sexual violence can be devastating, affecting the physical, psychological and sexual health of the survivor, as well as the larger social community (UNICEF, 2014). Adolescents who experience sexual assault are less likely to progress to university (Wilson & Widom, 2010), and are at a heightened risk of developing mental health disorders such as anxiety, panic disorder, eating disorders, substance abuse disorders, and posttraumatic stress disorder (UNICEF, 2014). Other potential consequences include academic underachievement, social withdrawal, unwanted pregnancy, self-harm, and self-stigmatisation (Mason & Lodrick, 2012). These personal outcomes can leave survivors at an economic disadvantage. Adults who experience sexual assault during adolescence have a lower income according to one U.S. study published in 2000, with a lifetime income deficit of approximately $241,600 (MacMillan, 2000).

Recent years have seen greater prioritisation of sexual violence prevention measures internationally. This was reflected in the 2014 White House initiative on sexual consent and sexual violence in third level education in the U.S., with similar initiatives by UK and Australian university governance associations. In Ireland, the Department of Education & Skills published guidance for Irish higher education institutions in April 2019 through the 'consent framework', which is designed to end sexual violence and harassment. However, less sectoral coherence is apparent in policy strategies to address the equivalent risks experienced by younger adolescents and the critical need for effective primary prevention measures that target second level students (Willis, Jozkowski, & Read, 2018). Efforts to address this are underway, with the publication by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment of a review of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) in 2019 (NCCA, 2019).

Behaviour Change Frameworks

Researchers recommend that high-quality sexuality education programmes are theoretically grounded and evidence-informed, focusing on psychosocial and sexual variables believed to have an influence on behaviour (Kirby, Larris & Rolleri, 2006). Several frameworks are available to help design programmes, many of which draw on concepts such as self-efficacy, attitudes, and social norms. The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) (Ajzen, 1985) is a well-established psychosocial theory of behaviour change, extending the earlier Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) through the addition of Perceived Behavioural Control (PBC) to account for non-volitional behaviour. PBC is defined as the

belief that one has the skills and resources to carry out a behaviour and is closely aligned with perceived self-efficacy. The TPB identifies the strength of the person's behavioural intention (i.e., their commitment to perform a behaviour) and their perceived behavioural control as the key determinants of behaviour. In turn, behavioural intentions are formed through attitude and subjective norms around the particular behaviour. Subjective norms are a person's perceptions of the beliefs and judgments held by others.

The TPB has been applied successfully to predict and influence a variety of problem behaviours in young people, including substance abuse (McMillan & Conner, 2003), contraception use (Gredig, Nideroest, & Parpan-Blaser, 2006; Malcolm et al., 2013; Turchik & Gidycz, 2012), and sexual risk behaviours (Boer & Mashamba, 2005; Hutchinson & Wood, 2007). It has also been used as the basis for one of the key measures of attitudes to sexual consent among young adults (Humphreys & Brousseau, 2010). The TPB has been critiqued in health psychology, for instance in relation to its focus on rational, conscious processes as opposed to implicit, unconscious processes, and as many applications of the TPB reveal a limited relationship between intentions and actual behaviour. Nevertheless, it continues to be found useful in many contexts and its use continues as a basic framework to help predict social behaviour (Ajzen, 2014).

The role of social norms in the behaviour change process has been further analysed using the Theory of Normative Social Behaviour (TNB) (Berkowitz, 2013). This framework considers how perceptions of the socio-cultural environment influences individual attitudes and behaviours. According to social norms theory, a person's decision to perform a behaviour is affected by the perceived frequency of the behaviour among their social group (Berkowitz, 2002). Individuals often under- or over-estimate the frequency of behaviours in their peer groups or in society generally. The belief that peers would not intervene in the case of a potential assault would mitigate against the individual taking action, even through they personally believe it is right to intervene. Typically, the goal of a social norms intervention is to close the 'gap' between perceived norms and actual social norms, by equipping students with knowledge regarding the actual norm.

There is a large body of research supporting social norms interventions as a useful mechanism to support behaviour change. For example, bystander interventions on sexual violence that integrate the TNB into their programming have been found to promote greater self-efficacy and attitude change in university students (Berkowitz, 2013). Given that peers are very prominent as social referents for adolescent sexual behaviour (Brooks-Gunn & Furstenberg, 1989; Whitaker & Miller, 2000), social norms theory is highly relevant to the development of programming targeting young people in adolescence or young adulthood.

Defining Sexual Consent

As the focus for this review, it is necessary to define and describe sexual consent. In doing so, it is important to note that the research literature on sexual consent is largely based on studies conducted at third level institutions with college students (MacNeela et al., 2018). There is not an equivalent development of research for second level education settings. Sexual consent is defined by Hickman and Muehlenhard (1999) as the freely given, verbal or non-verbal communication of a feeling of willingness to engage in sexual activity. This definition describes consent as involving both the internal desire to engage in intimacy (a feeling of willingness) as well as the external act of communicating one's consent through verbal or non-verbal signals. Verbal and non-verbal behaviours range from direct, affirmative behaviour (e.g., talking to a partner about intimacy, asking for consent) to indirect behaviours such as touching the other person or removing clothing, and passive behaviours (e.g., not resisting the other's person's advances). Passive consent can be seen as problematic because a person who is in fear or an intoxicated state may not resist yet not intend to communicate the desire to have intimacy.

That consent is 'freely given' denotes that an individual's sexual decision-making is free from factors that constrain the ability to make autonomous sexual choices. Barriers to freely given consent include social, interpersonal, and contextual constraints such as alcohol consumption, physical or emotional coercion, deception, perceived social norms and obligations, and gender-based inequities (Muehlenhard, Humphreys, Jozkowski & Peterson, 2016). Consent can also be defined in temporal terms because consent is an ongoing process. Understanding consent as ongoing means that an agreement to perform one sexual act does not imply consent for further acts and that consent can be retracted at any stage. Some early research suggests that men are more likely to view consent as a discrete event while women are more likely to regard it as an ongoing process (Humphreys, 2004; Humphreys & Herald, 2007).

Factors that Influence Sexual Consent Negotiation

Communication Norms

Studies show that direct verbal communication is endorsed by third level students as the most effective mode of consent communication, yet sexual scripts based on social expectations often prioritise tacit, indirect signals in which consent is non-verbal or assumed (Beres, Herald, & Maitland, 2004; Hickman & Muehlenhard, 1999; Humphreys, 2004; Jozkowski & Peterson, 2013; Muehlenhard et al., 2016). Same-sex couples may be more likely than heterosexual couples to communicate consent verbally, but indirect, non-verbal consent signals are nonetheless more common overall, regardless of an individual's sexual orientation (Beres et al., 2004; Fantasia, 2011). Students' preference for tacit consent communication has been attributed to the widespread perception that direct consent is awkward, unnatural, and disruptive to the flow of sexual events (Humphreys, 2004; Muehlenhard et

al. 2016). Young adults' consent negotiations are also influenced by the type of sexual behaviour they are performing, with research indicating that non-verbal and indirect cues are most often adopted for activities such as kissing and genital fondling, while more direct, explicit forms of consent are used for sexual intercourse (Hall, 1998; Hickman & Muehlenhard, 1999). MacNeela et al. (2018) have described Irish university students as typically endorsing a range of consent communication strategies, from verbal to non-verbal consent, and from initiating, assertive forms of consent communication to passive strategies. They found that male students described using passive consent behaviours to a greater extent than female students.

Gendered Sexual Scripts

According to the Office of the Children's Commissioner in England (2013), young people's understandings of consent are distinctly gendered. These gendered understandings are founded on culturally prescribed gender norms defined by attempts for male dominance over females. This unequal power dynamic is best represented through sexual script theory (Simon & Gagnon, 1986), a model used extensively in sexuality research. Sexual script theory describes heterosexual consent encounters as being guided by gendered sexual narratives which characterise the male seeking sexual activity through a dominant, sexual initiator role and the female in the role of limit setter or sexual "gatekeeper" (Jozkowski & Peterson, 2013; Jozkowski, Sanders, Peterson, Dennis, & Reece, 2014). The normative sexual script positions men as motivated by a powerful sex drive and therefore always in pursuit of sex, while portraying women as having a lower desire for sex and as being desired objects that men pursue. This definition supports cultural endorsement of sexual double standards, whereby women are judged more harshly for engaging in sexual intimacy than men would be in the same situation (Jozkowski, Marcantonio, & Hunt, 2017).

These sexual standards impose an expectation for women not to appear enthusiastic or assertive in their consent negotiations, for fear of making themselves too sexually available or motivated due to negative social repercussions such as being labelled a 'slut'. By contrast, an expectation for "high sex drive" as a sexual stereotype for men can be seen in sexual scripts as a justification or explanation for perpetration of sexual violence (i.e., arising from an 'uncontrollable' male sex drive) (O'Byrne, Rapley, & Hansen, 2006). Kitzinger and Firth (1999) argue that gendered conversation norms defined by female humility create an expectation for women to articulate their sexual refusals indirectly through the use of gentle, palliative remarks. This normative gender expectation can discourage women from confidently asserting their sexual desires. All of these factors are described by researchers as fostering an unequal sexual environment defined by heterosexual male sexual entitlement and female compliance.

Rape Myths

Rape myths can shape young people's understandings of sexual consent and the acceptability of sexual violence. Rape myths are false narratives about rape that seek to divert responsibility for violence from a perpetrator towards the victim (Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994). Common rape myths include the belief that the perpetrator "did not mean to commit the act" or that the victim did "not say no" and so the situation cannot be identified as rape. Such views outline a particular perspective on sexual scripts and roles. Measures of rape myth acceptance assess the degree to which these beliefs are endorsed by individuals. Rape myth beliefs are associated with perceptions that rape can be the outcome of miscommunication, and that it is a victim's responsibility to clearly communicate their sexual desires.

There is some support for "miscommunication theory" as one potential cause of non-consensual sex. For instance, research has found that in certain instances such as those involving alcohol consumption, men may overestimate women's signals of interest. Men may also proceed with their sexual advances following the woman's initial refusals under the assumption that she is engaging in "token resistance" (i.e., resisting so as not to appear sexually available) (Muehlenhard et al., 2016). However, there is a growing body of research that miscommunication is an unlikely cause as both men and women are typically adept at interpreting one another's sexual cues; thus, perpetrators may use miscommunication as an excuse for more intentional sexual violence (Beres, 2010; Beres, Senn, & McCaw, 2013; O'Byrne, Hansen, & Radley, 2008; O'Byrne et al, 2006). In any case, the assumption or mistaken belief that a partner wants to engage in intimacy can be checked and discussed rather than being simply acted on.

Relationship Length

Another factor found to influence consent communication is the nature of the couple's relationship. Research suggests that, compared to newer couples, more established couples tend to perceive consent negotiation as less relevant to their relationship and make more use of implicit cues (Humphreys, 2007; Willis & Jozkowski, 2019). Casual, one off intimacy (often described in U.S. research as 'hook-ups') can also set expectations that influence sexual consent communication. Studies indicate that beliefs about hook-ups tend to follow a generic social script characterised by implied consent, intoxication, and an expectation of proceeding to sexual intimacy. These factors can contribute to the occurrence of unwanted and coerced sexual experiences. For instance, in one study, 80% of unwanted sexual episodes reported by female students were found to occur in the context of a hook-up (Flack, Daubman, Caron, Asadorian, & D'Aureli, 2007).

Taken together, the consent research literature has described active consent as supportive of positive sexual development. The research also highlights factors which can serve as barriers to effective consent communication and can contribute to sexual violence and misconduct. Although there has

been limited development of consent education interventions, sexual education programmes have a potentially important role in supporting young people to balance a norm of affirmative consent communication with the capacity to challenge the sexual script norms and power inequities linked to non-consenting behaviour.

Approaches to Sexuality Education

This section examines international research trends concerning the main approaches to sexuality education at second level. Traditionally, the two predominant sexuality education models have been Abstinence and Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE). In more recent years, Holistic Sexuality Education (HSE) has emerged to include a greater emphasis on sex-positivity and pleasure discourses. Although positive developments in global sexuality education trends have materialised over the past decade, programmatic approaches still vary extensively across nations and between regions. Factors such as religious and political ideologies supportive of sexual abstinence, adequate resource provision, school ethos, and limited access to high quality teacher preparation have been cited as barriers to the adoption of effective sexuality education approaches (Wellings & Parker, 2006).

Abstinence Education

Abstinence programmes adopt a sex-negative framework to sexual health, endorsing the view that young people should refrain from engaging in sexual behaviour until marriage. The main goal of abstinence education is thus to delay the onset of sexual intercourse, and is grounded in the assumption that adolescents will willingly comply with the notion of abstinence until marriage. Accordingly, abstinence programmes do not provide information on contraception, pregnancy or STIs, and may teach scientifically inaccurate information (Santelli et al., 2017).

These methods have been viewed by sexuality education experts as ethically problematic, given the principle that students have a basic right to accurate scientific information on contraception, sexual reproduction, and freedom from sexual harm. These views are supported by extensive evidence that abstinence programmes are largely ineffective at delaying the initiation of sexual activity, while having no effect on rates of sexually transmitted infections, HIV or pregnancy (DiCenso, Guyatt, Willan, & Griffith, 2002). In the U.S., where the practice of abstinence education is prevalent, rates of sexually transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancy are higher than in most other western industrialised nations, including European nations where abstinence education is less common. Although abstinence advocates argue that education on contraception increases the incidence of sexual behaviour, there is little evidence to support this view (DiCenso et al., 2002; Haberland & Rogow, 2015).

Comprehensive Sexual Health Education (CSE)

> *Comprehensive sexuality education is recognized as an 'age-appropriate, culturally relevant approach to teaching about sexuality and relationships by providing scientifically accurate, realistic, non-judgmental information* (UNESCO, 2015, p. 1).

CSE challenges the principles of abstinence education in its acknowledgement that some young people will engage in sexual activity. Consequently, CSE recognises young people's basic right to accurate, scientifically sound information on topics such as contraception, safe sex, and unwanted pregnancy (UNESCO, 2015; UNFPA, 2014). In positioning the concepts of empowerment, knowledge, respect, and dignity alongside those of biology and disease, CSE better reflects the sexuality education standards set out by the UNFPA (2018). The use of CSE as a mode of sexuality education is supported by evidence that demonstrates effectiveness in both delaying sexual initiation and in supporting young people to engage in safer sexual behaviours (UNESCO, 2009). Accordingly, CSE has received backing from UNESCO in a report of CSE practices (UNESCO, 2015).

Holistic Sexuality Education (HSE)

Holistic sexuality education (HSE) is recognised as an extension of CSE to include a greater emphasis on the principles of sex-positivity, pleasure, and the view of sex as "a positive human potential" (Ketting & Winkleman, 2013). The adoption of a sex-positive approach to sexuality education has received extensive support from various health professionals and students alike (Hirst, 2013; IPPF, 2010; Pound et al., 2017; WHO, 2010). For instance, a qualitative synthesis of adolescent views on sexuality education found that UK adolescents desire more information on pleasure-based aspects of sexuality (Pound et al., 2017). Similarly, the UK Department of Education has emphasised the importance of incorporating pleasure discourses into sexuality education programmes (Blake, Emerson, Lees, & Hayman, 2014).

Holistic education differs from other approaches in its emphasis on ongoing as opposed to brief interventions. This resonates with recommendations from international agencies which state that sex education should be administered from early childhood onward through regular, compulsory class lessons (Pound et al., 2017; UNESCO, 2015; WHO, 2010). HSE is also distinct in its rejection of customary "deficit" conceptualisations of adolescent sexual decision-making. This deficit perspective is substituted for the view of young people as autonomous sexual beings capable of decision-making and with a desire for growth and sexual agency. HSE has received ongoing support from the World Health Organization and is practiced in countries such as Sweden, Norway, the Netherlands, and Belgium, where rates of teen pregnancy are especially low (Wellings & Parker, 2006).

Delivering Effective Sexuality Education

This section describes the key features identified by researchers and health authorities as contributing to the delivery of effective sexuality education programmes.

Age of Commencement

Researchers recommend that sexuality education should be provided on an ongoing basis and commence as early as possible (Pound et al., 2017). Ensuring that the course content is age-appropriate is also of key importance for optimising effectiveness (Pound 2017; UNESCO, 2015). Accordingly, tailoring curricula in accordance with the developmental needs of the respective age-group has been endorsed by various health professionals (UNFPA, 2018, WHO, 2010).

Locating Sexuality Education in the Curriculum

Health experts have come to advocate for the use of a whole-school approach to sexuality education in which the values and messages included in the programming are integrated across various levels of the school environment (Pound et al., 2017; Smith, Fotinatos, Duffy, & Burke, 2013; UNFPA, 2018). Related strategies include poster campaigns, talks, and the appointment of peer ambassadors. Other health professionals have expanded upon this recommendation to advocate for the implementation of socio-ecological or whole-community approaches to sexuality education that extend beyond the school environment. Socio-ecological or multi-component approaches influence behaviour by targeting the various levels of social influence in a person's environment. These networks extend outward from the young person's immediate interpersonal environment (family, peers, teachers), towards the community level (neighbourhood, town), and should be supported by public policy (sexuality education policies, consent policies, low tolerance for sexual violence) (Dills, Fowler, & Payne, 2016). Although it is clearly more challenging to research and assess the impact of multi-component and ecological interventions, several researchers describe this approach as important in producing sustained social change (Scher, Maynard, & Stagner. 2006).

Healthy Learning Environment

Having a safe, healthy learning environment that is conducive to active, open communication is also identified as being instrumental in creating a positive "classroom culture" in which young people are comfortable sharing their thoughts and opinions. This can be achieved by ensuring that class groups are small, that rooms are not overcrowded, and that the facilitator is capable of fostering a warm, non-judgmental classroom environment (Haberland & Rogow, 2015; Kirby, Laris & Rolleri, 2006; Pound et al., 2017; UNFPA, 2014).

Course Facilitation

A central area of contention in the administration of sexuality education relates to the choice of programme facilitator (Haberland & Rogow, 2015). This is widely recognised as a determining factor affecting the efficacy of sexuality education delivery, influencing students' feelings of safety, their willingness to engage with the programme, and the quality of the programme itself (Smith et al., 2013; WHO, 2017). Sexuality education experts have therefore come to recognise the importance of

having skilled, well-trained facilitators to optimise programme delivery (Pound et al., 2017; Wellings & Parker, 2006).

Sexuality education programmes are customarily delivered by either a class teacher, a special designated teacher, an external facilitator, or a combination of both (Wellings & Parker, 2006). Studies examining student preferences for sexuality education providers have found that students tend to express a preference for facilitation by a well-trained external provider over their own teachers. Pound et al.'s (2017) qualitative synthesis of adolescent views of sexual education in ten high and middle income countries reported that most young people felt uncomfortable receiving sex education from teachers as they believed it compromised their right to confidentiality. Teachers were also perceived as expressing discomfort and embarrassment around the subject, as well as being judgmental and lacking in the necessary training and expertise. Accordingly, the synthesis concluded that it was often preferable to support recruitment of external providers to administer sexuality education programmes. Overall, students believed that sexuality education should be administered by knowledgeable, approachable, trustworthy, and highly-trained experts who value student autonomy and approach them as equals (Pound et al., 2017).

Structure for Autonomy and Life-Skills Development

Given that the desire for autonomy is of particular importance during adolescence, it has emerged as crucial that adolescent sexuality education lessons are structured to foster young people's autonomy, and engage with their desire for agency (Pound et al., 2017). The development of self-efficacy is also identified by UNFPA (2018) as being of particular importance for adolescents. This recommendation is in line with the focus of the Theory of Planned Behaviour which identifies self-efficacy as a key predictor of behaviour change. Interactive, learner-centred sexuality education formats that personalise information are advocated as an appropriate medium to foster these qualities (Kirby et al. 2006; Pound et al., 2017; UNFPA, 2014). Researchers have come to advocate for the adoption of a "life-skills" approach to sexuality education that supports practical, transferable skills such as critical thinking, confidence, assertiveness, self-worth, and decision-making (Haberland & Rogow, 2015; Wellings & Parker, 2006; UNFPA, 2014).

Key Subject Areas

The areas of gender inequality, rights, and power have been identified by multiple international agencies as forming critical reference points for successful sexuality education programming (UNFPA, 2018; WHO, 2010). This comes in light of research that indicates that sexuality education programmes that adopt a "gender focus" are more effective in reducing rates of STIs, unwanted pregnancy, and sexual violence than programmes that do not target these issues (Haberland & Rogow, 2015). Addressing these areas is therefore considered imperative in challenging the root causes of sexual violence perpetration. Some health professionals endorse the application of feminist and Freirean frameworks as potentially appropriate for delivering on these issues. Feminist theory

challenges gender inequities by drawing attention to the socially constructed nature of gender and its central role in upholding a culture of sexual violence, while Frierien frameworks facilitate critical thinking and questioning of uncontested norms (Haberland & Rogow, 2015).

Sexual Violence Prevention Initiatives

To date, research on adolescent sexuality education has examined consent as an aspect of violence prevention, rather than a knowledge or skills base concerned with achievement of positive outcomes. Much of the research in this area is U.S. based and is framed in terms of adolescent dating violence. This section will critically evaluate the current evidence for dating violence prevention programmes.

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is defined as the perpetration of assault or coercive acts (including physical injury, sexual assault and emotional coercion) by a person in an intimate relationship with another person. Dating violence is a form of intimate partner violence that typically occurs in younger people in a "dating" relationship. Dating violence is widely recognised as posing serious health risks to adolescents. These risks and harms include unwanted pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (Campbell, 2002; Exner-Cortens, Eckenrode, & Rothman, 2013), as well as mental health problems such as anxiety, trauma, and self-harm.

Adolescents who have experienced dating violence are also at a heightened risk of becoming perpetrators or victims of IPV as adults (Chiodo et al., 2012). Further, research indicates that approximately 20% of female adolescents may experience dating violence (Bergman, 1992), and that IPV incidence rates are higher in adolescents than adults, with females between the ages of 12 and 18 being at the greatest risk. Given the magnitude of this issue, researchers have stressed the need for greater investment into effective prevention measures targeted at adolescent populations.

There is some evidence that school-based dating violence initiatives may be effective in promoting positive attitude and knowledge changes in adolescents (see Table 1), nevertheless the findings are inconsistent overall. In an international review of adolescent dating violence programmes in Europe and North America, it was found that programmes that were of a sufficient duration and focused on skills building were the most effective in promoting long-term positive changes (Leen et al., 2013). Long-term intervention effectiveness was predicted by the inclusion of behavioural change methods as opposed to attitude and knowledge change alone. Similar findings emerged from another review of 61 IPV interventions, which found that longer-term programmes that took place in a variety of settings had a greater impact on IPV and attitudes than single awareness campaigns or discussions (Lundgren & Amin, 2015).

A review conducted by De Koker, Mathews, Zuch, Bastien, and Mason-Jones (2014) analysed the effectiveness of eight dating violence interventions in the U.S. and Canada. Interventions identified as producing positive changes in IPV perpetration included Safe Dates (Foshee et al., 2005), Skills for Youth Relationships (Wolfe et al., 2009), and Shifting Boundaries (Taylor, Stein, Mumford, &

Woods, 2013). Common features of successful interventions included the use of comprehensive, multi-setting delivery formats, and lessons on relationship skills-building. For example, the U.S.-based Safe Dates programme is comprised of a class curriculum, a student theatre production, and a poster contest, augmented by community activities (Foshee et al., 2005). By contrast, interventions that were not successful in changing adolescent IPV (Ending Violence, Coaching Boys) were typically shorter in duration and confined to one setting. Overall, the authors recommend that interventions are interactive, ongoing, of sufficient 'dosage', and should focus on skills-building opportunities that rehearse positive behaviour change (De Koker et al., 2014).

Although promising, these outcomes should be considered in light of the finding that many interventions failed to produce positive changes in primary outcomes such as overall violence perpetration rates. Further, many intervention studies were found to contain methodological issues in their research designs, as well as a lack of long-term follow up outcomes or use of validated outcome measures (Lundgren & Amin, 2014). Therefore, the effectiveness of violence prevention programmes in producing meaningful changes, including reduced rates of sexual violence perpetration, cannot be ascertained with certainty (Fellmeth, Heffernan, Nurse, Habibula & Sethi, 2015; Lundgren & Amin, 2014).

These empirical shortcomings were highlighted in a meta-analysis by Fellmeth et al. (2015) which analysed 38 randomised control trials of U.S. adolescent/young adult sexual violence interventions. Fellmeth et al. (2015) did not detect any significant positive changes in student behaviour, attitudes, skills, or in overall rates of sexual violence following exposure to the interventions. Arising from these findings, the authors highlight the need for more rigorous, randomised control trials of programme outcomes, utilising validated measures as a basis for assessing programme effectiveness in producing meaningful behaviour change outcomes (Fellmeth et al., 2015).

Overall, these findings signal a need for novel approaches to sexual violence prevention, including the development of more comprehensive curricula that focus not only on reducing negative outcomes but also on supporting young people with practical skills (De Koker et al., 2014; Lundgren & Amin, 2014), including positive communication and consent negotiation skills. Further, given the promising findings in the area of sexual consent and CSE (examined below), it may help to expand the scope of the course content to include a focus on positive facets of sexual health, thereby optimising the capacity of sexual violence prevention programmes to produce meaningful, long-term behavioural outcomes.

Table 1: Adolescent Sexual Violence / Dating Violence Prevention Programmes (De Koker et al., 2014)

Programme	Description of Intervention	Outcome Measures	Findings
Safe Dates (*Foshee et al., 2005)* Design: Randomised control trial	Country: US Duration: 5 months Theory: Feminist and Social Learning Teaching approach: Activity-based Topics Dating violence norms; Gender norms; Conflict management; Perceptions.	Harassment and SDV victimisation / perpetration Behavioural intentions DV and harassment knowledge	Marginal effects on sexual victimisation. Effects on severe physical perpetration moderated by prior involvement in such violence. Primary and secondary prevention effects found, programme equally effective across genders and races. Programme effects influenced by changes in dating violence and gender-role norms, awareness of community services.
Stepping Stones *(Jewkes et al., 2006)* Design: Clustered Randomised Control Trial Sample: 1,360 males and 1,416 females aged 15-26 year	Country: South Africa Duration: 50 hours; 6 to 8 weeks Theory: Different behaviour change theories Teaching approach: Participatory Topics: Sex; Contraception; Pregnancy; safe sex and condoms; communication; STIs and HIV.	Incidence of HIV. Incidence of HSV-2, Unwanted pregnancy, Reported sexual practices, Depression Substance misuse	No lowered incidence of HIV. Reduction in HSV-2. Significant reduction in male perpetration of IPV, transactional sex, and problem drinking at 12 months. No significant behaviour change in women. More transactional sex at 12 months.
The Fourth R *Skills for Youth Relationships* *(Wolfe et al., 2009)* Design: Randomised control trial Sample: 1.722 students aged 14-15 from 20 public schools	Country: Canada. Duration: 21 classes & community activities. Theory: Skills-based. Teaching approach: Didactic. Single sex classes. Topics: Personal Safety Healthy growth and sexuality dating violence. Substance abuse. IPV. Sexual decision making and assertiveness.	Self-reported PDV. Physical peer violence Substance use, and condom use	Reduced PDV. Increased condom use 2.5 years later. Teaching of healthy relationships enhanced effectiveness.
Shifting Boundaries *(Taylor et al., 2013)* Sample:117 sixth and seventh grade classes (over 2,500 students). Design: multi-level experimental design *Survey at* *(i) baseline* *(ii) post intervention* *(iii) 6 months post intervention.*	Country: US. Duration: 6-10 weeks. Theory: Theory of Reasoned Action Teaching approach: Participatory Curriculum: *Classroom Intervention:* 6-session curriculum Dating violence, sexual harassment consequences for perpetrators Gender constructs Healthy relationships. *Building-based intervention:* Restraining orders, Security in unsafe locations. Awareness posters. Topics: Legal consequences of assault. Gender roles. Healthy relationships. Bystander skills.	Sexual victimisation/ perpetration Behavioural intentions. Dating violence & sexual harassment knowledge	Students received either classroom, a building, a combined, or neither intervention Building-only & combined interventions reduced sexual violence victimisation (post 6 months) Reduction in sexual violence perpetration by peers in the building-only intervention.
Coaching Boys Into Men *(Miller et al., 2012).* Sample: 973 male athletes (ages 11–14, grades 6–8) Design: Cluster-randomised school-based controlled trial Surveys completed - *Baseline (T1), Six weeks and 12 months after baseline.*	Country: US Duration:12 weeks Theoretical Approach: Social Norms Theory, Theory of Reasoned Action, Program: Didactic. Athletic coach-delivered Topics: 1) Healthy relationship behaviours, 2) expose myths of male sexual aggression. Gender equality 3) Male bystander intervention.	Positive bystander behaviours Recognition of what constitutes abusive behaviour, Intentions to intervene Gender equitable attitudes Reduction in sexual violence perpetration	Significant increase in intervention athletes intentions to intervene and in positive bystander intervention self-reports relative to control subjects. No significant changes in gender-equitable attitudes, recognition of abusive behaviours and DV perpetration. More positive outcomes for intense intervention group.

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) In Post-Primary Irish Schools

A number of studies have been conducted recently to research Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) in Irish Primary and Post-Primary schools (Keating, Morgan, & Collins, 2018; Nolan, 2018; NCCA, 2019). This work has been prompted by a growing demand from Irish health and government bodies for a reform of the current RSE curriculum, given that it has not been extensively reviewed since its introduction into the Irish school curriculum in 1995. A scoping assessment of RSE in Ireland published by the Oireachtas addressed the need for the RSE curriculum to attend to contemporary subjects such as cyberbullying, consent, sexting, and LGBTQ issues (Nolan, 2018). The report also identified the importance of ongoing consultation with the views of young people in the process of curriculum development. Arising from their analysis, the authors recommended the adoption of a whole-school based approach to RSE that is grounded in a sex-positive, holistic framework.

A further background report of current RSE standards was conducted by Keating et al. (2018) to provide the context for a landmark NCCA-led review of student and educator experiences of RSE. The preliminary report identified teacher confidence and competence as central challenges in the existing provision of quality RSE. Key shortcomings were identified in pre-service and in-career professional development opportunities, adequate resource support, and the priority of RSE in the school curriculum. A significant variation was noted in the quality and delivery of RSE (Department of Education & Skills, 2009, 2013), which was attributed to the flexibility of the RSE curriculum and the consequent tendency for teachers to avoid highly sensitive subject areas within the curriculum.

The Catholic ethos maintained by the majority of Irish post-primary schools has been identified as a challenge in the provision of comprehensive RSE programming. Researchers have raised concerns that a religious ethos could adversely impact the decision to teach certain RSE subject areas deemed to conflict with the ethos (Keating et al., 2018). The ambiguity surrounding this issue has been described by some teachers as creating uncertainty around appropriate teaching materials. Further, although the school's RSE policy is required for clear teacher guidelines on the issue of school ethos, many teachers have expressed dissatisfaction with the documentation available to support RSE policy development (NCCA, 2019). Accordingly, experts have come to identify the implementation of clear, supportive RSE policy guidelines as a priority, developed in consultation with the whole-school community.

A comprehensive report on Relationship and Sexual Health Education was released by the NCCA in 2019. It represented the culmination of an extensive consultation process in the sector, exploring the RSE experiences of thousands of Irish students, teachers, parents, and stakeholders. The report has a primary focus on the areas of RSE planning, programme delivery, support materials and resources, and pathways for professional development. Overall, the findings of the review were consistent with

international literature and prior national studies (Mayock, Kitching, & Morgan, 2007), with strong agreement across cohorts regarding the instrumental role of teacher competency in the delivery of effective RSE. Students specifically endorsed teacher openness, non-judgemental attitudes, and confidence as imperative to the success of programme delivery.

Teachers and stakeholders were critical of pre-service and in-service professional development opportunities, which were considered to limit teachers' acquisition of sexual health education competencies. Some feedback advocated for the development of a professional masters qualification in RSE as a means of enhancing teacher confidence and expertise and enhancing the status of RSE as a subject discipline. Students expressed a similar interest in programme facilitation by a teacher with specialist knowledge in the area of sexuality. Respondents also criticised inconsistencies in programme provision and quality, consistent with the findings cited in prior studies internationally.

Student responses clearly point to the conclusion that RSE has not adequately met their expressed developmental needs for life skills and relational knowledge. Students criticised the perceived focus on biology and risk prevention, at the expense of the positive and emotional facets of sexual development including healthy relationships and consent. These views echo earlier Irish studies in which a majority of students described their RSE education as being overly influenced by biological perspectives (Alliance Review, 1999).

In light of the findings, the authors advocate for the adoption of a whole-school approach to RSE that is holistic, developmentally appropriate, inclusive, and student centred. In order to meet these standards, the authors endorse the development of clear curriculum guidelines, ongoing opportunities for professional development and interagency collaboration, as well as the priority of a revised, accredited SPHE curriculum developed in consultation with parents and young people.

Sexual Consent Education in Third Level Institutions

Given the lack of empirical literature directed towards the area of school-based consent programming, this section provides a critical analysis of college-based sexual consent programming. Findings in this area offer insights on the development and evaluation of effective school-based consent training programmes. Persistently high rates of sexual violence recorded in U.S. college student research over a period of decades prompted a growing demand by student advocacy groups, health officials, and government bodies for effective, evidence-based sexual violence prevention measures appropriate for student populations (ACHA, 2016; Campus SaVE Act, 2013; The White House, 2014; NCCA, 2019; UUK, 2016). As a consequence, there has been a surge in affirmative consent policies and activism-based sexual consent programming on college campuses. Campaigns such as *Consent is Sexy* (Wills & Duncan, 2018), *Define Your Line* (Ortiz & Schafer, 2018), and *I Heart Consent* (NUS Women) have embraced the principles of affirmative consent to address high rates of sexual violence and support young people to express their sexuality in a way that fosters respectful relationships.

Affirmative consent interventions are intended to empower students who engage in consensual sex by promoting clear, assertive consent communication, usually based on verbal strategies. These principles are encapsulated in the "yes means yes" and "no means no" messaging that has become a familiar presence on university campuses over the past decade (Witmer-Rich, 2016). However, campus consent campaigns that focus exclusively on promoting clearer communication have been criticised as overly simplistic, in light of evidence that sexual violence is rarely a result of miscommunication (Burkett & Hamilton, 2012; Beres, 2010; Beres et al., 2013). Another criticism made of the explicit communication approach as the sole solution to sexual violence is that it is overly narrow and does not adequately address contextual factors such as gendered sexual norms, sexual scripts, drug use, and alcohol use, all of which complicate or disrupt freely given consent (Burkett & Hamilton, 2012; Johnson & Hoover, 2015).

Consequently, in a review of current sexual consent education on U.S. college campuses, Jozkowski and Humphreys (2014) advocated for a sociocultural approach to consent that addresses the underlying determinants of sexual violence, including power, gender-based inequities, rape myths, and social norms. Ensuring that interventions address both genders as equally responsible parties in the consent process is believed to be instrumental to intervention success (Jozkowski & Humphreys, 2014). In this way, the reinforcement of gendered sexual norms defined by female gatekeeping could be avoided. In terms of consent intervention delivery, researchers advocate for ongoing initiatives that extend across multiple levels of the campus ecology (Jozkowski & Humphreys, 2014). This echoes the 'whole institution' approach identified in relation to the school setting. This is consistent with the recent Department of Education and Skills (2019) 'consent framework' that envisages direct student-facing initiatives, policy development, and organisational culture change in how consent and sexual violence prevention is approached. Nevertheless, while the conceptualisation of consent among college students is well developed, there is limited evidence on specific consent interventions.

There is some evidence that sexual consent interventions can produce positive changes in student understandings of consent. For instance, one randomised control study examining a brief sexual consent presentation compared three groups of students on consent knowledge and attitudes following exposure to either one or two 15 minute interventions (Borges, Banyard, & Moynihan, 2008). The findings revealed that that both intervention groups displayed positive changes in knowledge and attitudes towards sexual consent compared to a control group who received no intervention, with the 30 minute intervention producing the greatest outcomes (Borges et al., 2008). Relatedly, another study examining the influence of an interactive, participatory student sexual consent workshop produced significant positive changes in student consent preparedness and positive attitudes to consent (MacNeela et al., 2018).

Although preliminary, these findings draw attention to the potential of sexual consent programming as a strategy for promoting positive changes in student sexual attitudes and knowledge. In light of these findings, there has been extensive advocacy for the extension of consent programming to second level school populations. Providing adolescents with consent education at an earlier life stage, ideally before they are sexually active, is identified as crucial to shift the focus from risk reduction towards primary prevention of sexual violence (Office of the Children's Commissioner, 2013; UUK, 2016).

Sexual Consent Education At Second Level

Situating Consent in Sex Education

A report published by the U.K.-based End Violence Against Women Coalition (2011) states:

> *Consent should be the bedrock for all sexual health education. Without this foundation it is impossible to ensure that every student is safe in their school environment or to effectively tackle attitudes that condone and normalise violence against women and girls* (p. 16*)*

In recent years, numerous health authorities have come to identify sexual consent as forming a central feature of effective, comprehensive sexuality education programming (HM Government, 2014; Pound et al., 2017; UNFPA, 2014). Sexual consent education is viewed as essential, not only in safeguarding young people from harm but also in affording adolescents with the requisite skills and values with which to cultivate positive, pleasurable sexual relationships built on the principles of equality and mutual respect. Educating adolescents on respecting one another's boundaries is recognised as a means of fostering shared societal values that support young people to exercise their sexual autonomy without fear of shame or judgment from others (IPPF, n.d; UNFPA, 2018).

Notwithstanding these recommendations, there is a limited evidence base with regard to school-based sexuality education programmes that directly address positive sexual consent skills (WHO, 2010). For instance, in a recent review of existing sexuality education programmes in the U.S., it was revealed that although many sexuality education programmes address areas related to sexual consent such as building healthy relationships and exercising boundaries, consent is rarely mentioned as an explicit subject area in the curricula (Willis et al., 2018).

Sexual Consent Education Programmes

A report published by the UK Department of Education on sexuality education standards states that relevant programmes should include lessons on sexual consent law, positive consent communication, consent negotiation skills, and relationship equality (Blake et al., 2014). The report reaffirms the importance of delivering consent training that "goes beyond teaching how to say no" (Blake et al., 2014, p. 9). A more comprehensive guide on school-based sexual consent training was recently developed by the UK-based Personal, Social, Health & Economic Association (PSHE, 2015). This programme situates consent in the context of healthy relationships defined by mutual respect and reciprocity. A spiral curriculum is adopted, in which lessons progress from the areas of sexual consent

in the law, towards more specific, skills-based areas including how to avoid making assumptions about consent, how to withdraw consent, consent in relation to the media, and victim blaming. The programme aims to foster life skills such as communication strategies and ways of identifying and challenging unfounded social norms perceptions (Haberland & Rogow, 2015; Wellings & Parker, 2006; Pound et al., 2017; UNFPA, 2014).

UNFPA (2018) have developed three evidence-based comprehensive sexuality education curricula tailored for specific age groups. Although these are guidelines rather than implementation packages, they advocate for integrating consent content into mainstream programming. For instance, the curriculum developed for 15-17 year olds includes an assessment of sexual consent and bodily autonomy as part of Topic 4 on "Violence". Topic 5 on "Skills and Health for Wellbeing" involves an examination of the components that constitute effective consent communication, and Topic 2 ("Values") includes information on the age of consent. These examinations of sexual consent are complemented by other topic areas that explore sexual violence prevention and gender-based violence awareness. Overall, the International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education (ITGS) curriculum situates sexual consent across various dimensions of sexual health, both positive and negative. In this way, the curriculum incorporates consent into holistic sexuality education programmes by identifying how the coverage of standard topics can be enhanced with reference to consent.

There is a small number of empirically evaluated sexuality education initiatives that incorporate sexual consent education into their programming methods. These analyses, given their largely positive outcomes, provide preliminary support for the inclusion of consent as part of a comprehensive sexuality education package. For example, the Sexuality Education Initiative (SEI) (Contantine et al., 2015) is an American rights-based sexuality education initiative that includes a lesson on sexual choice and coercion in which consent communication and boundaries are addressed. In a study assessing the impact of the programme on ninth-grade students at 10 high schools (N=1,750), the findings revealed that the intervention group displayed more positive attitudes about their sexual relationship rights, better sexual communication and better relationships with parents, as well as increased self-efficacy post-intervention compared to the control group. However, no significant differences were detected in communication with sexual partners and intentions to use condoms.

A male-focused Kenyan sexuality education programme includes an in-depth lesson on sexual consent which focuses on defining consent, consent communication skills, and its relationship with gender norms (Keller, Mboya, Sinclair, Githua, & Mulinge, 2015). A study examining programme effectiveness on male adolescent attitudes towards women, their rape myth acceptance levels, and self-reported behaviour detected a significant increase in the intervention group's positive attitudes towards women and in their active bystander behaviour relative to the control group. These findings were maintained at multiple follow ups.

Table 2: Empirically Evaluated Sexuality Education Programmes That Address Consent.

Programme	Description of Intervention	Outcome Measures	Findings
The Sexuality Education Initiative (SEI) (Contantine et al., 2015) Sample: Ninth-grade students at 10 high schools. 1,750 students (N = 934 intervention, N = 816 control).	Country: U.S. Duration: 12-sessions. Theory: Rights-based approach. Multi-component (curriculum; parent education workshops; peer advocate program, sexual health services). Didactic approach: Interactive, group based. Goal: Improve sexual and reproductive health of low-income, primarily Hispanic and African American adolescents in LA high-schools. Topics: Social and Media Messages. Gender And Identity. Relationships. Sexuality. Sexual and Reproductive Anatomy. Pregnancy. STIs and Safer Sex. Contraception. Sexual Choice and Coercion (*Incl. Consent: the right to say 'no' and responsibility to ask*). Decision-making.	Attitudes about rights in sexual relationships. Communication about relationships, rights, and sexuality with parents and partners Sexual health knowledge Sexual Self-efficacy Condom use intentions Sexual health information Awareness of sexual and reproductive health services	Intervention group showed greater knowledge about sexual health and sexual health services, more positive attitudes about sexual relationship rights, better sexual communication and better relationships with parents, increased self-efficacy post-test (compared to control). No significant differences between intervention and control in (i) communication with sexual partners, and (ii) intentions to use condoms.
Your Moment of Truth (YMOT) (Keller et al., 2015). Design: Intervention and control group. Assessed at baseline and 9 month follow up. Sample: 1,543 adolescents	Country: Nairobi, Kenya. Duration: Six 2-hr sessions. Theory: Bystander & feminist theory. Didactic Approach: Skills-based. Participatory. Goal: Reduce rates of gender based violence via improving men's attitudes towards women and increasing proactive bystander behaviour. Topics: Skills building. Bystander theory and skills. Empathy building. Consent: define and understand sexual consent, rape myths, consent communication skills. Role play to reinforces skills.	Attitudes Toward women. Endorsement of rape myths. Intervention behaviour (Post intervention).	Intervention group showed a significant increase in positive attitudes towards women and in bystander behaviour relative to control. Sustained at multiple follow ups.

Table 3. Model Sexuality Education Curricula that Incorporate Sexual Consent.

Programme	Details	Curriculum Topics
It's All One *International Sexuality Group (2011).* Audience: Late adolescents 15-17	Country: Tailored for a global audience Duration: Each activity=One/two 40 minute sessions. Theory: Rights-based. Freirean Pedagogy. Didactic approach: Participatory. Learner-Centred Goal: Increase decision making ability, ability to exercise human rights, critical thinking, self-efficacy, agency, sexual wellbeing. Reduce sexual violence, unwanted pregnancy, STIs, unintended pregnancy.	Sexual health and well-being require human rights. Gender. Sexuality. Interpersonal relationships: *activity number 25: the matter of consent.* Communication and decision making. The body puberty and reproduction. Sexual and reproductive health. Advocating for sexual health, rights and gender equality.
UNESCO CSE *UNFPA, 2018.* Audience: Adolescents 15-17.	Country: Globally applicable. Duration: Not specified. Theory: Rights-based. Didactic Approach: Learner-centred. Curriculum: Spiral-curriculum approach. Knowledge, attitude, and skills building activities integrated into each lesson. Goal: Provide information about various aspects of sexuality. Allow young people to explore.	Relationships. Values, rights, culture and sexuality (*Age of consent*). Understanding gender. Violence and staying safe (*Benefits of consent. consent & gender).* Consent communication. Factors that impede effective consent. Skills for health and well-being (*Consent communication*). The human body and development. Sexuality and sexual behaviour. Sexual and reproductive health.

Taken together, these findings give credence to the view that sexuality education programmes which explicitly relate to consent may enhance positive outcomes in student attitudes and overall sexual wellbeing. However, no definitive conclusions can be drawn given their preliminary nature. Accordingly, more targeted empirical evaluations that directly examine the area of sexual consent are

required in order to establish the key components and approaches that constitute effective consent education.

Conclusion

In summary, sexual consent has been identified by sexual health researchers and policy makers as an area that has not been adequately addressed in school-based sex education to date (Blake et al., 2014; HM Government, 2014; Wellings & Parker, 2006; Pound et al., 2017; UNFPA, 2014; Willis et al., 2018). The findings from this review reveal that the sex education programming research is still firmly rooted in the area of violence prevention. Sexual consent programming is endorsed by health professionals as a potential vehicle for enhancing the effectiveness of sexuality education programmes, given its dual role in the development of healthy, pleasurable relationships defined by mutual respect and in safeguarding potentially vulnerable individuals from harm (Willis et al., 2018). Moreover, while existing consent programme outcomes appear promising, these evaluations are largely confined to campus-based interventions with only a handful of studies investigating consent programming in school settings (Contantine et al., 2015; Keller et al., 2015).

Furthermore, given that adolescents are at a heightened risk of experiencing sexual violence and that high-quality sexual consent education can function as an effective primary prevention tool, health professionals have come to highlight the potential benefit from engaging young people with sexual consent training during adolescence (Mulford & Blachman-Demner, 2013; UUK, 2016; Willis, Jozkowski & Read, 2018). More empirical research is needed to address a lack of rigorous, ongoing monitoring of programme outcomes in school-based consent training and dearth of evidence-based sexual consent interventions tailored for adolescent school populations (Muehlenhard et al., 2016; WHO, 2018; Willis et al., 2018).

The Irish National Council on Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA, 2019) identified the area of sexual consent as a key priority in the provision of high-quality relationships and sexuality education in their recent review, while also highlighting Irish second level students' interest in receiving holistic RSE that moves beyond biological approaches. This evaluation study aligns with these interests by assessing both positive and negative aspects of sexual health as topics covered in the Manuela Programme. In encompassing both positive and preventative facets of sexual health, the Manuela Programme is consistent with international best standards which advocate for a holistic sexuality education framework. This evaluation will help support the emergence of a more comprehensive understanding of effective school-based sexuality education programming.

Chapter 2: Methods

Design

The independent research evaluation of the Manuela Programme employed a mixed methods approach, with the aims of assessing the programme impact quantitatively and of studying the processes and sustainability of the programme using qualitative strategies. Two questionnaires were completed by students to assess changes in young people's knowledge, beliefs and attitudes, a Pre Programme questionnaire prior to the programme and a Post Programme questionnaire at the end of the programme. The key variables in the questionnaire included the endorsement of particular sexual consent communication strategies, attitudes to consent, perceptions of rape myths, pornography and sexting, and skills for negotiating agreement / boundaries. A waitlist control design was employed to compare the effects of the intervention with a group of students who did not receive the Manuela Programme between completing the pre and post questionnaires. The control group received the Manuela Programme after completion of the second questionnaire.

The qualitative component of the evaluation captured the perspectives of students, project workers, teachers and other stakeholders on aspects of the Manuela Programme. These were facilitated through focus groups, participatory workshops, and individual interviews. Further qualitative data was gathered using text boxes in the Post Programme questionnaire completed by the students. Fidelity records were kept by the project workers in respect of the implementation of the Manuela Programme curriculum with each class of students participating in the evaluation. Fidelity record forms provided information about the extent of amendments or deviation from the programme. The context of programme implementation was further assessed through an analysis of a sample of school policies on sexual health education.

The Manuela Programme comprised 6 x 2 hour sessions with learning activities specified for each session. These are outlined in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Manuela Programme Content and Learning Activities.

Session	Learning Activities
Session 1: Consent	• Introductions & Contract • Hopes and Fears • Shake Hands • What is Consent? • Walking Debate • Scenarios
Session 2: Sexual Violence	• Defining Sexual Violence • Why Do People Commit Sexual Violence? • Impact of Sexual Violence • Responding to a Disclosure • Why Do We Have Sex?
Session 3: Healthy & Unhealthy Relationships	• Lucy's House Party • Healthy vs. Unhealthy Relationships • Optional: Case study
Session 4: The World You Live In	• Influences in My World • Gender Stereotypes and Positive Masculinity • Take My Picture • Sexting
Session 5: Healthy Boundaries	• Pornography • Boundaries • Feeling No, Feeling Yes • Now Me, Future Me
Session 6: Prevention & Integration	• Consequences • Positive Power and Prevention • Walking Debate (optional) • Wrap it Up • Caring for Me • Evaluation

The programme was designed to be facilitated rather than taught. Facilitators were expected to position themselves as actively engaging with the students to explore the key concepts rather than presenting didactically on a curriculum to be learned. The key pillars of programme facilitation were documented as awareness, consent, respect, and safe boundaries. Programme delivery was to be underpinned by the values of:

- Respect.
- Dignity.
- Right to be different.
- Social justice.
- Personal safety.
- Right to healthy relationships and positive sexual health.
- The right to opt out.

Recruitment and Participants

Project workers secured agreement from schools in the first instance to recruit students to the evaluation. Schools were provided with an information sheet outlining the purpose of the evaluation and what it would involve for the school and for the pupils. Schools who agreed to participate gave an information and consent form to the students who would be participating in the Manuela Programme.

The project workers collected the consent forms prior to distributing the questionnaires at the start of the first session of the Manuela Programme. Only students who returned a consent form signed by themselves and a parent were permitted to complete the questionnaires. This did not prevent students receiving the Programme. Students in the intervention group completed the Pre Programme questionnaire during the first session of the Manuela Programme and the Post Programme questionnaire during the last session. Students in the control group completed the Pre Programme questionnaire during school time and the Pre Programme questionnaire again six weeks later. They commenced the Manuela programme subsequent to completing both questionnaires. The Post Programme questionnaire comprised the same questions as the Pre Programme questionnaire but with additional items to assess satisfaction with the programme overall and each element of the programme. In addition, items were included to explicitly assess the impact of participation with reference to each of the programme objectives.

The project workers negotiated permission from a school to run a focus group on a specified date. The project workers distributed the focus group information sheets and consent forms during the third week of the programme and encouraged the students to participate. The focus group went ahead as scheduled if a minimum of eight consent forms signed by both a parent and the student were returned to the teacher or the project worker by the fifth week of the programme.

Project workers were asked to complete a fidelity record in respect of each class participating in the evaluation or to request a facilitating teacher to complete the form. These fidelity forms provide information about the extent of amendments to the programme or deviation from it.

Student Participatory Focus Groups

The purpose of these workshop-style focus groups was to use small group and consensus exercises to explore: 1) What the Manuela Programme means for young people in the context of growing up in Ireland, 2) How the Manuela Programme could impact the lives of young people, 3) Student views on the content and facilitation of the Manuela Programme, and 4) Suggestions for future implementation and development of the Manuela Programme. Students were also consulted for their views through the inclusion of text boxes in the Pre and Post Programme questionnaires.

Thirteen participatory focus groups were held in schools across the country. A total of 134 students took part in them, with numbers in each group ranging from 8 to 24. The workshops took between 40

and 60 minutes to complete. The group process was designed with an emphasis on small group, consensus-based tasks in line with the principles of participation, equity and empowerment.

The focus groups comprised three stages. The first stage focused on the students' experiences of the programme and sought their advice for its further development. Each student was given colourful Post It notes and was asked to write down what they thought was 'good' and 'not so good' about the Manuela Programme. They were asked to write one comment per Post It and to use as many Post It notes as they needed. When they had finished writing their comments they put the Post It notes onto one of two flip-chart pages which were stuck onto the walls. One page was headed "what was good about the Manuela Programme" and one was headed "what was not so good". The workshop facilitators used these comments to frame a discussion with the students asking them to elaborate and discuss the comments made.

In the second stage of the focus groups students were given small pieces of coloured card and asked to write one idea per card corresponding to a potential impact that the Manuela Programme could have on young people. The facilitators collected the cards, organised the students into groups of four to five and distributed the cards randomly between the groups. Working in their small groups, students collated the cards which they had been given into groups of similar ideas and labelled these groups. Thus, each group devised themes based on the cards they had been given. Card responses that students could not fit into any of their chosen themes were labelled as "miscellaneous" and collected by the facilitators. Each group was then given a sheet of flip chart paper with a matrix or web drawn on it. This was introduced as a "Web of Ideas". Working in their small groups, students were asked to choose the theme which they considered to represent the most important impact, and to place the cards comprising this in the centre of the Web. Through discussion in the groups students worked outward from the centre of the Web to note down the ways in which the Manuela Programme could bring about this impact and how this could be supported. Each group presented their Web to the whole group.

Students were then invited to help themselves to refreshments provided by the facilitators and to return to their seats. The refreshments included cookies and water and a gluten-free option. During this third stage of the workshops the facilitators encouraged to students to further discuss aspects of the Manuela Programme which they wanted to elaborate on or which had not been previously covered and to give advice about the future of the programme. Audio recordings were made of group discussions. The findings from these participatory consultations are presented under four themes (facilitation, content, activities and structure, impact and recommendations for the future).

Quantitative Data and Data Analysis

The results chapter sets out descriptive and inferential statistical analysis of the Pre Programme and Post Programme data collected across the Manuela Programme and waitlist control group participants.

The descriptive analysis is used to familiarise readers with the main characteristics of responses to each standardised measure included in the questionnaire, along with a break down by gender and group, and an illustration of data trends through the use of individual items. The inferential analysis is used to test the hypotheses that participants in the Manuela Programme would report higher levels of positive, active sexual consent and lower levels of negative endorsement of rape myths and gender stereotypes, relative to the control group. The inferential analysis was performed using General Linear Model univariate analysis of variance (ANOVA) on Post Programme responses to each of the main study variables, controlling for Pre Programme scores and gender.

Qualitative Data and Data Analysis

The qualitative interviews were conducted by an experienced qualitative researcher and digitally recorded. The teacher and stakeholder interviews were transcribed verbatim by a professional transcription company. The researcher who conducted the interviews transcribed the student focus groups. All interview transcripts were anonymised. The data was analysed thematically according to the guidelines of Braun and Clarke (2006). After thorough familiarisation with the data, initial codes were generated and these codes were collated into higher order themes through an iterative process. The rigour and quality of the analysis was enhanced by discussion between team members during the analysis phase and through note-taking within the research team.

Ethical Issues

Ethical approval for the study was granted by the Tusla Child and Family Agency Research Ethics Committee. Written, informed consent was given by the parents of the students and written assent was given by the students themselves prior to the students' participation in the quantitative and the qualitative aspects of the evaluation. Signed consent was given by all individuals who participated in face-to-face qualitative interviews. Consent to participate and to audio-recording was recorded at the start of telephone interviews. Electronic data was stored on a password protected computer. Paper-based data was kept in a locked filing cabinet. Interview recordings were sent to the transcriber under encryption and the transcripts were returned as encrypted files.

Questionnaires

The questionnaire was developed to reflect the distinct aspects of the Manuela Programme including the meaning of sexual consent, sexual violence, skills for negotiating agreement and boundaries and pornography and sexting. A mapping exercise was undertaken to ensure that the programme objectives were represented in the questionnaire by use of established measures that have been tested in the academic literature. The questionnaire was piloted with 37 students in a school who had completed the Manuela Programme in the previous academic year. In response to their feedback, two of the measurement scales were removed from the survey and the language in a number of the

questions was simplified. We concluded that this represented the best compromise between having a comprehensive measure while ensuring that completion of the measure was feasible.

The decision was made not to ask about sexual orientation in case privacy of responses was compromised during questionnaire completion in the classroom environment. Participants were further protected by not including items on experiences of sexual intimacy or sexual misconduct. Besides demographic items on gender and age, the common measures across the Pre and Post Programme questionnaires comprised:

The Sexual Consent Scale-Revised (SCS-R; Humphreys & Brousseau, 2010) which measures an individual's beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours with respect to how sexual consent should be and is negotiated between sexual partners. Two sub-scales were included, on perceived behavioural control (which largely focuses on perceived barriers to active consent) and on awareness and discussion. These were selected to assess whether potential barriers to engaging in active consent would be impacted by the programme and if perceptions of peer acceptability and discussion would increase.

The Consent Preparedness scale (MacNeela et al., 2018) was originally designed to assess the impact of the SMART Consent workshop for third level students. It contains six items based on perceptions of self-efficacy and personal ability to talk about sexual consent.

The Consent To Sex Scale (adapted, Jozkowski & Peterson, 2014) which assesses students' cues for indicating consent to sexual intimacy. It contains sub-scales that reflect distinct forms of consent communication. Respondents indicate their agreement or disagreement that they would use each form of communication if they intended to consent to sex. The verbal and passive behavioural intention sub-scales were used to present a form of consent communication that should increase through the Manuela Programme (verbal consent) and a form that should decrease (passive).

The Measure of the Heterosexual Script and Its Relation to Television Consumption (adapted, (Seabrook et al., 2016), which measures levels of endorsement of the heterosexual script including the sexual double standard, courtship strategies and commitment strategies. These sub-scales were used to assess whether programme participants would show evidence of reduced endorsement of heteronormative scripts.

The Updated Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale. (McMahon, 2010), which aims to understand attitudes and beliefs around sexual assault and can be used to assess general rape myth acceptance. The scale contains a number of sub-scales and was used to assess whether endorsement of false gendered beliefs about rape would decrease following the programme.

Porn & Sexting Items (Dawson, 2019) which aimed to explore students' perceptions about the perceived realism of mainstream porn. These items assess whether students believe that pornography content reflects intimacy as it actually takes place and the acceptability of sexting.

Fidelity Records

Project workers were asked to complete a "fidelity record" at the end of each session. The purpose of the fidelity record was firstly to assess if the programme was delivered as intended, and secondly to enable project workers to document student responses to the modules and note any difficulties which arose during the programme delivery. Fidelity records from thirty-six class groups were returned, containing varying levels of information in addition to the content covered.

The group sizes ranged from 15 to 28 students. Two hours per session were allocated in most schools to the Manuela Programme; however in five instances the allocated time was 90 minutes, in five instances it was 80 minutes, and in one instance 75 minutes were allocated per session. One group was scheduled to receive the programme in one hour sessions over a 12-week period.

Figure 1 below shows the extent to which the content of Session 1 and 2 were fully or partially covered. On many occasions the project workers reported that they had made timing adjustments to the sessions. If students were particularly engaged with a module the project workers would let it continue longer than the allotted number of minutes and, if necessary, return to other modules in later sessions. Likewise, some modules were completed in less than the allocated number of minutes and appropriate adjustments were made to the other modules (e.g., "*sexting debate went on much longer and 'take my pic' was over faster"*). For the purpose of this report, modules were included as completed if they were covered at any point during the programme. Modules were also included in this calculation if they were partially completed according to the fidelity record.

The Pre Programme questionnaire for the evaluation was completed by the students in the first session and the project workers noted that this restricted the time that they had to cover all the material in the first session. Only a few classes used the scenarios and just over half the classes did a walking debate in Session 1. Three of the five modules in Session 2 were covered in all the classes and a fourth was covered by almost all the classes. However, the module "Why do we have sex" was covered in less than half the groups. One project worker did not deliver this module to any group and explained that they ran out of time on each occasion.

Project workers included a number of comments about the "Why do we have sex" module including one that stated that the students felt that the material was "*a bit young*" for them. Other comments on this module included "*great to finish with something fun for the girls"* and "*teens said it felt weird"*.

Figure 1: Content Covered in Sessions 1 and 2

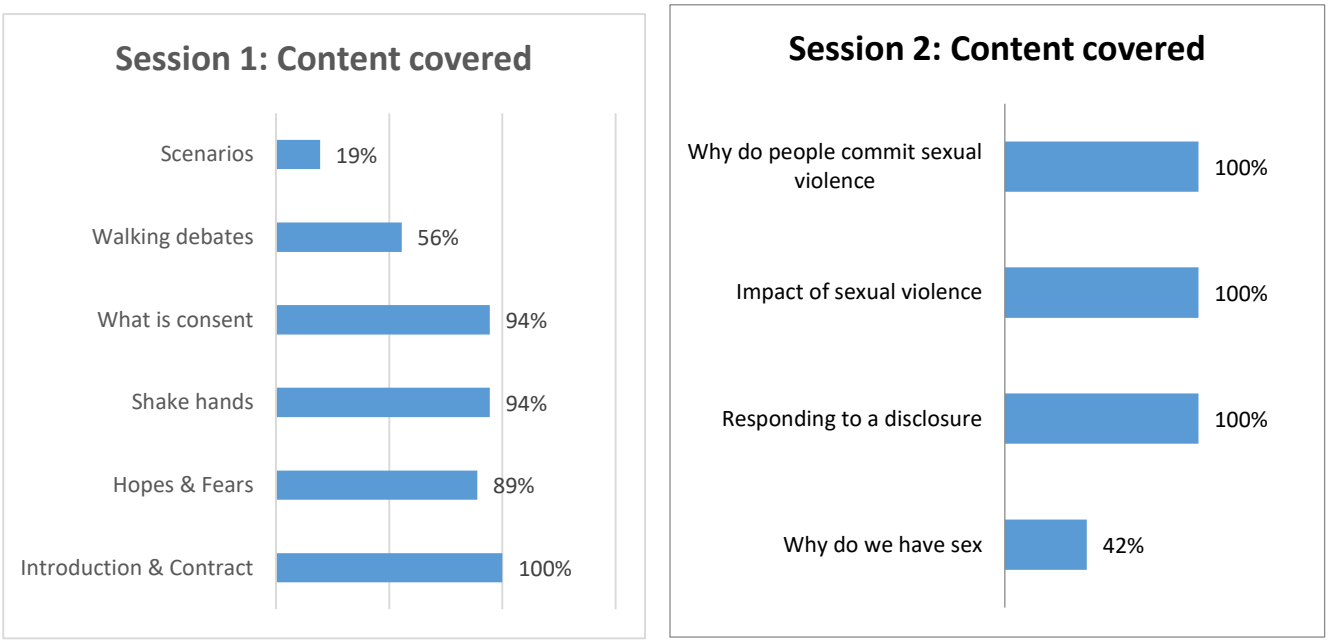


Figure 2 presents the coverage data for Session 3 and 4. The two key modules in Session 3 were covered in all classes and the option module was covered in more than half the classes. The project workers included many comments about Lucy's House party, one of which reported that the students felt that the information was too late and that they were "*way ahead of this*". However, the other comments were very positive about this module, for example:

> *Engaged with film, great to see female perpetrator*
>
> *Found Lucy's House party to be visually effective and real to what adolescents can experience socially. The video clip was really good and showed different scenarios which would be beneficial to the whole group. Loved Red Flags and had questions for first time*

In particular, project workers noted that the video prompted much discussion – and some argument, which some project workers used to introduce other parts of the Manuela Programme:

> *In Lucy's House Party discussion 2 boys insisted that there was no proof and Simon was innocent when the other students said obviously Simon raped Lucy - good discussions and very manageable in small group but also because it is so small the two strongest personalities - one boy, one girl, tried to turn parts into a boy vs girl type discussion. So we talked a bit about gender stereotypes in the session as well*

"Healthy vs Unhealthy Relationships" was described as a piece that the students "*really get into*" and one that results in a lot of learning for the students.

In Session 4, one module was covered in all the classes and the other three were covered in most classes. The fidelity records demonstrate the diversity of responses of the students to different

components of the programme and the extent to which the project workers were required to exercise flexibility and to tailor each component to different classes:

> *We discussed it* [sexting], *they didn't want to do walking debate and felt they received multiple talks on it before so we talked about the important pieces*.

A number of comments were included about the gender stereotypes module, some of which noted that the students engaged with the topic but others which indicated some resistance or disinterest in this topic on the part of the students:

> *Gender piece was somewhat flat. We covered it but very little interaction from the class*
>
> *No interest in the gender stereotypes - most felt it was not an issue anymore and I didn't push it*
>
> *Really hard sell on the gender stereotypes and positive masculinity. Seems to go over the majority of the lads*

Figure 2: Content Covered in Sessions 2 and 4.

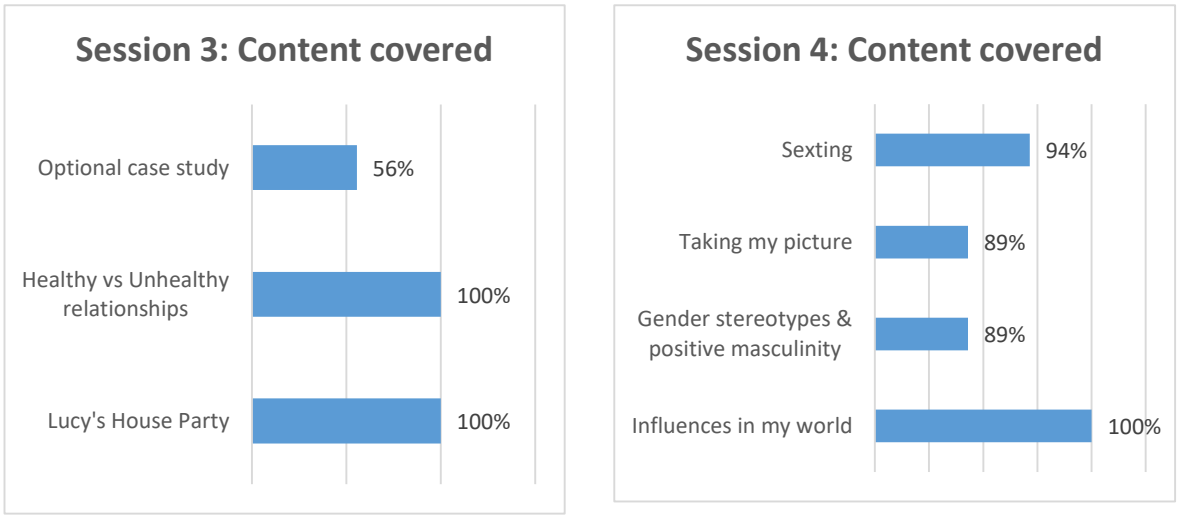
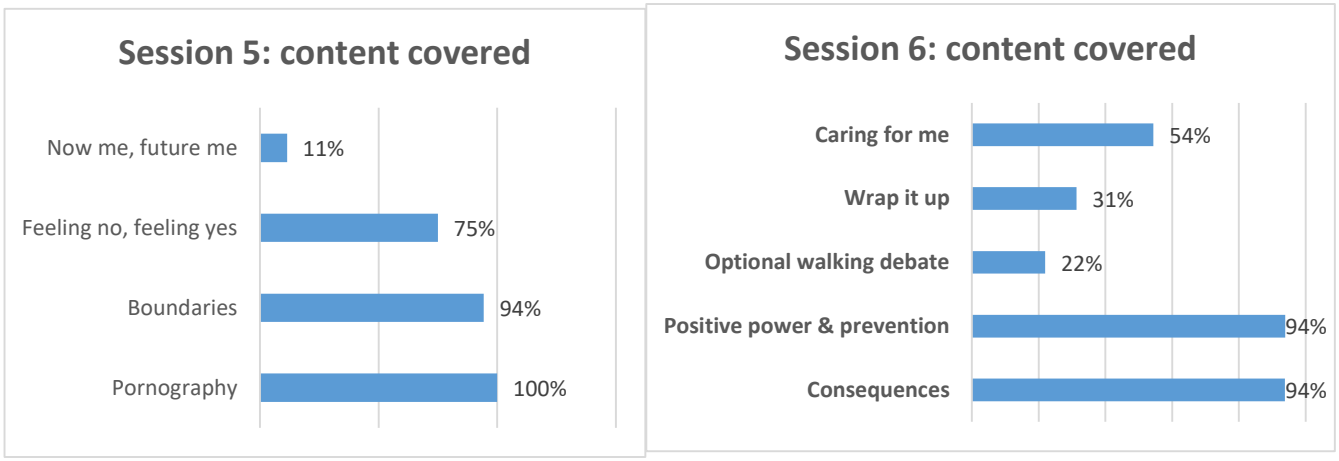


Figure 3 presents the extent to which the programme content was covered in Sessions 5 and 6. The post-questionnaire was completed in the sixth session and it impinged on the time available for the programme in the same way that the pre-questionnaire impinged on the first session. All classes receive the module on Pornography and most classes covered Boundaries. A few comments were made about the Pornography module including: "*Engaged well with walking debate, seemed very knowledgeable about unrealistic nature of porn"* and "*they felt a little jaded re porn - tired of it 'it's everywhere'!"* One project worker noted that pornography was "*a difficult topic for teachers to carry out outside of the workshop"*.

Most students received the Positive Power & Prevention module and the Consequences module. Less than one third of students received the "Wrap it up" module but a number of positive comments were noted about it including this one from a teacher: "*A very good finish to the sessions - the wrap it up exercise was fun and reflective for students"*.

Figure 3: Content covered in Sessions 5 and 6.



Insights from the Fidelity Records

The fidelity records provided information on the practicalities, challenges, and high points of delivering the Manuela Programme. The group sizes varied considerably, with 18 of the groups comprising more than 20 students. The number in one group increased to 35 when extra students attended particular sessions. A number of references were made in the fidelity records to the advantage of "*nice small classes*" and one project worker wrote that "*smaller groups feel safer to the students*". The size of groups also fluctuated between sessions due to participation in other transition year, sports, and school activities. The scheduling of sessions was also subject to change due to unforeseeable events including bad weather and events within the school or wider community. In some instances re-scheduling of classes was not possible and the programme was abridged:

> *We scheduled 12 one hour sessions and 2 were cancelled so we did 10 sessions*

When sessions are rescheduled, the flow of the programme may be affected. After a gap of many weeks between Session 5 and Session 6, one project worker reported:

> *Tough sell on this session. Really felt like we lost momentum*

The day-to-day business of the school also impeded the delivery of the programme in some instances with interruptions from staff members collecting forms, giving reminders about upcoming forms to be returned, and forthcoming events within the school.

Of the 36 classes for which fidelity records were completed, 19 noted that teachers or other personnel facilitated or co-facilitated some or part of the programme. Three fidelity records were completed by teachers. Co-facilitation was recorded as a very positive experience in a number of the records:

> *Very talkative class, responded great to teacher co-facilitating*

> *Teacher co-facilitated each session and she did brilliant, students responded well*

However, the presence of a teacher in the classroom may also act as a barrier to the students' participation:

Teacher in the room didn't work well there – class told me after he had left the room

Teachers were also referred to in the fidelity records for their role in supporting standards of behaviour in the class and removing disruptive students from the sessions. The records suggest that behaviour problems are not commonly experienced but when they arise they can be extremely disruptive for the class and the project workers:

Three boys a bit disruptive – really tried to turn the whole consent conversation to talking about animals having sex

I had to repeatedly ask them to stop talking when I was talking and stop throwing things, hitting each other etc.

The fidelity records also indicate that programme facilitators were flexible and adaptable in optimising the programme to individual groups and sessions. Some groups interacted well with each other and the programme and a number of comments specified that females might engage more when they are in an all-girls group:

Very educated crew, more talkative with no males in the group

The project workers adapted the session and placed more or less emphasis on aspects of the programme according to the needs and wants of the groups. Students had different levels of previous knowledge and some felt that the Manuela Programme was not giving them new information:

Students said that they were bored because they had covered all of this before

Likewise, students had different levels of comfort in discussing some of the topics or engaging with some of the activities and project workers reported making adaptations to support their engagement:

Changed walking debate to a more private and personal space, had them take paper and respond privately on paper and then went over more complex questions. This was a very quiet class.

Conclusion

Taking into account the impact that the completion of the evaluation questionnaire had on the first and last session of the programme, the fidelity records indicate that the Manuela Programme was largely delivered as designed. Most modules were delivered to most groups, however in Session 5 "Now me, future me" was delivered in just over 11% of groups and "Why do people have sex?" was delivered to less than half the groups. This may undermine the co-facilitation model used in the pilot project of the Manuela Programme to enable teachers to learn how to facilitate independently. Where teachers have not experienced the co-facilitation of a particular module they may be less inclined to deliver it themselves or could infer that it is not an important programme component. The length of the sessions did not have an apparent impact on the coverage of content was covered, with the full session delivered to some groups in 90 minutes or less.

The fidelity records highlight the vulnerability of a programme delivered in schools over a six-week period to a myriad of interruptions and disruptions. Some of these disruptions may impact all years within a school. However transition year may be particularly susceptible to interruptions it typically includes optional and external activities. The views of the project workers, as expressed in the fidelity records, suggest a divergence of opinion about whether single sex or mixed groups are more receptive to the programme. However, it is clear that some groups are more amenable than others and that groups may have very different dynamics. Thus facilitators are required to have both skill and confidence in being responsive to the subtleties of each group and flexible in their delivery.

Chapter 3: Quantitative Results

The intervention arm of the evaluation study comprised 626 students – 67% in mixed gender schools, 24% in boys schools, and 9% in girls schools. These students took part in the Manuela Programme and completed a Pre Programme and Post Programme questionnaire. A total of 81 students took part in the waitlist control arm of the study – 65% of these students were in mixed gender schools, 27% in girls schools, and 8% in boys schools. These students completed the Pre Programme questionnaire on two occasions six weeks apart but did not take part in the Programme during that period.

The percentage of boys and girls was approximately even in the intervention group (53% male, 46% female, 1% other) and in the control group (48% male, 51% female, 1% other). One student identified their gender as other than binary in the control group and nine did so in the intervention group. The data from the students who identified their gender as other was included in the statistical analysis, however where the data is presented by gender identity this group was not included due to the small number of students involved.

Age

Over 90% of the students who took part in the intervention and control groups were between 15 and 16 years of age. A majority were 16 years of age in the intervention group (55%) and in the control group (62%), followed by 15 year olds (intervention group: 43%, control group: 35%). A small number were 17 years (intervention group: 3%, control group: 4%). There were three 14 year olds in the intervention group.

Descriptive Quantitative Results

A descriptive analysis of the main scales used in the Pre and Post Programme questionnaires is presented below. This section of the findings provides an orientation to the quantitative data and an initial comparison between intervention and control groups illustrated by responses to representative items. The control group Pre and Post Programme questionnaire responses were not significantly different so the findings in relation to the intervention group are focused on in this description. The lack of change in control group responses verified that no change occurred over the period and bolsters the argument that the significant changes identified in the intervention group Pre and Post Programme questionnaire responses were attributable to taking part in the Manuela Programme.

Consent Preparedness

The Consent Preparedness scale comprises six questions indicative of self-efficacy and peer perceptions of approval for active consent. Each items is scored on a 1-5 scale of agreement. Most items are positively phrased. Once scores on negatively phrased items are reversed, the item scores are summed. Higher summed scores indicate higher levels of agreement. The maximum score for the scale is 30. In the intervention group, the mean score between questionnaires increased by 3.05 points to 24.41 indicating high levels of consent preparedness. The mean score from the first questionnaire

completed by the control group students was 21.64, decreasing slightly to 21.18 on the Post Programme questionnaire.

Table 5: Consent Preparedness Scale Responses, Pre and Post Programme and by Group.

	Pre Mean	Post Mean	Pre Standard Deviation	Post Standard Deviation	Pre Item Mean	Post Item Mean
Intervention	21.36	24.41	3.61	3.11	3.56	4.07
Control	21.64	21.18	3.67	4.10	3.61	3.53

In the intervention group the mean score for females increased to a greater extent (4.41) than did the scores of the males (2.76). Changes in item responses among the intervention group are illustrated in Table 6, which presents the percentages of students who agreed with statements on the Consent Preparedness scale (i.e., choosing 'agree' or 'strongly agree' option). For example, the percentage of students who agreed with the idea that they are well informed about sexual consent rose from 64% in the Pre Programme questionnaire to 95% on the Post Programme questionnaire. Rates of agreement on the four positively phrased items changed substantially. The percentage of male students who agreed with the negatively phrased items did not change at all and the percentage of female students who agreed with these items changed only slightly. This left about one third of Post Programme males and one fifth of females agreeing with the social norm peer perception that people their age think talking about sexual consent is 'odd'.

Table 6: Percentage of Students Who Select 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree' on Consent Preparedness Items.

	Pre Male	Post Male	Pre Female	Post Female
I feel well informed about sexual consent	65.5	95.4	63.6	96.1
I have all the skills I need to deal with sexual consent	62.1	91.4	52.7	94.2
My peers think that sexual consent is an important issue	64.4	77.7	74.2	88.4
I would be confident talking about sexual consent with peers	49.2	72.2	55.3	81.6
People my age think talking about sexual consent is odd	33.0	34.3	26.8	20.2
I'd find it hard to talk about sexual consent with a partner	21.7	21.0	20.0	14.1

Consent to Sex Scale

Eighteen questions from the Consent to Sex Scale (Jozkowski & Peterson, 2014) were included in the questionnaire to assess the behavioural strategies that participants said they would use if they were to let their partner know if they consent or agree to engage in some form of intimacy. The four point scale of agreement for each item invites students to choose from strongly disagree, disagree, agree and

strongly agree options. The 18 questions comprised eight statements referring to verbal consent strategies and 10 statements that describe passive consent strategies. The maximum overall score for the verbal consent statements is 32 and 40 for the passive consent statements.

Table 7: Consent to Sex Scale Responses, Pre and Post Programme and by Group.

	Pre Mean	Post Mean	Pre Standard Deviation	Post Standard Deviation	Pre Item Mean	Post Item Mean
Intervention – Passive	26.03	26.02	6.26	6.30	2.60	2.60
Intervention – Verbal	24.08	26.16	3.92	4.15	3.01	3.27
Control – Passive	25.24	25.05	3.99	4.27	2.52	2.50
Control – Verbal	23.11	23.51	6.28	6.09	2.89	2.94

Verbal consent strategies were more endorsed by the Manuela Programme participants, as indicated by the mean item score for the passive and verbal statements. However endorsement of the passive statements was still at a relatively high level as it exceeds the scale mid-point. The control group scores on the two sub-scales of the Consent to Sex measure suggest no change in endorsement of behavioural intentions. The intervention group mean score on verbal consent statements changed by 2.08 points from 24.08 to 26.16, indicating that some change did occur, with a slightly greater increase for female participants than for males. This is reflected in a change of 0.26 in mean item scores for verbal statements, from 3.01 to 3.27. There was no indication of change in the passive consent item scores for the intervention group.

Table 8 illustrates the descriptive findings on verbal items in the Consent to Sex scale for the intervention group. Responses to these items indicate general support among the students for verbal consent strategies. For instance in the Pre Programme questionnaire 85% agreed they would indicate consent by saying it's ok to engage in intimate behaviour, moving to 91% in the Post Programme questionnaire. For females, the largest change on an individual item was in the intention to tell their partner what types of intimate behaviour they want to engage in ask their partner (going from 79.7% to 91.4%). The largest percentage change for male students on a single item on this sub-scale was on the item 'I would suggest being intimate to my partner', which increased from 76.4% to 85.3%.

Table 8: Percentage of Students Who Selected Agreement Options on Verbal Consent Strategy Items.

	Disagree / Strongly Disagree		Agree / Strongly Agree	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
I would say it's ok to engage in intimate behaviour				
Male	15.2	13.3	84.8	86.7
Female	14.0	5.1	86.0	94.9
I would ask my partner if they are interested in engaging in intimacy				
Male	15.9	8.2	84.1	91.8
Female	26.9	18.0	73.1	82.0
I would tell my partner what types of intimate behaviour I want to engage in				
Male	17.8	13.7	82.2	86.3
Female	20.4	8.6	79.7	91.4
I would tell my partner that I am interested in being intimate				
Male	16.2	9.1	83.8	90.9
Female	23.2	16.5	76.8	83.5
I would talk about it with my partner				
Male	14.1	7.9	86.0	92.1
Female	13.6	7.2	86.4	89.8
I would give verbal permission to be intimate with me				
Male	18.1	10.6	81.9	89.3
Female	18.8	11.1	81.3	88.9
I would suggest being intimate to my partner				
Male	23.5	14.7	76.4	85.3
Female	36.7	26.8	63.3	73.2
I would verbally communicate I'm interested in being intimate				
Male	19.6	11.8	80.4	88.2
Female	18.7	14.2	81.3	85.9

The programme objective was for endorsement of passive consent strategies to decrease. Although there was a decrease in the percentage of intervention group students endorsing several passive strategies in the Post Programme questionnaire responses, more than 80% of the students still agreed or strongly agreed that they would communicate their consent to engage in intimacy by letting the intimacy progress (81%), by continuing with the intimacy (78%), or by not resisting their partner's attempts for sexual intimacy (59%).

The percentage of students endorsing passive consent strategies in the Pre and Post Programme questionnaire show higher agreement with passive consent communication statements among males. Following the intervention, the majority of males still endorsed most of the strategies as communication options that they would intend to use. On the Post Programme questionnaire the most

common passive communication strategies for both males and females included communicating consent by letting the intimacy progress (males: 87.2%; females: 75.5%) and continuing with intimacy (males: 84.1%; females: 71.8%).

Table 9: Percentage of Students Who Selected Agreement Options on Passive Consent Strategy Items.

	Disagree / Strongly Disagree		Agree / Strongly Agree	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
I would not resist my partner's attempts for sexual intimacy				
Male	24.6	35.9	75.4	64.1
Female	49.6	46.0	50.4	54.0
I would let my partner be intimate with me				
Male	10.1	8.5	89.9	91.4
Female	21.7	15.2	78.3	84.8
I would let the sexual intimacy progress				
Male	12.6	12.7	87.4	87.2
Female	30.5	24.5	69.4	75.5
I would not push my partner away				
Male	28.2	32.4	71.8	67.6
Female	53.6	50.5	46.4	49.5
I would continue with sexual intimacy				
Male	21.0	16.0	79.0	84.1
Female	36.9	28.3	63.1	71.8
I would let my partner go as far as they wanted				
Male	51.5	57.4	48.4	42.5
Female	86.3	84.8	13.7	15.2
I would not say no				
Male	52.3	55.3	47.7	44.6
Female	78.7	73.7	21.3	26.3
I would let my partner touch wherever they wanted on my body				
Male	45.5	51.4	54.5	48.6
Female	78.4	79.9	21.6	20.2
I would not stop my partner's advances				
Male	39.9	48.0	60.1	51.9
Female	76.3	70.4	23.7	29.6
I would let my partner start sexual intimacy and not tell them to stop				
Male	43.9	49.2	56.1	50.7
Female	78.0	73.8	22.1	26.2

The least frequently endorsed strategy was an item that conveys complete lack of personal control – letting their partner go as far as they wanted (males: 42.5%; females: 15.2%). There was an increase in the percentage of male students who agreed with two passive items on the Post Programme

questionnaire, but a decrease on remaining items. By contrast, the percentage of female students expressing agreement increased on nine of the passive items. While most increases were of a small scale (less than 5%), and occurred in the context of higher male agreement at baseline, this pattern suggests different appraisals of passive consent strategies.

Sexual Consent Scale

The Sexual Consent Scale–Revised (SCS–R) (Humphreys & Brousseau, 2010) comprises five sub-scales that measure different facets of an individual's beliefs, attitudes, and behavioural intentions with respect to sexual consent, perceived norms for communication and negotiation between sexual partners. The scales map on the Theory of Planned Behaviour framework described earlier in the report. The Manuela Programme evaluation questionnaire included 10 questions from the subscale on perceived behavioural control. This subscale is titled "(lack of) behavioural control" as the items refer to challenges and impediments to achieving positive, active consent. Three items from the shorter subscale on "awareness and discussion" were also included.

Respondents give their agreement to each item using a 1-7 scale. Three items were positively worded and the scores for these items were reversed before analysis. In the subscale "(lack of) behavioural control" a high score indicates a negative attitude or behaviour towards negotiated consent. These scores should decrease following an intervention designed to support active consent. By contrast, in the "awareness and discussion" subscale, high scores indicates higher levels of awareness and greater involvement in discussions about sexual consent.

Table 10: Sexual Consent Scale Responses, Pre and Post Programme and by Group.

	Pre Mean	Post Mean	Pre Standard Deviation	Post Standard Deviation	Pre Item Mean	Post Item Mean
Intervention– Perceived behavioural control	32.93	29.04	12.31	13.29	3.29	2.90
Intervention – Awareness & discussion	12.71	13.78	4.32	4.43	4.24	4.59
Control – Perceived behavioural control	30.73	31.60	12.31	13.29	3.07	3.16
Control –Awareness & discussion	13.19	12.61	4.64	4.47	4.40	4.20

The intervention group's mean score for the "(lack of) behavioural control" subscale decreased from 32.93 to 29.04. This was reflected in a decline in the mean item score from 3.29 to 2.90. Given that a neutral score on an item is 4.0, any mean item score below 4.0 is positive in that it indicates that the barrier identified in the item is not endorsed. The females recorded greater change in mean item scores on this subscale (female: 0.48 change in mean item score; male: 0.33 change in mean item score).

The percentage of students who moderately / strongly disagreed with the items typically rose by approximately 10% (e.g., the percentage of female students who disagreed with the idea that they would have difficulty asking for consent because it would spoil the mood went from 40.1% to 51.8%). The percentage scores also illustrate greater changes in female scores – for instance the percentage of females who moderately / strongly agreed with the positively worded item that they feel confident they could ask for consent from a partner rose by almost 20% whereas the equivalent for males was 6%.

The figures also illustrate that, while some positive change was achieved, there is further scope for students to feel comfortable and confident about active consent. That is, the percentage of students who moderately / strongly disagreed with consent barriers typically ranged from 40-60%, leaving many more students yet to reach that level of disagreement.

Table 11: Percentage of Students Who Select 'Strongly' or 'Moderately' Options on Perceived Behavioural Control Items.

	Strongly / Moderately Disagree		Strongly / Moderately Agree	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
I would have difficulty asking for consent because it would spoil the mood				
Male	25.2	34.4	17.0	11.6
Female	40.1	51.8	5.7	7.2
I would be worried a partner could think I'm weird or strange if I asked for sexual consent before starting any intimacy				
Male	31.0	38.0	19.5	11.0
Female	41.6	52.2	14.0	6.5
I would have difficulty asking for consent because it doesn't really fit with how I like to engage in sexual intimacy.				
Male	33.7	45.7	11.9	6.1
Female	50.0	58.1	7.2	5.0
I would worry that other people would think I was weird or strange if they knew I asked for sexual consent before intimacy.				
Male	41.3	51.1	13.7	6.1
Female	50.9	59.8	10.7	6.4
I think that verbally asking for sexual consent is awkward.				
Male	30.7	36.4	18.2	13.7
Female	36.6	48.4	12.9	7.5
I believe that verbally asking for sexual consent reduces the pleasure of the encounter.				
Male	33.0	42.6	11.0	8.5
Female	54.1	63.4	7.1	4.7
I would have a hard time talking about consent during intimacy because I am too shy.				
Male	34.5	38.0	17.3	11.7
Female	36.9	49.1	15.8	8.3
I would not want to ask a partner for consent because it would make me aware that I'm sexually active.				
Male	44.6	50.2	6.7	6.3
Female	54.0	68.3	6.2	4.0
I feel confident that I could ask for consent from a new partner.				
Male	13.5	9.3	30.8	36.7
Female	15.8	7.9	31.6	46.4
I feel confident that I could ask for consent from a partner.				
Male	10.4	5.9	40.8	47.2
Female	12.0	6.2	40.6	60.2

The group's mean score for the "awareness and discussion" subscale increased from 12.71 to 13.78. The mean item score increased from 4.24 to 5.59 indicating higher levels of awareness. As with the

"(lack of) perceived behavioural control" subscale females recorded a greater level change than did the males (female: 1.16; male: 0.35) in the "awareness and discussion" subscale. Interestingly, about one quarter of the Post Programme males and one half of the females strongly or moderately agreed they had discussed sexual consent issues with a friend or had heard it discussed by people their age. This indicates that they did not relate their discussion of consent in the Manuela Programme to discussion with friends or peers, or did not see it as discussion of consent. However the percentage of students who agreed they had not given much thought to consent dropped by the Post Programme questionnaire to approximately one in ten.

Table 12: Percentage of Students Who Select 'Strongly' or 'Moderately' Options on Awareness and Discussion Items.

	Strongly / Moderately Disagree		Strongly / Moderately Agree	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
I have discussed sexual consent issues with a friend.				
Male	38.3	25.5	23.2	25.5
Female	23.4	17.9	37.6	49.8
I have heard sexual consent issues being discussed by other people my age.				
Male	27.4	25.4	28.9	26.1
Female	19.7	14.0	43.3	48.9
I have not given much thought to the topic of sexual consent.				
Male	25.0	36.5	23.8	12.3
Female	39.6	50.9	17.7	7.9

Heterosexual Script Scale

This scale measures the endorsement of the heterosexual script (Seabrook et al., 2016) using four sub-scale that assess courtship and commitment strategies, beliefs about men as powerful initiators, men's valuing of women's appearance, and the belief that women set sexual limits. In each case it is preferable if endorsement of these heteronormative beliefs reduces after an intervention programme. The original scale was adapted and shortened to a set of 16 items included in the Manuela programme evaluation questionnaire. Students indicated their agreement with each statement on 1-6 scale of agreement. The maximum score for the scale was 96. A high score indicated a high endorsement of the heterosexual script. The control group scores did not change substantially between the Pre and Post Programme questionnaire. The mean score of participants in the Manuela Programme reduced from 52.53 (mean item score 3.28) to 48.22 (mean item score 3.01).

Table 13: Heterosexual Script Scale Responses, Pre and Post Programme and by Group.

	Pre Mean	Post Mean	Pre Standard Deviation	Post Standard Deviation	Pre Item Mean	Post Item Mean
Total score: Intervention group	52.53	48.22	13.11	14.11	3.28	3.01
Total score: Control group	51.61	50.91	14.47	12.27	3.23	3.18
Subscale: Commitment and courtship						
Intervention	4.88	4.74	2.49	2.42	2.44	2.37
Control	4.89	4.83	2.41	2.05	2.45	2.42
Subscale: Men as powerful initiators						
Intervention	14.73	13.80	3.85	4.01	3.69	3.45
Control	14.61	14.32	4.05	4.16	3.65	3.66
Subscale: Men value women's appearance						
Intervention	18.02	16.72	4.86	5.01	3.61	3.34
Control	17.72	17.87	4.87	4.29	3.54	3.57
Subscale: Sex defines masculinity; women set sexual limits						
Intervention	15.01	12.95	5.42	5.32	3.00	2.59
Control	15.08	14.12	5.77	4.70	3.01	2.82

The smallest level of change was apparent on the traditional courtship and commitment strategies sub-scale. Overall a majority of participants disagreed with these items. For instance, 72.2% of females disagreed that "*guys like to play the field and shouldn't be expected to stay with one partner for too long"*, along with 64.1% of males. There was a gender difference on the item that "girls are attracted to guys with a lot of money" – only one-third of males disagreed with this statement compared with three-quarters of the females.

Table 14: Percentage of Students Who Chose Selected Agreement Options on Commitment and Courtship Items.

	Strongly / Somewhat Disagree		Strongly / Somewhat Agree	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Guys like to play the field and shouldn't be expected to stay with one partner for too long				
Male	59.9	64.1	11.1	9.4
Female	72.6	72.2	8.6	9.0
Girls are attracted to guys with a lot of money				
Male	36.4	35.0	24.3	18.4
Female	74.2	77.6	7.1	4.3

Both males and females were less likely, after the intervention, to agree or strongly agree with all four statements in the "*men as powerful initiators*" subscale of the Heterosexual Script measure. There

were notable reductions in the percentage of female students who endorsed the idea that a guy should always protect and defend his girl, and the belief that girls like to admire guy's bodies. There was an increase in the percentage of both males and females who disagreed with the idea that guys should be the ones to ask girls out. Compared with males, the females had a lower level of endorsement of these items to begin with. Nevertheless, support for these beliefs declined among males by the end of the programme.

Table 15: Percentage of Students who Chose Selected Response Options on the Men as Powerful Initiators Subscale.

	Strongly / Somewhat Disagree		Strongly / Somewhat Agree	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
A guy should always protect and defend his girl				
Male	5.9	8.0	71.9	63.3
Female	7.6	13.4	67.9	54.5
Guys should be the ones to ask girls out and initiate physical contact				
Male	35.6	37.5	18.6	13.1
Female	37.2	48.9	18.1	12.4
A girl wants a guy because she wants someone to protect her				
Male	37.5	41.5	8.7	10.7
Female	48.2	51.3	14.4	12.6
Girls like to admire guy's bodies and are attracted most to guys who are muscular and handsome				
Male	14.3	14.3	42.7	37.5
Female	28.4	37.5	31.0	18.8

Five items made up the "*men value women's appearance*" subscale. The highest rate of change of these items after the programme occurred in ratings of the belief that being with an attractive partner gives a guy prestige and that it is only natural for a guy to make advances on someone he finds attractive. Some gender differences were also noted. For instance, there was a 13.2% difference between males and females in agreeing with the item "*it is natural for a guy to want to admire or check out other people even if he is dating someone*", and a 14.2% difference by gender in agreement with the statement that "*being with an attractive partner gives a guy prestige*".

Table 16: Percentage of Students Who Chose Selected Options on Men Value Women's Appearance Subscale.

	Strongly/ Somewhat Disagree		Strongly / Somewhat Agree	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Being with an attractive partner gives a guy prestige				
Male	9.6	12.3	47.7	39.1
Female	18.6	24.5	30.3	24.9
Guys who are able to date a lot of people are considered cool				
Male	35.8	34.1	22.2	20.1
Female	54.5	56.5	23.0	17.7
In the dating game, guys frequently compete with each other for partners and girls try to lure or catch partners				
Male	20.8	28.4	22.0	19.2
Female	26.8	42.9	23.5	12.4
It's only natural for a guy to make advances on someone he finds attractive				
Male	10.0	12.9	43.9	35.0
Female	17.5	24.8	40.7	26.9
It is natural for a guy to want to admire or check out other people even if he is dating someone				
Male	22.5	27.5	28.0	22.9
Female	43.0	48.7	13.2	9.7

There were also five items in the "*sex defines masculinity; women set sexual limits*" subscale. Endorsement of the items in this subscale was generally low, typically one quarter or less of the participants agreed with the items. Participation in the Manuela Programme was linked to levels of disagreement becoming stronger with these gender-typed beliefs on sexual relations. After the programme, the percentage of males who disagreed with items increased by up to 15%. The percentage of males who disagreed with stereotypes that girls are more into emotional relationships and guys into physical ones went from 31% to 38%, the percentage who disagreed with the idea that girls should expect a bad reputation if they engage in intimacy went from 25% to 40%, while the percentage who disagreed that guys are always ready for sex increased from 44% to 60%.

Table 17: Percentage of Students Who Chose Selected Options on "Sex Defines Masculinity; Women Set Sexual Limits" Subscale.

	Strongly / Somewhat Disagree		Strongly / Somewhat Agree	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Girls who play the field should expect a bad reputation				
Male	25.3	39.5	26.8	26.8
Female	43.7	50.4	25.8	20.1
Most guys don't want to be "just friends" with a girl				
Male	29.0	38.9	31.8	19.8
Female	45.1	58.9	17.8	13.4
Guys are more interested in physical relationships and girls are more interested in emotional relationships				
Male	31.2	38.1	17.9	15.6
Female	26.9	43.2	26.1	16.9
Guys are always ready for sex				
Male	44.2	59.6	18.8	10.1
Female	61.9	75.5	15.4	6.5
It is up to the girl to keep things from moving too fast sexually				
Male	47.2	56.5	11.8	7.6
Female	61.9	76.6	7.9	4.0

Updated Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale

The Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale is concerned with inaccurate and false beliefs about sexual assault. The 23 items are comprised of 4 subscales: "*she asked for it*", "*he didn't mean to*", "*it wasn't really rape*", and "*she lied*". Each item is scored on a 1-5 agreement scale. Higher scores indicate a higher level of endorsement of the rape myths, so the objective of an intervention programme is for these scores to decrease. It was apparent that the intervention group's mean scores on these subscales reduced significantly. The total score decreased by an average of nearly 7 points, representing a change from a mean item score of 2.31 in the Pre Programme questionnaire to 1.88 in the Post Programme questionnaire. All mean subscale scores reduced over the course of the Manuela Programme, with the highest mean item scores recorded on the subscales "*she lied*" and "*he didn't mean to*".

Table 18: Rape Myth Scale Responses, Pre and Post Programme and by Group.

	Pre Mean	Post Mean	Pre Standard Deviation	Post Standard Deviation	Pre Item Mean	Post Item Mean
Total score: Intervention group	50.44	43.71	15.01	15.29	2.31	1.88
Total score: Control group	52.04	51.49	15.90	15.52	2.26	2.34
Subscale: She asked for it						
Intervention	13.15	11.05	4.96	4.86	2.19	2.01
Control	13.91	13.57	5.42	5.22	2.32	2.26
Subscale: He didn't mean to						
Intervention	15.50	13.81	4.49	5.02	2.58	2.30
Control	15.45	16.14	4.91	4.40	2.55	2.69
Subscale: It wasn't really rape						
Intervention	8.62	7.35	3.59	3.42	1.72	1.48
Control	9.18	9.14	3.96	4.06	1.84	1.83
Subscale: She lied						
Intervention	13.61	11.92	4.85	4.86	2.72	2.38
Control	13.14	12.72	4.93	4.81	2.63	2.54

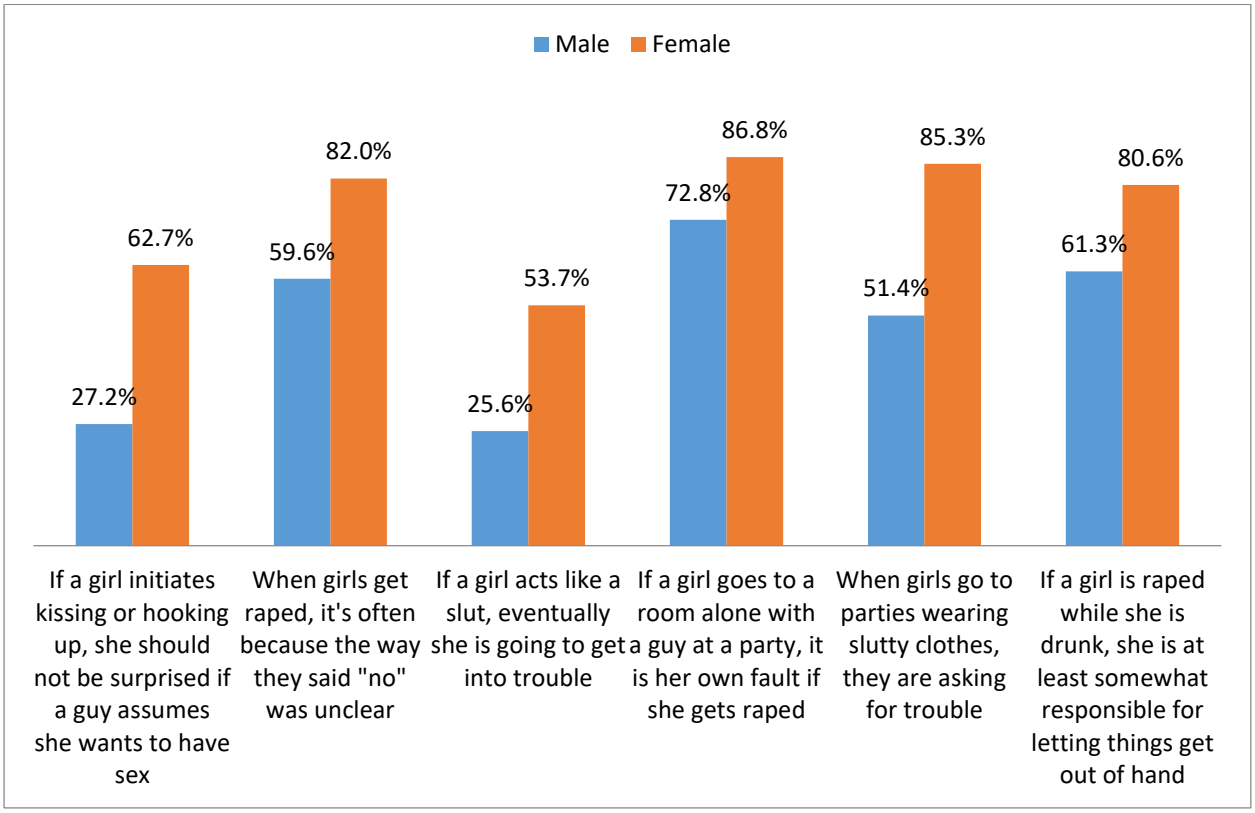
Subscale: She Asked For It

This subscale contained six items that assess beliefs about females being somehow responsible for acts of sexual violence committed against them. The mean scores on this subscale showed the greatest reduction between Pre and Post Programme questionnaires of the Rape Myth subscales. Both males and females were less likely to endorse the statements after the programme. Indeed, males' mean scores declined more than female mean scores, but did begin and finish higher than the equivalent female responses. The mean score for females on this subscale reduced by 1.67 (from 10.50 to 8.83) while the mean score for males reduced by 2.48 (from 15.37 to 12.89). There were considerable differences in rates of disagreement on these statements between the males and females, reflected in 20-30% gender differences in rates of disagreement on Figure 5. The closest convergence between males and females was on the statement "*If a girl goes to a room alone with a guy at a party, it is her own fault if she is raped".* In the Post Programme questionnaire, 72.8% of males disagreed with the statement, compared with 86.8% of females.

Both males and females were least likely to disagree with the statements *"If a girl acts like a slut, eventually she is going to get into trouble"* and "*If a girl initiates kissing or hooking up, she should not be surprised if a guy assumes she wants to have sex".* These were also the statements which attracted the highest percentage of neutral (i.e., non-committal) responses. Just over 30% of males and 16% of females gave a neutral response to the statement "*If a girl initiates kissing or hooking up, she should not be surprised if a guy assumes she wants to have sex".* Just over one quarter of males and

18% of females gave a neutral response to the statement *"If a girl acts like a slut, eventually she is going to get into trouble"*. A relatively high percentage of females (16.7%) gave a neutral response to the statement "*When girls go to parties wearing slutty clothes, they are asking for trouble"*.

Figure 4: Percentage of Participants Who Gave 'Disagree' or 'Strongly Disagree' Responses to Items on the "She Asked For It" Post Programme Subscale, by Gender.



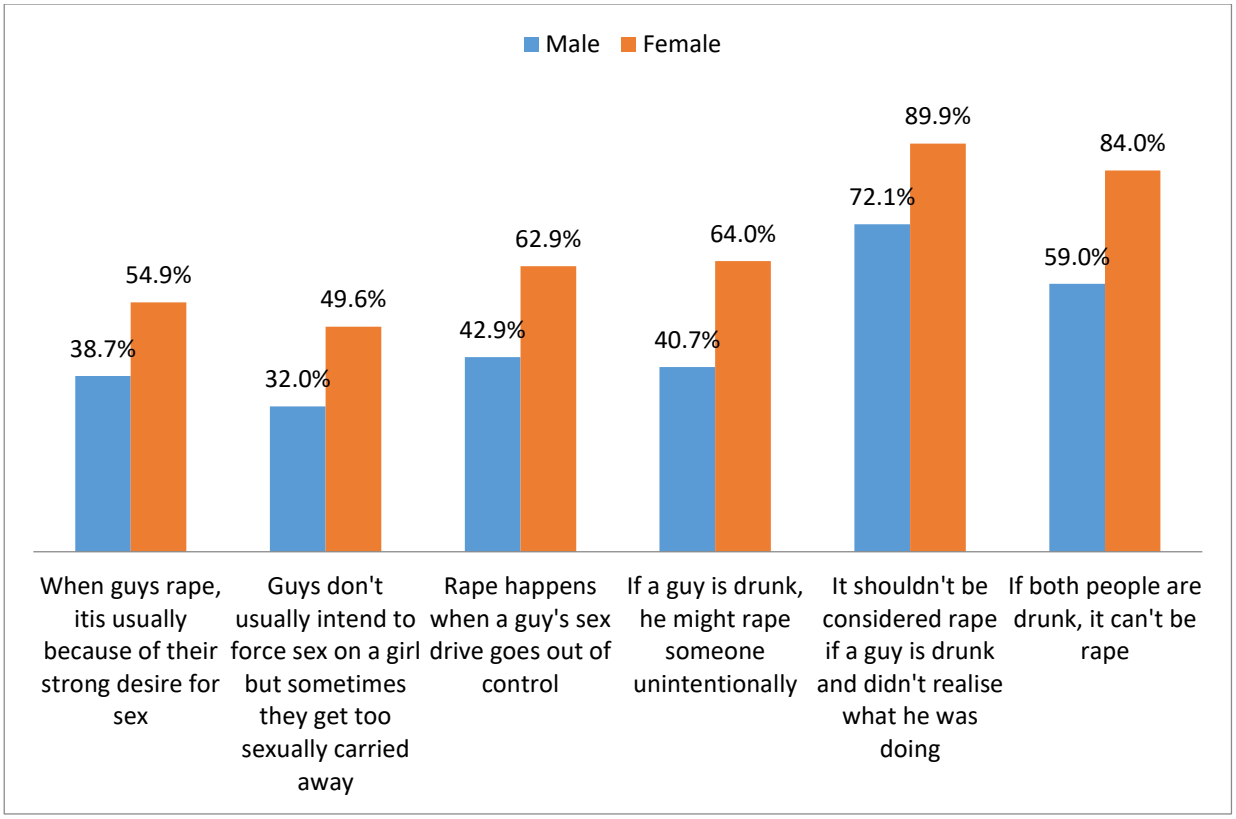
Subscale: He Didn't Mean To

The subscale "*he didn't mean to*" comprised six items that explore beliefs about the intentionality of male perpetrators of sexual violence. The mean female score on this subscale reduced by 1.67 (from 13.48 to 11.80), while the mean male score on this subscale reduced by 1.71 (from 17.20 to 15.49). A higher percentage of males and females taking part in the Manuela Programme strongly disagreed or disagreed with all the statements after the intervention. Nevertheless, after the intervention still less than one quarter of males disagreed or strongly disagreed that "*When guys rape, it is usually because of their strong desire for sex*" and less than 20% strongly disagreed or disagreed that "*Guys don't usually intend to force sex on a girl but sometimes they get too sexually carried away*". These two propositions were also those with which the females were least likely to disagree.

On the Post Programme questionnaire, both males and females most frequently disagreed with the statements "*It shouldn't be considered rape if a guy is drunk and doesn't know what he is doing*" (89.9% of females, 72.1% of males) and "*If both people are drunk it can't be rape*" (84.0% of females, 59.0% of males). However 25% of males gave a neutral response to the statement "*If both*

people are drunk it can't be rape" (10.9% of females). More than 30% of both male and female groups gave a neutral response to the statement *"Guys don't usually intend to force sex on a girl but sometimes they get too sexually carried away"* (males: 34.5%; females: 30.8%). Likewise, more than 20% of both males and females gave neutral responses to the statements *"When guys rape, it is usually because of their strong sex drive"* (males: 24.5%; females: 23.8%) and "*If a guy is drunk, he might rape someone unintentionally"* (males: 30.1%; females: 21.1%).

Figure 5: Percentage of Participants Who Gave 'Disagree' or 'Strongly Disagree' Responses to Items on the "He Didn't Mean It" Post Programme Subscale, by Gender.



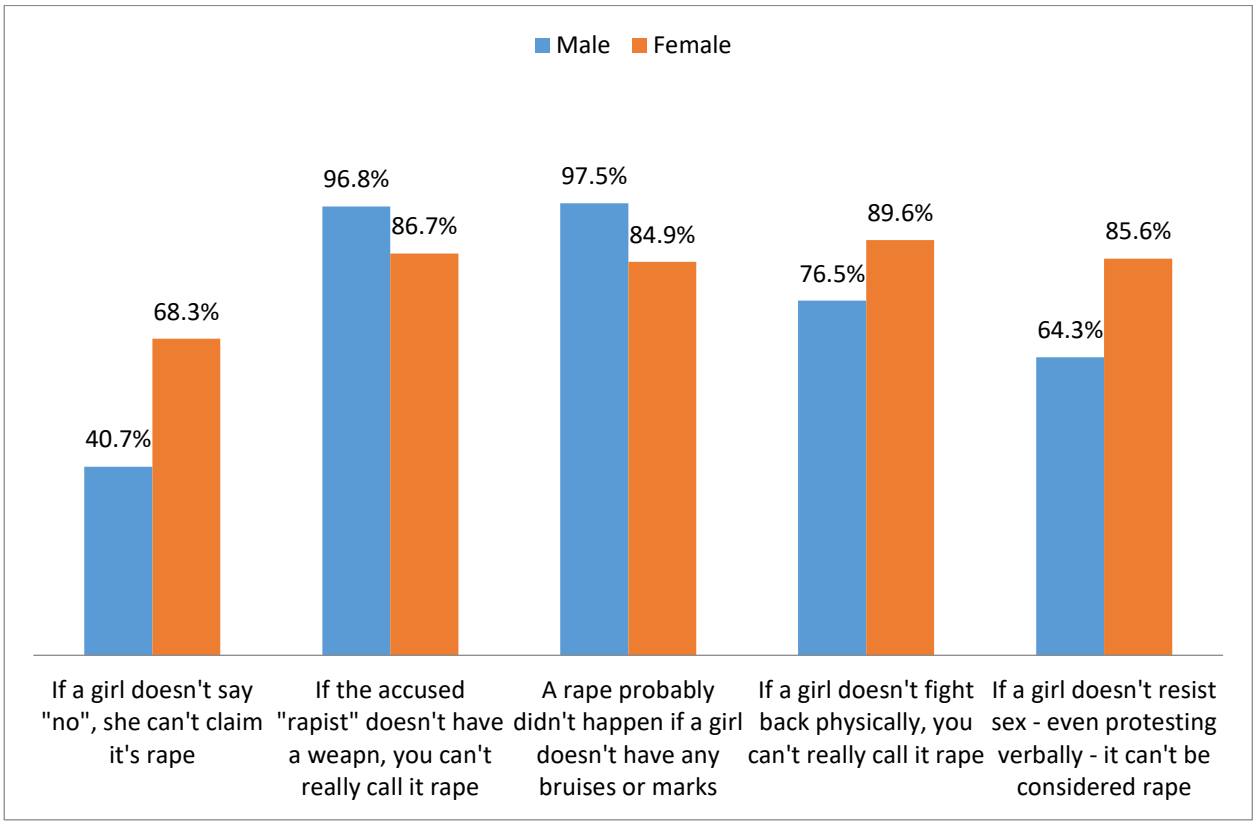
Subscale: It Wasn't Really Rape

The subscale "*it wasn't really rape*" comprises five items stating beliefs that minimise the nature of sexual assault. The mean score for males on this subscale reduced from the Pre to Post Programme questionnaire by 1.51 (from 9.87 to 8.36) while the mean score for females reduced by 1.03 (from 7.15 to 6.13). Post-intervention, more than 80% of the females rejected four of the five propositions, while a smaller percentage (63.8%) rejected the proposition that "*If a girl doesn't say no she can't claim it rape*". Less than 5% of females gave a neutral response to four of the statements in this subscale; 11.3% of females gave a neutral response to the statement *"if a girl doesn't say no, she can't claim rape".*

A higher percentage of males disagreed with each of the propositions after the intervention, but again disagreed to a lesser extent than the females. More than 20% of males gave a neutral response to the

statement "*If a girl doesn't say no she can't claim rape*", and 15.2% of males gave a neutral response to the statement *"If a girl doesn't resist sex – even protesting verbally – it can't be considered rape"*. There was a clearer consensus on other items, with nearly all males disagreeing with the statement: "*If the accused rapist doesn't have a weapon, you really can't call it rape"* (96.8%) and *"A rape probably didn't happen if a girl doesn't have any marks or bruises"* (97.5%).

Figure 6: Percentage of Participants Who Gave 'Disagree' or 'Strongly Disagree' Responses to Items on the "It Wasn't Really Rape" Post Programme Subscale, by Gender.



Subscale: She Lied

The "*she lied*" subscale comprised five items. These items explore beliefs that women intentionally misstate what was happened to them and make untrue reports of assault or rape. The mean score for males on the Pre Programme questionnaire (15.84) was higher than that of the females (10.89) and remained so after the intervention (mean score of 13.82 for males, 9.61 for females). Nevertheless the mean scores declined after the intervention and male scores reduced to a greater degree than female scores. Following the intervention, a higher percentage of both males and females disagreed with each of the statements and a smaller percentage agreed with them.

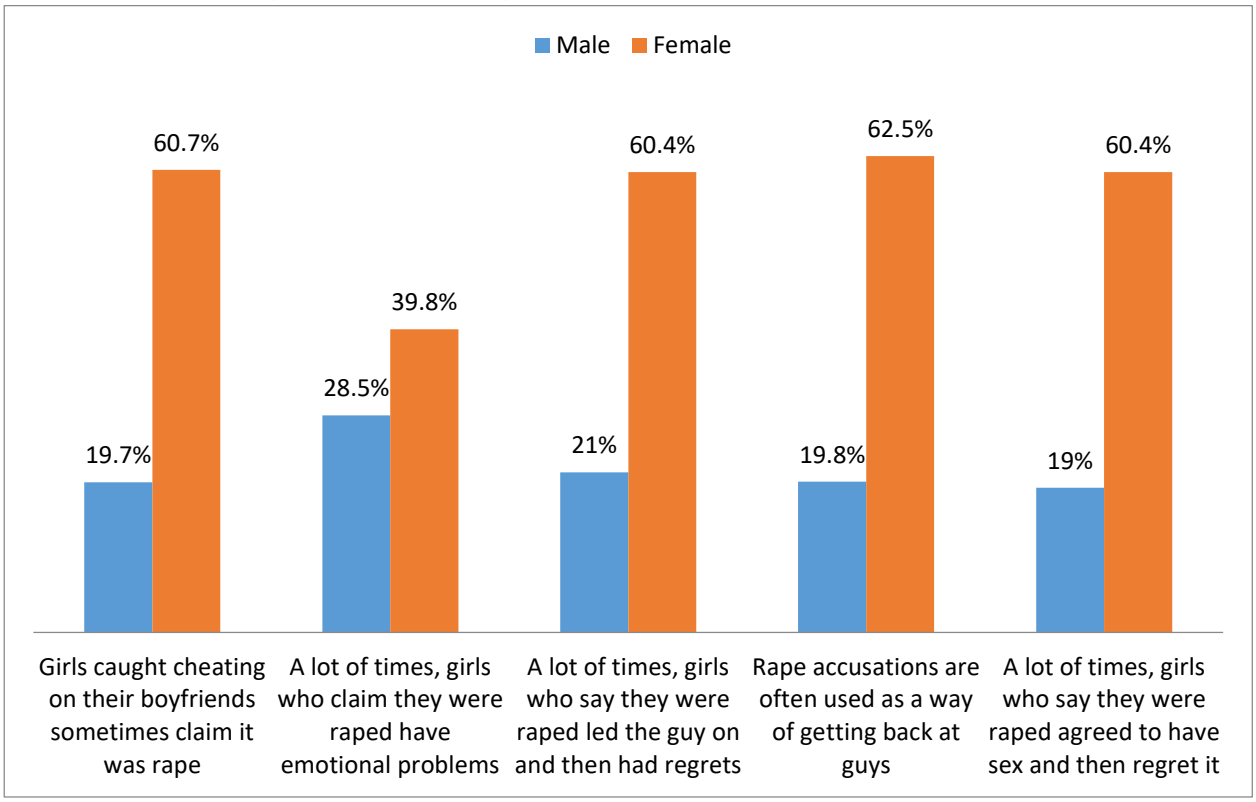
While relatively few of the Manuela Programme participants agreed with or endorsed the items, there was a marked gender difference in responses. There was a large difference in the percentages of males and females who disagreed with the items. Approximately 60% of females disagreed with four of the items. Less than 40% of females disagreed with the statement: *"A lot of times girls who claim they*

were raped have emotional problems". Approximately 30% of females gave a neutral response to the statements "*Girls caught cheating on their boyfriend sometimes claim it was rape", "A lot of times, girls who say they were raped led the guy on and then had regrets", " A lot of times, girls who say they were raped agreed to have sex and then regret it"*, and "*Girls caught cheating on their boyfriends sometimes claim it was rape".*

By comparison, less than 30% of males disagreed or strongly disagreed with any of the items in the subscale "*she lied"*. More males returned a neutral response than disagreed with the items. More than 40% of males gave a neutral response to the items: "*Girls caught cheating on their boyfriends sometimes claim it was rape", "A lot of times girls who claim they were raped have emotional problems", "A lot of times, girls who say they were raped led the guy on and then had regrets"*, and *"A lot of times, girls who say they were raped agreed to have sex and then regret it"*.

As an indicator of the acceptability of "*she lied*" rape myths for males, the mean item score for males on four of these items was more than 3.00 on the Pre Programme questionnaire (i.e., above the scale neutral point). In addition, there was a mean item score of more than 3.00 for males on two of the "*she asked for it*" rape myths and on three of the "*he didn't mean it*" rape myths. By comparison, in the responses to the Post Programme questionnaire, there was no mean item score of 3.00 or more for males. While the mean score on these items remained above 2.50, by the end of the intervention the social norm had moved away from endorsement of faulty rape myth beliefs.

Figure 7: Percentage of Participants Who Gave 'Disagree' or 'Strongly Disagree' Responses to Items on the "She Lied" Post Programme Subscale, by Gender.



Sexting and Pornography

The sexting and pornography scale is a six item measure developed to measure attitudes to pornography and sexting. Two items measure attitudes toward the acceptability of sexting and four items assess beliefs about pornography. Each item is rated on a six point agreement scale. The control group scores on these items did not change, whereas the mean scale score of the intervention group reduced from 15.36 to 12.96. This was reflected in a reduction of the mean item score from 2.56 to 2.16. The mean score for the two sexting statements reduced from 6.38 to 6.00 for the intervention group, while the equivalent figure for pornography questions reduced from 8.95 to 7.01.

Table 19: Pornography and Sexting Scale Responses, Pre and Post Programme, and by Group.

	Pre Mean	Post Mean	Pre Standard Deviation	Post Standard Deviation	Pre Item Mean	Post Item Mean
Intervention – Sexting / Porn Total	15.36	12.96	5.08	4.66	2.56	2.16
Control – Sexting / Porn Total	16.20	16.54	5.02	5.24	2.70	2.76
Intervention – Sexting Items	6.38	6.00	2.40	2.42	3.20	3.00
Control – Sexting Items	6.14	6.29	2.32	2.33	3.07	3.15
Intervention – Porn Items	8.95	7.01	3.80	3.22	2.24	1.75
Control – Porn Items	10.06	10.16	4.22	4.25	2.52	2.54

Prior to participating in the Manuela Programme, over half of the students strongly disagreed with the propositions that sex in porn is like sex in real life and that porn portrays sex in a realistic way. This proportion increased further in the Post Programme questionnaire. However this change was more marked among female participants, with a large gender gap opening up. Male participants were more likely to strongly disagree with these statements after taking part in the programme, with an increase of approximately 15% in the percentage of males strongly disagreeing with the idea that pornography reflects sex in real life. The equivalent percentage change for females was an increase of over 25%. Although they shared a change in attitude, there was a divergence between the males and female responses in the impact of the intervention programming on pornography.

Relatively few students strongly disagreed with the idea that it is the norm to engage in sexting, with no change in beliefs following the programme. More females did strongly disagree with the idea that sexting is relatively harmless, rising to nearly 30% after the intervention, but there was little change in the percentage of males who strongly disagreed with this idea.

Table 20: Pornography and Sexting: Percentage of Programme Participants Who Selected 'Strongly Disagree' as a Response Option.

	Pre Male	Post Male	Pre Female	Post Female
Sex in porn is like sex in real life	51.6	65.2	55.4	81.8
Porn portrays sex in a realistic way	48.9	64.7	57.0	82.9
People can get useful information about how to communicate with a sexual partner from watching porn	34.5	47.1	37.1	62.0
People can get useful information from watching porn about different types of sexual behaviour	17.5	26.5	18.5	40.1
It is the norm to engage in sexting	9.1	9.7	15.3	15.4
Sexting is relatively harmless	11.9	15.3	17.5	29.3

Inferential Statistical Analysis of the Manuela Programme Effectiveness

The inferential analysis of the Pre and Post Programme questionnaire data was designed to identify whether statistically significant differences occurred for programme participants, taking into account control group and gender. A General Linear Model analysis was conducted using univariate ANOVA. This is a statistical analysis that enables the relationship between a predicted or outcome variable (e.g., consent preparedness) and several independent predictor variables to be assessed simultaneously. The strength of the effect of a predictor variable on the outcome variable is indicated by the F statistic, which is further contextualised by the level of statistical significance, and the use of Partial Eta Squared as a measure of effect size (allowing us to describe the effect of a variable as small, medium, or large). Effect sizes between .01-.09 are considered small, 0.10-0.25 are medium, and effect sizes over 0.25 are interpreted as indicative of a large effect.

The inferential analysis was used to test hypotheses arising from the Manuela Programme objectives. Table 21 sets out the findings in relation to the Post Programme scores on consent preparedness, attitudes, and behavioural intentions. In the first example, several variables are used to assess variance in Post Programme consent preparedness scores. The R^2 figure indicates how much variance is accounted for within the analysis model (in this case 25%). The Pre Programme consent preparedness score was the strongest predictor by far of the Post Programme consent preparedness score – as we would expect, the strongest predictor of the Post Programme score is the equivalent score on the Pre Programme measure. This is the case throughout all the GLM analyses, as the Pre Programme scores are strongly correlated with their Post Programme scale equivalent. Through its inclusion in the analysis, the Pre Programme score is controlled for and allows the impact of the other variables to be discerned more clearly. In the case of Post Programme consent preparedness, the group condition (i.e., intervention or control group status) was a significant predictor, indicating an experimental effect arising from taking part in the intervention. The impact of group condition has a Partial Eta Squared coefficient of .119, suggesting a medium effect size.

Gender and the interaction of gender and condition (i.e., gender X condition) were included as covariates. This meant that the analysis was able to identify any moderating or confounding effects that might arise from these factors. A significant gender X condition interaction suggests that the intervention effect was stronger for one gender only or even restricted to one gender. In the case of consent preparedness scores, gender was not a significant predictor of post-intervention scores, but there was a significant interaction of gender and condition. Those female participants who had taken part in the intervention had a significantly higher consent preparedness score than males who took part. While consent preparedness scores did not differ by gender as a whole, females in the intervention group had a larger increase in preparedness than males.

Looking at the two forms of consent communication strategy that were assessed, there was a main effect for verbal consent, indicating a significant increase in the endorsement of verbal consent behaviour intentions for programme participants, but no gender effect or gender X condition interaction. The effect was not linked to gender. While there was a significant difference in verbal consent intentions among those who took part in the intervention, the Partial Eta Squared figure suggests a small effect size. Turning to passive consent intentions, there was no significant change in passive consent scores for programme participants relative to the control group. There was a significant albeit small effect for gender on passive consent scores overall, suggesting that males overall had significantly higher endorsement of passive consent communication strategies than females. There was a significant main effect for participation in the Manuela Programme on Post Programme scores on the consent-related measures of perceived behavioural control and awareness / discussion. Although significant, the effect size was small in both cases. There was no effect for gender or gender X condition for these factors.

Table 21: Univariate ANOVA of Pre / Post Programme Questionnaire Responses, Consent Scales.

	F	Significance	Partial Eta Squared
Consent Preparedness, R^2=.25			
Manuela Programme / Control Group Condition	82.70	.000	.119
Pre Programme scores	115.16	.000	.158
Gender	0.13	.716	.000
Condition X Gender	5.48	.020	.009
Verbal Consent, R^2=.25			
Manuela Programme / Control Group Condition	24.18	.000	.036
Pre Programme scores	176.96	.000	.216
Gender	0.03	.863	.000
Condition X Gender	3.49	.062	.005
Passive Consent, R^2=.41			
Manuela Programme / Control Group Condition	0.53	.465	.001
Pre Programme scores	298.43	.000	.330
Gender	4.95	.026	.008
Condition X Gender	0.83	.362	.001
Perceived Behavioural Control, R^2=.37			
Manuela Programme / Control Group Condition	11.68	.001	.018
Pre Programme scores	343.39	.000	.352
Gender	0.81	.368	.001
Condition X Gender	2.23	.136	.004
Awareness and Discussion, R^2=.28			
Manuela Programme / Control Group Condition	10.63	.001	.016
Pre Programme scores	202.19	.000	.237
Gender	2.55	.111	.004
Condition X Gender	1.12	.290	.002

The conclusion in relation to the inferential analysis of the impact of the Manuela Programme on the consent variables is that there was a medium effect size on increases in consent preparedness, a small effect size in relation to increased verbal consent communication intention scores, awareness and discussion, and a small effect size decrease in perceived barriers to engaging in active consent (perceived behavioural control). All consent measures changed significantly among programme participants compared with the control group, with the exception of passive consent.

Table 22: Univariate ANOVA of Pre / Post Programme Questionnaire Responses, Rape Myth Scales.

	F	Significance	Partial Eta Squared
Rape Myths Total, R^2=.60			
Manuela Programme / Control Group Condition	29.87	.000	.048
Pre Programme scores	513.75	.000	.465
Gender	5.41	.002	.009
Condition X Gender	.427	.514	.001
She Asked For It, R^2=.48			
Manuela Programme / Control Group Condition	24.64	.000	.036
Pre Programme scores	361.50	.000	.355
Gender	9.97	.002	.015
Condition X Gender	0.58	.449	.001
He Didn't Mean To, R^2=.41			
Manuela Programme / Control Group Condition	26.18	.000	.040
Pre Programme scores	271.71	.000	.300
Gender	6.59	.010	.010
Condition X Gender	0.06	.811	.000
Not Really Rape, R^2=.34			
Manuela Programme / Control Group Condition	20.40	.000	.031
Pre Programme scores	192.01	.000	.229
Gender	19.06	.000	.029
Condition X Gender	3.48	.062	.005
She Lied, R^2=.47			
Manuela Programme / Control Group Condition	7.45	.000	.011
Pre Programme scores	329.82	.007	.340
Gender	9.91	.002	.015
Condition X Gender	0.40	.526	.001

Table 22 sets out the same form of statistical analysis in relation to the rape myth total scores and subscale scores. The overall trend was that there was a significant impact on rape myth total scores and all subscale scores from taking part in the Manuela Programme, resulting in a small effect size statistically. There were no significant interactions of condition X gender, but there was a significant main effect for gender for all scales, showing that females were significantly less supportive of rape myths than males. Putting this in context, the effect size associated with participation in the Manuela Programme was either greater than or equal to the effect size linked to gender. In conclusion,

participation in the Manuela Programme is supported as an effective method of reducing rape myth endorsement.

Table 23 sets out the GLM analysis in relation to the heterosexual script scale total score and subscale scores. It demonstrates that there was a main effect for the group condition in the overall scale score and in the scores for two of the subscales, in relation to '*men value women's appearance'*, and '*sex defines masculinity*, *women set sexual limits'*. In all cases the effect size was small. There was a significant main effect for gender for all the scales with the exception of '*men value women's appearance'* – females generally had lower scores on endorsement of heterosexual script beliefs compared with males. The effect size for gender was small. There was one interaction gender X condition, with females in the intervention group having the lowest endorsement of '*men value women's appearance'* items.

Table 23 also includes the GLM analysis for the short scales concerning sexting and perceptions of pornography being a helpful guide and source of learning on sexual intimacy. There was a main effect for Manuela Programme participation on scores on both subscales indicating that the participants were less accepting of sexting and trusting of pornography after taking part in the programme. The effect size for participation in the programme on pornography scores was near the level of a medium effect. There was also a main effect for gender, with females having lower scores than males on both subscales.

Table 23: Univariate ANOVA of Pre / Post Programme Questionnaire Responses, Heterosexual Script Scales, Sexting and Pornography Scale.

	F	Significance	Partial Eta Squared
Heterosexual Scripts Total, R^2=.46			
Group condition	6.14	.014	.010
Pre Programme scores	392.77	.000	.404
Gender	4.77	.029	.008
Condition X Gender	1.48	.224	.003
Courtship and Commitment, R^2=.27			
Group condition	0.69	.682	.000
Pre Programme scores	650.49	.000	.193
Gender	24.98	.014	.009
Condition X Gender	0.51	.476	.001
Men as Initiators, R^2=.37			
Group condition	2.27	.132	.004
Pre Programme scores	332.64	.000	.344
Gender	5.06	.025	.008
Condition X Gender	0.57	.450	.001
Men Value Women's Appearance, R^2=.37			
Group condition	7.67	.006	.012
Pre Programme scores	285.74	.000	.310
Gender	1.42	.234	.002
Condition X Gender	7.49	.006	.012
Sex Defines Masculinity, Women Set Sexual Limits, R^2=.29			
Group condition	4.66	.031	.007
Pre Programme scores	215.74	.000	.252
Gender	10.70	.001	.016
Condition X Gender	0.89	.346	.001
Sexting, R^2=.35			
Group condition	4.05	.045	.006
Pre Programme scores	292.18	.000	.313
Gender	5.17	.023	.008
Condition X Gender	0.29	.590	.000
Pornography, R^2=.30			
Group condition	52.53	.000	.080
Pre Programme scores	158.15	.000	.208
Gender	10.06	.002	.016
Condition X Gender	0.54	.461	.001

Implications of Pre / Post Programme Surveys as a Baseline of Adolescents' Attitudes and Intentions

There is currently limited baseline information for adolescents in Ireland on the positive and negative dimensions of sexual health described in the literature review. The attitudes, intentions, and beliefs that were assessed in the Pre and Post Programme questionnaires are potentially useful in addressing this gap in our knowledge, especially considering the sampling of participants from across the country. Participation in the Manuela Programme took place in the context of the students' earlier socialisation in social norms and potentially harmful beliefs. Thus, to begin with, only 14% of females and 26% of males strongly agreed that they have all the skills they need to deal with sexual consent. This rose to 58% of females and 57% of males after the programme. In addition, before taking part, 22% of females and 24% of males strongly agreed that they were well informed about sexual consent. After taking part, these figures rose to 80% of females and 67% of males. While these figures suggest an increase in perceptions of self-efficacy and confidence, they also document a relatively low baseline level of confidence prior to taking part, which may be reflective of broader trends nationally that the revised RSE programme will need to address.

Before taking part in the Manuela Programme, 24% of females and 44% of males strongly agreed they would show their consent by asking their partner if they want to engage in intimacy. Reflective of the relatively modest changes in consent communication intentions associated with the programme, these percentages rose to 46% of females and 49% of males after the programme. Before the programme, 40% of females and 41% of males strongly agreed they would talk about having intimacy with their partner as a way of showing consent, compared with 53% of females and 44% of males after the programme. These findings highlight an increase in support for 'asking' and talking as a way of checking, asserting, and ensuring that consent is present, with an increase in active consent intentions for females in particular and a smaller change for males. Taking part in the programme appeared to narrow the baseline gender gap in this form of affirmative consent between females and males, but suggests that this gap may still exist in the broader community.

Pre-participation, 13% of females and 18% of males moderately / strongly agreed that verbally asking for sex is awkward, falling to 8% of females and 14% of males after the programme. Before taking part, 31% of females and 32% of males moderately / strongly agreed that they were confident they could ask for consent from a new partner. This rose to 46% of females and 37% of males after the programme. These figures indicate that asking for consent is not seen as awkward by many young people to start with, and the reduction in the percentage in this category is modest as a result. There was a more substantial increase in feeling confident that they could ask for consent, at least for females, moving from a relatively low base. It would be preferable if the figure who feel comfortable with asking were higher still. While attitudes to consent were generally positive, there were still

indicators of lack of empowerment among the young people that suggests a community-wide approach is called for.

In relation to heterosexual scripts, a total of 18% of females and 19% of males somewhat / strongly agreed that guys should be the ones to ask girls out and initiate physical contact. These figures fell to 12% of females and 13% of males after the programme. 23% of females and 22% of males agreed before the programme that in the 'dating game', guys usually compete with each other for partners, falling to 12% of females and 19% of males after the programme. Relatively few young people subscribed to these beliefs as components of a traditional heterosexual script before the programme, and thus the rate of improvement was modest. There were higher levels of endorsement of other indicators of heteronormative scripts. For instance, pre-programme, 41% of females and 44% of males somewhat / strongly agreed that 'it's only natural' for guys to make advances on someone they find attractive, which fell to 27% of females and 35% of males after the programme. Fewer females (18%) and 32% of males somewhat / strongly agreed that guys do not want to be just friends with a girl, falling to 13% of females and 20% of males after the programme. Here we can note that traditional, scripted beliefs can be identified among young people, especially among males, but that these can be addressed through participation in an intervention such as the Manuela Programme.

Before the programme, 15% of females and 25% of males agreed / strongly agreed that girls who go to parties wearing 'slutty clothes' are asking for trouble. These figures fell back to 1% of females and 13% of males afterwards. Pre-programme, 17% of females and 42% of males agreed / strongly agreed that girls who initiate hooking up should not be surprised if the guy assume she wants sex. This items attracted agreement from 8% of females and 22% of males after the programme. Before taking part, 37% of females and 50% of males agreed / strongly agreed that when guys rape it is usually because of their strong desire for sex. After taking part, these figures fell to 22% of females and 37% of males. Pre-programme, 11% of females and 41% of males agreed / strongly agreed that girls who were raped agreed to have sex and then regretted it, falling to 9% of females and 24% of males afterwards.

Pre-programme responses to items on rape myths indicate that beliefs clearly tolerant of assault still have a disturbingly high level of acceptance in a relatively large sample of young people, particularly among teenage boys. These beliefs, in combination with heterosexual scripts, are an important foundation for ongoing acceptance of sexual and gender violence. While there was a significant rate of change in the acceptance of rape myths, in general males started from a higher baseline level of acceptance. The resulting picture at group level is one where females are even less tolerant of rape myths than they were to begin with, while the percentage of males who endorse myths falls back to an improved but still unacceptable level. As noted above, many students continued to be 'neutral' in regard to rape myths, highlighting the continuing and most likely systematic approach needed to counter these false narratives.

Summary of the Quantitative Analysis

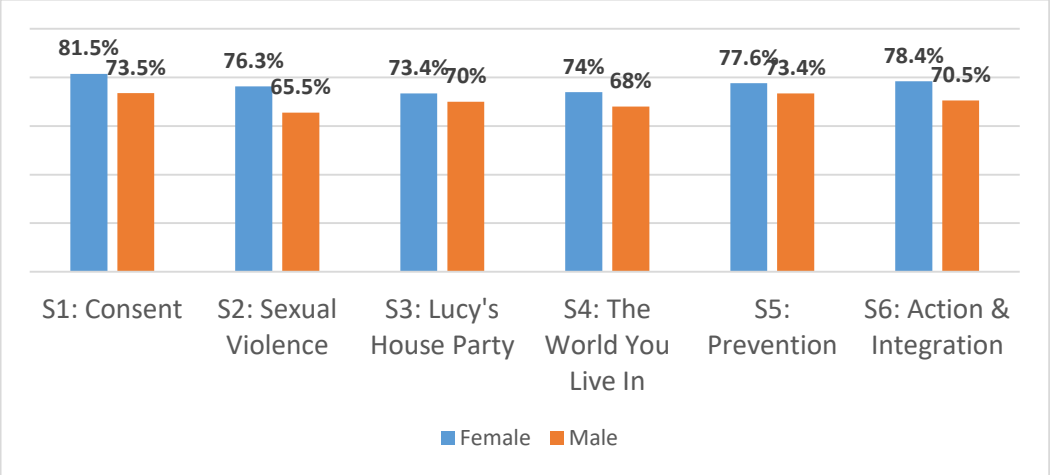
The Pre and Post Programme questionnaire responses provide an insight on adolescents' attitudes and intentions concerning important aspects of negative and positive components of sexual health concerning consent and sexual violence. The Pre Programme baseline helps to demonstrate the need for a systematic approach to supporting both positive development and prevention of sexual misconduct. Taken together, the GLM analyses supported the hypothesis that participation in the Manuela Programme has a significant impact on both positive understanding and intentions concerning the achievement of sexual consent as well as on harmful beliefs concerning sexual violence and related constructs, particularly the endorsement of rape myths. This is exemplified by the following Manuela Programme participant mean score changes:

- Increase in mean score in consent preparedness among females from 21.6 to 25.1, and from 21.2 to 23.8 for males.
- Increase in mean score for verbal consent behavioural intentions among females from 23.2 to 26.2, and from 24.8 to 26.2 for males.
- Decrease in (lack of) perceived behavioural control among females from 31.4 to 26.6, and from 34.6 to 31.0 for males.
- Decrease in rape myth scores among females from 42.1 to 36.2, and from 58.1 to 50.5 for males.
- Decrease in heterosexual script scores among females from 49.3 to 43.7, and from 55.7 to 52.2 for males.

Student Evaluation of the Manuela Programme

The Post Programme questionnaire included questions to prompt feedback on the content, structure, and process of the Manuela Programme. Students were asked to share their opinions of each of the six sessions that comprised the programme on a scale from 1 (very negative) to 7 (strongly positive). All six sessions of the Manuela Programme were rated moderately or strongly positively by at least 70% of the students, with the "Prevention" (76% of students), "Action and Integration" (74%), and "Consent" (77%) sessions garnering the most positive ratings. Females consistently rated the sessions more positively than males. The percentage difference was greatest for the "Consent" and "Action and Integration" sessions. Males were least positive about the "Sexual Violence" session.

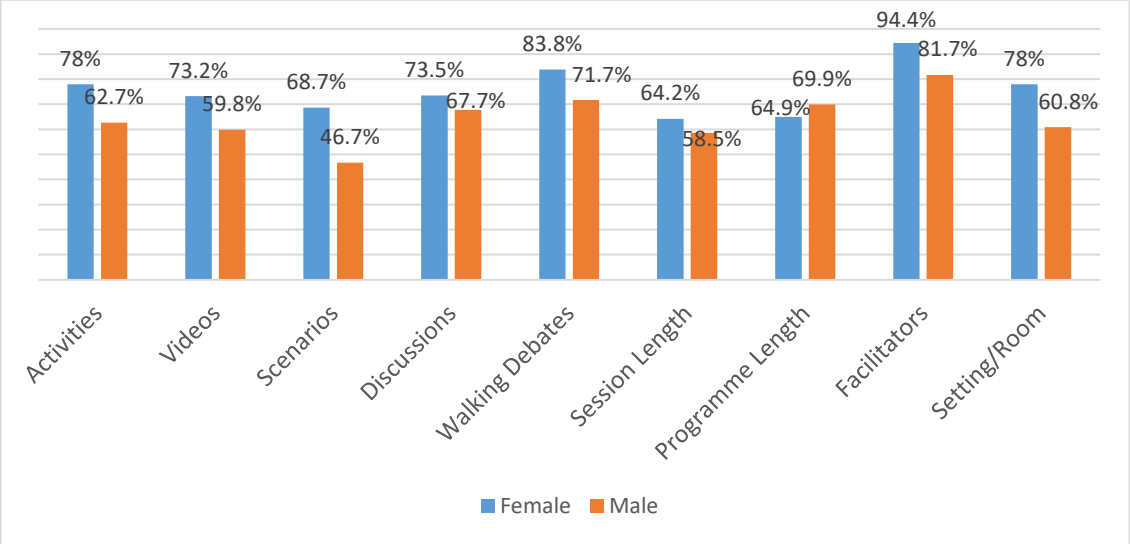
Figure 8: Percentage of Students Who Rated Programme Sessions Moderately or Strongly Positively, by Gender.



Ratings of Manuela Programme Components

The feedback from participants was particularly positive with regard to the programme facilitators, with 87.2% rating them moderately or strongly positively. The lowest ratings were given to the use of scenarios in the programme (61.8%) and the length of the programme sessions (61.3%). A gender divergence in the ratings was apparent and consistent between the males and females across all the programme components. Male participants scored each component less favourably. The percentage difference was greatest in relation to the scenarios, with a 22% difference between the rating of the males and the females. A percentage difference of more than 10% between males and the females was found in relation to setting, activities, the videos, the facilitators, and walking debates. The highest gender convergence was on ratings of programme and session length, and use of discussions.

Figure 9: Percentage of Students Who Rated Programme Delivery Components Moderately or Strongly Positively, by Gender.



Personal Impact of the Manuela Programme

During its development, the components of the Manuela Programme and its intended outcomes were depicted via a logic model. Three of the intended outcomes were long-term outcomes and seven were immediate outcomes. These intended outcomes were presented in the Post Programme questionnaire to students who had taken part in the intervention as a series of statements. They were asked to consider "*What impact, if any, did the Manuela Programme have for you personally*?" Response options ranged from 1-5, with 1 representing "no impact" and 5 representing "very significant impact".

Figure 10: Percentage of Students Reporting 'Significant' or 'Very Significant' Impact of the Manuela Programme, Recognition and Understanding Items.

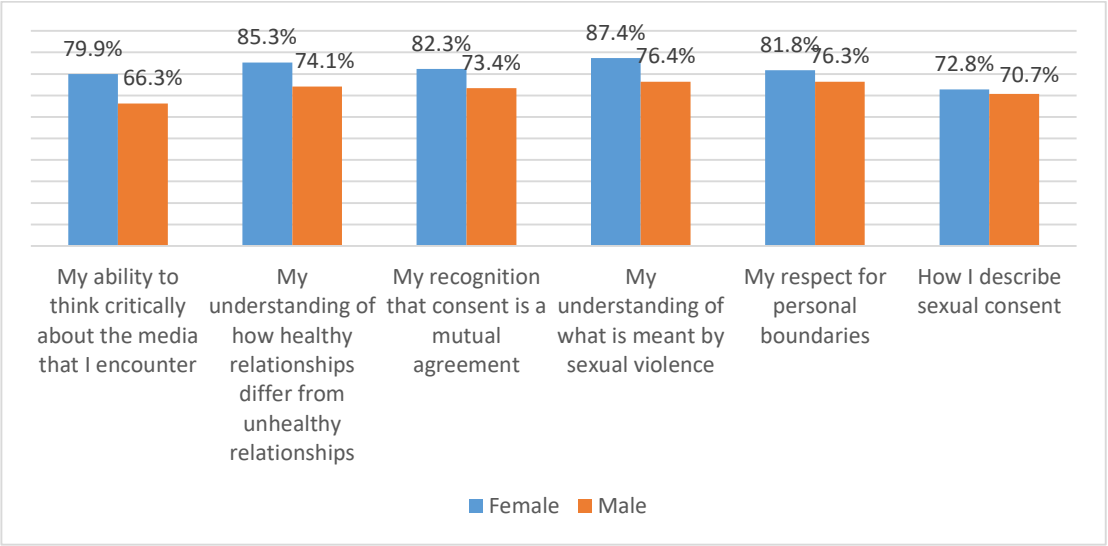
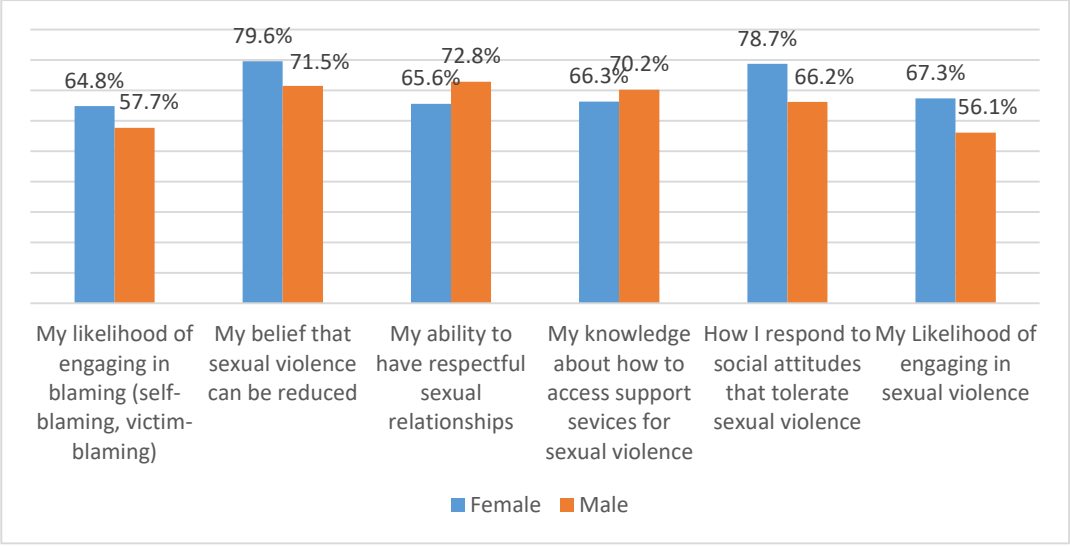


Figure 12: Percentage of Students Reporting 'Significant' or 'Very Significant' Impact of the Manuela Programme, Ability and Capability Items.



Ratings of the programme impact suggest that approximately three quarters of the male participants and four fifths of females identified with having experienced several positive outcomes as a result of taking part. The responses to the statements should be interpreted with caution as no information is available about the students' position prior to the programme. In addition, some items refer to negative actions with which students may not have identified. For instance, a number of students added a comment within the questionnaire that they were unlikely to engage in sexual violence prior to the programme, therefore the programme would have had little impact in this respect.

Females were more likely than males to report significant or very significant impact with regard to nearly all of the impact statements. The exceptions were the items that refer to perceptions of knowledge in how to access support services for sexual violence and ability to have respectful relationships. Almost 80% of female students felt that the Manuela Programme could have a significant or very significant impact in reducing levels of sexual violence and in challenging social attitudes that tolerate sexual violence. By comparison, more than 70% of males responded that the programme could have significant or very significant impact on the reduction of sexual violence, and 66% were similarly positive that the programme challenges social attitudes that tolerate sexual violence.

Student Recommendations for Changes to the Manuela Programme

As part of the post-intervention questionnaire, students were asked what changes they would make to the Manuela programme, if any. A majority of respondents stated that they would not change anything about the programme, with a greater proportion of males than females expressing this view. More than one-quarter of respondents expressed dissatisfaction with programme and session length, with diverging views regarding the ideal duration overall. For instance, while more respondents advocated for a lengthening of the programme, some students nonetheless recommended a shortening of programme duration. With respect to session duration, most students who expressed a view recommended a shortening of sessions.

The third most frequent response to this question was to include more interactive activities in the programme. Specifically, a number of respondents advocated for the inclusion of additional games and videos. However, with respect to group work, respondents expressed contrasting views with some recommending additional group work while a smaller number recommending less group work. Some students proposed changes to programme content based on subject areas that they wanted included or inadequately addressed. For instance, a small number of respondents identified areas relating to sexual violence that were either omitted, such as *"what actually happens if you go to help centres and what it is they do to help rape victims*". Others wanted more information on biological areas relating to sex and sexual intercourse. Students also expressed a desire for more realistic stories and case studies, with a greater number of females compared to males expressing this view.

Conclusion

The fidelity records demonstrated that most of the students received most of the programme components. A small number of the modules were only received by a minority of the students. This has clear implications for both the integrity of the programme as a whole and for the "training by co-facilitation" approach designed to enhance the sustainability of the Manuela Programme after the pilot project ends. The fidelity records also indicated the level of skill, flexibility and sensitivity required to deliver the Manuela Programme alongside expertise, enthusiasm, and persistence.

Student feedback on the content of the programme and the process of taking part were positive overall, although useful feedback was given on future changes in delivery and content. The participants provided evidence of identifying with positive outcomes arising from the programme. These suggest that the learning objectives and outcomes envisaged by the programmer developers were addressed successfully. Nevertheless, there was scope to identify how the student feedback can be used to further improve the impact of the programme, particularly in relation to the experience of males taking part.

The quantitative results demonstrate that the Manuela Programme had a statistically significant impact on the student participants across most of the measures. Following participation in the programme, students were more prepared and confident to negotiate sexual consent, had greater self-efficacy to verbally communicate in matters of sexual intimacy, and had a more positive attitude towards negotiating consent. They were also less likely to endorse heterosexual stereotypes or rape myths, and had a less positive attitude towards pornography and sexting.

Nevertheless, the results demonstrated residual levels of rape myth endorsement, which was particularly evident among the male students. Although students were less likely to agree with many of the rape myths their responses did not move into disagreement but into the neutral response. This may indicate that rape myth beliefs are established by the time of engagement with the programme in Transition Year, and points toward the importance of delivering the programme earlier in secondary school.

The changes in the students' responses to the Consent to Sex subscales corresponding with behavioural intentions in relation to consent communication indicated relatively little change. Endorsement of passive communication strategies did not change significantly for programme participants. This suggests the need to review the programme content to ensure it is appropriately balanced between highlighting negative issues such as rape myths and positive behavioural intentions such as verbal consent.

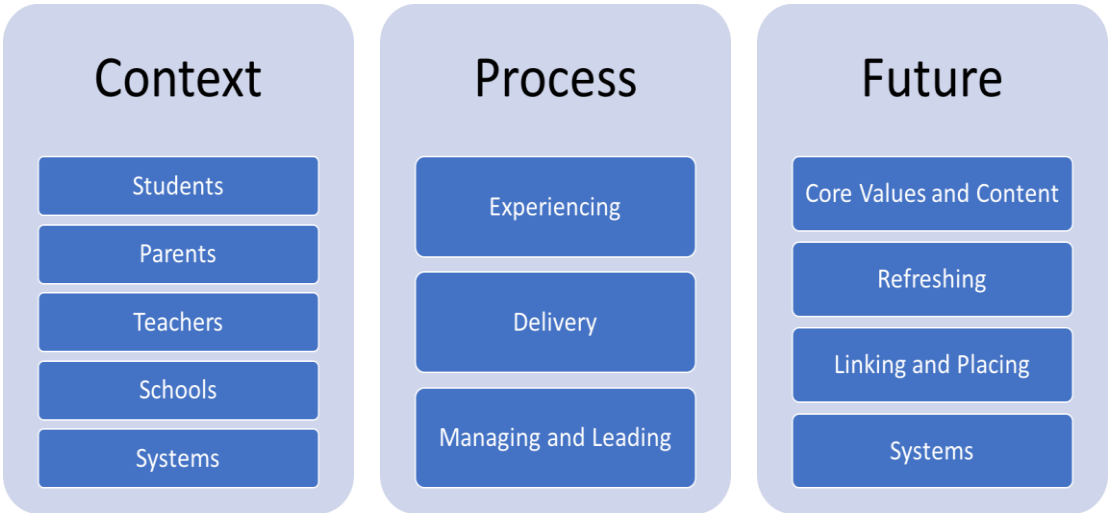
There were gender differences in many of the questionnaire responses. Males were more likely to express negative attitudes. In addition, feedback on the programme demonstrated that the males were less positive about all aspects of the Manuela Programme. It may be that by the age of 16 or 17 the

views of the males had become entrenched or there may be elements of the programme or its delivery that are less acceptable to males.

Chapter 4: Qualitative Results

Thirteen participatory focus groups were conducted with a total of 134 participating students. The focus groups were scheduled to fit in with each school's timetable and ran for between 30 and 60 minutes. Eleven teachers, one chaplain, and one school principal were interviewed for the evaluation. The teachers who took part were sampled on a regional basis and on because of an existing involvement in the Manuela Programme. They were invited to take part by the researcher with some recommended by the project workers who identified teachers felt to be a rich source of information for the evaluation. These teachers were interviewed on the day on which the student focus groups took place in the schools. Other stakeholders were invited, by personal invitation, to take part in either a one-to one interview or a focus group. Two stakeholder focus groups were conducted. One focus group comprised the four project workers on the pilot project and the other comprised the members of the advisory group for the pilot project. Each focus group lasted approximately 60 minutes. Individual interviews were held with six key informants, three of whom were educators at third level institutions, two worked in the Rape Crisis sector, and one was from Tusla. Three interviews were in-person and three were via telephone. Interview times ranged from 30 to 50 minutes.

Figure 12: Qualitative model of the Manuela Programme process.



The findings from the qualitative research for the evaluation is depicted above as a three part model of progression from the pre-Manuela Programme status of schools and students, to the process of delivering the programme, and decision points that will inform future development following the pilot roll-out. In terms of context, the national educational systems to support comprehensive sex education are based on a system developed several decades ago. This system is currently in a reform phase, and seems to be open to incorporating the ethos of positive rights and freedom from harm that the Manuela Programme offers. Yet as it stands, the programme was being delivered into a school system that has not traditionally had systematic, evidence-based approaches to these topics. Many students

leave school with the sense that their sex education has been inadequate or limited. In terms of schools and teachers, the SPHE and RSE teaching role is not a specialisation in the sense that other subjects tend to be, with a resulting tendency to rely on highly motivated, committed teachers to champion the introduction of the programme.

School policies concerning RSE are typically not inclusive of a whole-of-school strategy with regard to sexual health and violence prevention, contributing further to the positioning of the Manuela Programme as an 'add on' dependent on the configuration of Transition Year and favourability of local supporters. The school ethos was not raised as a significant barrier to implementation but has traditionally placed sex education in the context of a Catholic ethos that has not promoted sex positive or progressive practice. Parental attitudes were not raised as a barrier to the implementation of the Manuela Programme. Students were seen by stakeholders to be immersed in a culture outside school that helps to perpetuate the sexualisation and gender roles, which in turn threatens the ethos of active consent and values supportive of mutual respect. The quantitative research findings demonstrate that there was an acceptance of rape myths and gendered stereotypes among a number of pupils, particularly among males. Thus, by the time they have entered transition year, the influences they are exposed to, including peer culture, have resulted in the issues that the Manuela Programme is intended to address. The cultural beliefs and attitudes of students are particularly relevant to the programme as these are the areas that the learning outcomes focus on.

The process of the Manuela Programme that was observed through the qualitative research has three components – one relating to the students who experienced it, the next to the teachers and project workers who delivered it, and the last to the management and leadership responsible for introducing the programme into schools and managing the roll-out. The context depicted above is important to consider here, as the programme is engaging with students who are moving into late adolescence without having had significant prior education on issues of consent and sexual violence.

While some schools may have had prior partnership with external providers and Rape Crisis Centres, the Manuela Programme was a novel introduction of a systematic, manualised, and intensive approach to tackling these issues. The programme had to meet both students and schools where they were in terms of their level of knowledge, skills, and preparedness to engage fully with the topics addressed. In that context, the students' experiences were very promising, as they described the programme having successfully engaged them using a facilitating and non-judgemental mode of delivery. There were nuances to this experience, as the examples facilitators and teachers raised about less successful engagement tended to be linked to boys as opposed to girls. This is to be expected, given the findings revealed through surveys that many boys had less supportive attitudes to begin with. Nevertheless, it demonstrates the need to continue to find ways to engage with those who are less receptive to the message of the programme and the techniques currently used in working with the young people. Some

students were able to identify situations where they did not feel supported within the programme, and this was principally attributed to teachers who were less skilled in delivery. This underscores the need for adequate preparation and support for teachers on an ongoing basis.

In terms of delivery, the manualised, structured approach was appropriate and provided a secure structure that allowed the project workers and teachers the opportunity to respond to the dynamics and nuances of the classes they worked with. There was limited opportunity in the evaluation to capture the full hand over of the delivery to teachers themselves, and while the teachers we spoke to were enthused about their engagement in the programme, there was also nervousness about performing as well as the project workers and lack of confidence in delivering certain elements of the programme. The need for an emerging community of practice between teachers, presumably across schools and regions, was clearly evident. The focus of the discussion of delivery was how the programme roll-out took place within the classroom, and the wider impact on school culture and buy in of school management merits further research.

Project workers described some schools as not open to the programme, opening the possibility of schools who will incorporate the programme and those who will not. At the level of the pilot roll-out organisation and leadership, the approach of having project workers as the key proponents for the programme was successful. They had credibility with schools, teachers, and students, and led the way finding opportunities for the programme to be taken on by schools, supporting the teachers in the schools to deliver sessions and grow in confidence, and contribute to the knowledge and teaching that is critical to programme sustainability.

It is important to highlight the future as a critical part of reflection on the pilot roll-out of the programme. In keeping with the programme aims, the students' open ended comments described the significant impact from the programme in terms of learning about consent and sexual violence. This shows the scope the programme has for supporting students to positively engage with active consent when they engage in intimacy, as well as their raised awareness about the impact of violence, how to recognise negative situations, and the underlying gender-based influences are underpin many of these situations.

The programme does not teach a specific behavioural model for engaging with violence should it occur, bystander interventions skills or specific skill sets in other areas such as managing pornography use. The knowledge webs designed by the students suggest that the core content and contribution is to support personal development, awareness, and sensitivity to others, through critical reflection on scenarios, other engaging materials, and on our cultural assumptions and practices. It does this using a complementary facilitation style that is designed to partner with students in an exploration of the behaviours, scripts, and expectations that are associated with sexual expression. It highlights the risk

and consequences of sexual violence as a key motivating factor, thereby enlisting the empathy, peer support, and values of young people.

While there was much consensus on the value of the programme between all stakeholders, including the students, there was variation among the adult stakeholders in identifying the best way forward for the programme. It would be possible to take the key contribution as outlined above and deliver it in a different modality, and at this early stage of reflection among the stakeholders these are still being discussed and teased out. The existing programme could be trimmed down in terms of content, hours of delivery, and length of sessions to make it more feasible, trainable, and replicable. This runs the risk of reducing the potential impact of the programme, yet set against concerns among some students of repetition and session length should be investigated.

The programme could also be split up and delivered at different points in the secondary school curriculum, including the Junior Cycle, where new opportunities are apparent through the Wellbeing curriculum. This would also help address the issue of engaging with students earlier to offset the finding that some students already endorse rape myths and lack confidence in consent knowledge at the Transition Year stage. Responding effectively to the opportunity to link with curriculum changes, other sexual health education programmes, new teacher training and professional development programmes can help ensure that the programme is placed in the right point and in an appropriate way in the students' educational journey toward autonomy, personal development, and critical thinking.

Yet to navigate these opportunities and potential challenges, it will be important to be attuned to the opportunities that arise. The programme stakeholders comprised a strong team of supporters for the programme, who are able to draw on a range of professional backgrounds, expertise, contacts and networking capacity. This is an important resource that should be developed further, as programme re-design and scaling up of delivery could be an intensive undertaking requiring strong support from statutory as well as NGO stakeholders. Finally, and underscoring the need for the stakeholders to review the programme content, the students' feedback highlighted the need to continually refresh the audio-visual materials and scenarios used as learning materials and prompts for discussion.

Educators

The data from the educators interviews is presented under the themes of sexual consent and sexual violence prevention, reflections on experiences of the Manuela Programme, strengths and weaknesses of the Manuela Programme, and opportunities and challenges to further implementation of the Manuela Programme.

Sexual Consent and Sexual Violence Prevention Among Young People

A number of the educators expressed concern that students increasingly lack a concept of what constitutes a healthy relationship and many do not have good role models in their lives. Teachers and principals expressed serious concerns about the influences which young people are exposed to and their lack of preparedness to meet the challenges arising from this exposure:

> *I'm listening to young people saying what's going on and I think we have to see there's a real struggle with boundaries and appropriateness and they are not being taught it in a lot of cases at home. And they are certainly not getting any role models on TV, on soaps. In the media it's the total opposite* (T3)

Particular concern was raised about the amount and type of pornography that young boys were watching and the violence inherent in some video games. As a consequence of exposure to these media some students, especially the more vulnerable ones, were thought to struggle to distinguish fantasy from reality:

> *I know that there is a lot of violent video games out there and they are increasing in violence and they are very, very real … And then those boys, possibly after drink or drugs, when they are out in the real world they are not able to decipher between what is real and what is in a game. … And then you wonder why we have an increase in sexual violence* (T2)

Increasing numbers of young people were thought to lack an understanding of what is meant by appropriate behaviour and expectations. Of equal concern was the perception that some young people do not possess information and the vocabulary to communicate with intimate partners in a respectful and empowering way.

Although important and welcome, programmes such as the Manuela Programme were said to provide only a small counterbalance to the messages that young people were receiving all the time from very many sources. Teachers' hopes for the Manuela Programme included that the aspiration that all students would feel empowered to develop healthy and safe personal relationships:

> *That the girls and the boys would be more confident in saying no and the importance of asking for consent and the realisation of seeing their partners being a person of equal needs as themselves. And hoping that, I suppose really an awareness of the sexual violence that is out there and that is wrong. And increasingly in the last couple of years I would be hoping*

that the likes of this programme would be highlighting to them that, first of all to seek consent and that the girls and the boys as well would have the confidence to say no and just to be comfortable just how far they want to go (T2)

Reflections on the Manuela Programme

Teachers who were interviewed as part of the evaluation had a range of experience with the Manuela Programme. Some were Transition Year co-ordinators and others were teachers who had sat in on or co-facilitated Manuela Programme sessions. Some had co-facilitated a whole roll-out of the programme and two had experience of leading a roll-out with a project worker co-facilitating. As such they are among the best prepared teachers currently with regard to programme delivery.

Training

A small number of the teachers had undertaken the facilitator training, all but one after they had facilitated or co-facilitated the Manuela Programme in their schools. Those who had attended the training were highly positive about it. One teacher described it as the best professional training that she had experienced and another spoke of how the participants left the day "buzzing". However, most teachers had not attended the training but had learned by co-facilitating the programme with the project workers. Co-facilitation supported them to gradually take over more of the programme delivery and develop their confidence:

Now last year she did most of it because I hadn't any experience of it. And then as the weeks rolled on I was ok to do a little bit more, so this year the plan would be I'd be more confident in the content (T3)

Training, co-facilitation, and familiarity with the Manuela Programme served to increase teachers' confidence to deliver the programme. Nevertheless, several teachers identified that they felt that they would never be as accomplished as the project workers at facilitating the Manuela Programme. The project workers were perceived to have professional expertise and a way of relating the young people that was different to those of teachers.

Confidence

The teachers reported different levels of confidence and willingness to engage with the topics. Some believed that there were certain constraints to the teacher/student relationship that were necessary and appropriate; others reported that watching the project workers engage with the students caused them to consider adjusting their own teaching styles. Several teachers welcomed the opportunity to open up discussions with their students about issues that they would never have previously covered:

Even the last topic I did now was the pornography. I would never have the depth or the discussion, it was brilliant. The walking debate, I would never have gone into that kind of

detail with them before. Just even those questions to get them to talk about it, I would never have done that before (T9)

The project workers' expertise on gender and sexual violence was identified as a powerful asset to the programme, one which teachers felt they could not replicate:

The person delivering it needs to be someone that's an expert in it … it's about who going to have the best impact on the student. And if there's somebody there, in anything, in any subject area, if they have somebody who's in there, in the coalface of it, that person is the expert. I would be delivering it very much from a cognitive perspective, from knowing the content but I'm not there on a day-to-day basis, I'm not seeing the victims (T3)

For some of them, looking at me it's like "she's talking about that and what would she know" (T4)

Some teachers were uncomfortable with the prospect of taking on programme delivery and felt that it would make it difficult for themselves and the students to interact in other school contexts. Other teachers felt strongly that there a high level of involvement from within the school was appropriate because of the depth of the knowledge the teachers have about the students. Teachers therefore are in a position to see beyond a façade that a student might put on with others and could assist with follow-up support if required:

I'm not so sure [if you are coming in from the outside] *that you're actually seeing the real group. We can all put on a performance for two hours and be absolutely interactive in walking debates and running debates and every sort of thing. But then you're kind of left, just here you go now, that's that done* (T9)

An educator in a Youth Reach setting was particularly comfortable with the Manuela Programme. The pedagogical approach within this alternative education setting was closer to that of the Manuela Programme than the more didactic approach they associated with secondary school teaching.

Student Response to the Programme

Across the interviews, many teachers emphasised the importance of the dynamic within each group. The atmosphere within the groups was variously described as relaxed, as stridently challenging, and as respectfully challenging:

Very adversarial, like. And if someone was contradicting them, I thought God, there's going to be a fight ….. I don't know whether it was spilling out into the corridors but it was causing tension within the group (T9)

What was lovely is the environment within the group was safe enough to challenge each other, which they did, in a very respectful way. Because I think they learned from each other because of the makeup of the group (T8)

Group work and seating the students with those with whom they felt confident was seen as important in another school. Small group work facilitated the students to comfortably interact with each other:

> *But in the small groups they were discussing, they were talking, they were finding it at their own level. There'd be, there's three or four of the boys, there'd be certain social issues going on but they chose to sit together at a table so they were communicating on their level on the topic. So it allows for that. And for the ones that were uncomfortable about discussing it, if they are sitting in their group with their pals then it's alright if they choose not to say anything* (T4)

Mindful of the possibility that the issues might trigger difficult emotional responses in pupils, teachers made provision for the eventuality. Some schools organised that students could go to an alternative room if they were distressed or uncomfortable, others had worked prior to the sessions with vulnerable students to agree a sign they could use to indicate that they needed to leave the session. Some teachers spoke of being proactive about the possibility of negative responses being triggered in students through their participation in the programme. Students in these schools were permitted to stay away from sessions that they would rather not attend:

> *They knew they were vulnerable and they didn't want to be putting themselves in a vulnerable situation. Now I would have said that at the start of the programme, if there's any issues that arises for anybody that have areas of discomfort, say it to us beforehand so that we know, that you don't have to get up in the middle of a session and walk out* (T9)

Age Profile

A range of opinions were expressed about the optimum age for students to receive the Manuela Programme. Many were convinced that younger and perhaps even much younger students need the learning and protection that they could derive from participation in the programme:

> *They frighten me with what they are up to, they frighten me. I know that they know a lot more about things than I do in first year. And the scenarios we're dealing with social media and WhatsApp and Snapchat. I'd say we've no idea what age they're being exposed to stuff* (T5)

However some argued that although younger students might need the benefits that accrue from the programme, they were concerned that they were not mature enough to engage with either the content or the process:

> *My fear would be their lack of maturity and their lack of being able to engage. Like with the Leaving Certs you could sit around in a circle … they were so mature and ready to talk about it. I'm doing RSE with my second years at the moment and they're still laughing about something as simple as saying breast* (T9)

Chronological age was not seen by teachers to be a key indicator of level of maturity. Teachers identified that the level of maturity in any year group varied from year to year and that there was also a spectrum of maturity within each class in each year. Although the overwhelming majority of students were either 16 or 17 years of age, several teachers spoke of the varying levels of maturity and experience of the students. They felt that some students engaged with the information in a way that suggested that it was of particular relevance to them:

> *Sometimes you know the ones that are sexually active, you know the way that they are listening or asking questions, they're contributing and they're accessing it at a different level to somebody that's not* (T4)

Other students may not have found the information of immediate relevance, but it was suggested that they will benefit in the future from having received it. Students in alternative education settings may have missed out on some key stages of their education, therefore they may benefit from the Manuela Programme at a different chronological age than students in conventional school settings.

Impact

The formal and informal feedback which the teachers had received from the students about the Manuela Programme was very positive. One teacher reported that her Transition Year students listed the programme alongside the musical and the school tour as one of the highlights of the year. The Manuela Programme was seen to give students information and "a voice". Students were described as previously lacking the vocabulary that would enable them to articulate their needs and boundaries. Their learning from the programme was thought to give them a language and a confidence to say:

> *This isn't who I am and I have a right to be taken seriously and be respected in my own body and my own values* (T3)

It became apparent to some of the teachers during the programme that both male and female students had never considered that consent should be an issue in established relationships. Girls were seen as particularly disempowered in this respect:

> *Then one girl said "well a wife must be available for her husband at all times", you know* (T4)

> *You have here in 2019 where the young women will think "well I have to do this to keep my man happy"* (T8)

While acknowledging that it may have been a coincidence, a teacher reported that two boys had approached her for advice following the Manuela Programme about how to deal with unwanted physical attention from girls. One teacher expressed the hope that, once empowered, the students will be able to transmit that to others:

So if we can empower them to empower their nieces, their nephews, just to get the word out, I think we've done wonders. Completely (T8)

Strengths and Weaknesses of the Manuela Programme

Credibility of the Programme

For teachers and principals a key strength of the Manuela Programme was its grounding in the Rape Crisis movement, with the additional and important bonus that it was free of cost to the schools. Teachers spoke of being inundated with requests and offers of courses which individuals and organisations were keen to run in their schools. A number of the schools had a pre-existing relationship with their local rape crisis centre and/or the project worker through the Rape Crisis Centre:

It needs to be by the book and it needs to be with a reputable agency that you think they know what they're doing. … . It's very sensitive… Once that name was associated with it I think we thought yeah this will be (T7)

Structured Programme

Teachers liked that the Manuela Programme was manualised and reported that it was consistent with the way that teachers prepared their own lessons and was therefore familiar to them. The structure of the programme was considered to be supportive of the teachers building their own confidence levels and providing a framework to support them to provide sexuality education:

I stick to the book 100% because I do go home sometimes in the car and I think "should I have said that". Or if someone asks me about sexuality, that's where I'd be quite nervous. I'd need to be really well scaffolded, word-for-word and how to deal with questions (T10)

The teachers love step by step, week 1, week 2. Definitely having a set programme, a plan, a scheme of work. Teachers are used to having that, what's to be done this week, what's to be done in week 2. The way it's done is very good (T2)

The structure was also described as supportive of the students' learning, introducing and reinforcing knowledge and enabling skills development. However, for many teachers the pinch point for their confidence was student questioning and comments: "*If there's one comment from the floor that could just derail the whole lesson"* (T1). The ability to deal with impromptu questions was a key anxiety identified by several teachers. Some were nervous that they might give the wrong response, particularly when they are new to the programme. Many teachers spoke admiringly about the project workers' skill at dealing with the unpredictable remarks or observations from the students:

It's almost like there would be the fear factor and there is still the fear factor because the knowledge she has on the area, I haven't got. She was able to deal with absolutely anything that came up during the course of the class … you know that kind of unpredictability of what

might come up or might be said for the laugh or the joke or whatever. I think that's where the fear is really (T4)

Teachers very much valued the back-up support that they received from the project workers, particularly support in responding to the students' questions. Some spoke of emailing the students' questions to the project workers who advised them about the answers which the teachers then covered in the next session. For some teachers, the relationship between the school and local Rape Crisis Centre was particularly important, with several receiving reassurances from the project workers that they will always be available to the school if they can at all.

Weaknesses

The key weakness of the Manuela programme identified by the educators was the length of the sessions. It was suggested that two hour sessions require a good variety of activities and a break in order to maintain student engagement:

I would make it more interactive. I'd put it more on the students to do a bit of work …. It's easier when they are interested and interactive (T5)

Timetabling issues forced some schools to reduce the length of the sessions to 80 minutes and teachers tended to report that they felt that that was long enough for the students.

Opportunities / Challenges to Further Implementation of Manuela Programme

Parental Support / Opposition

Parental opposition was not seen as a challenge to the implementation of the Manuela Programme. Most teachers considered that parents generally trusted the school to provide appropriate sex education or were relieved that the school was providing this service. Nevertheless, a few teachers had experience of parents not wanting their son or daughter to participate in the Manuela Programme or other sex education programmes:

I think that's more of a wider issue for the whole school, it's a cultural issue. I don't think it had to do with this programme per se but they were uncomfortable and I think it was significant that it wasn't someone Irish (T5)

Transition Year

The Manuela Programme was delivered to Transition Year students in most of the schools that participated in the evaluation. A number of teachers did had experience of running the programme in Leaving Certificate year. They highlighted some difficulties including the pressure that the students were under in this exam year and their perception that some scenarios were pitched at a younger age group. Transition Year was seen as offering a number of advantages for the provision of the Manuela Programme, including having a less constrained timetable and greater flexibility to run a six week programme. However, a number of disadvantages to locating the programme in Transition Year were identified. In many schools Transition Year is optional and students can choose to bypass the year.

Teachers suggested that many of the pupils who choose not to do Transition Year are pupils who might benefit from the Manuela Programme. Those students who opt into Transition Year may have a range of activities to choose from and therefore the Manuela programme is competing with alternatives:

> *Bear in mind that we roll it out as part of the TY activities programme so they have other things competing with it. So it wasn't that they were opting out of that it was just that they were choosing it as one option out of others* (T3)

Within most of the participating schools the Manuela Programme was not available to all the Transition Year students. Although some had plans to expand its reach within the school, it was reported that resources such as time or space had restricted the number of students who could avail of the programme:

> *And it's only half the TYs have done it. I must find space now because the others are coming and going "when are we going to do that, when will we do that". They feel they have missed out on it, missed out on something* (T4)

> *We only had the allocation for one class a week so we have five TY classes. … So the five classes we picked a random four out of each class. Next year now the intention is to roll it out to the 92 students that we have* (T1)

Boys were considered less likely than girls to choose to take part in the Manuela Programme. In addition, many boys were considered to be less able to articulate their emotions and less confident in their opinions. One teacher's response to this issue was to incorporate the themes from the Manuela Programme into RSE lessons:

> *And that's why I'm bringing bits of the general themes when I have the boys because that's the only way to get the conversation happening* (T3)

Boys were also said to engage less in a mixed class than did the girls. In one such school a teacher suggested that although some boys were overtly dismissive of the programme and others were not actively participating, she felt that they were nevertheless absorbing the information. It was thought that boys may feel vulnerable when they participate in programmes like Manuela:

> *I think that in programme like this, that often the boys are concerned that they are just gonna be portrayed as predators so they're reluctant to put themselves in a situation where that might happen* (T9)

One of the four project workers was male. Several of the female teachers who co-facilitated the programme with him referred to gender balance and the value of the boys receiving the programme messages from a male:

> *Because it's really powerful to come from a man to say things, the boys are immediately "oh right, this isn't another". There's a lot of women in this school teaching as well and there's a lot of women doing SPHE so it sometimes sounds like constant "boys don't do this, don't do that"* (T5)

Several teachers made the point that every group of students is different and experienced facilitators or teachers with knowledge of the programme will be able to make slight adjustments to accommodate the dynamics in the different groups. Particular considerations may arise in settings outside mainstream secondary school. Some of the language used in the Manuela Programme was thought to be inaccessible for students in an alternative school setting, some of whom may have missed out on several years of education. The presence of a teacher who knows the young people was seen as very important to identify when they were struggling and to rephrase or reiterate information in a supportive manner. The content was described as important and empowering and therefore it was important to include them in the programme.

The Future

All the teachers interviewed for the evaluation believed that the Manuela Programme was impactful and important for their students. Some schools are already incorporating parts of the Manuela Programme into RSE and SPHE classes. The Manuela Programme was seen as a vehicle for opening a discussion about important topics:

> *I think it's just brilliant. The kids need it don't they? The students need to discuss and communicate and talk about these issues I think. So that's why we would have put it in, there's a need for it* (T9)

Schools, it was argued, varied in their commitment to sexuality, wellbeing and relationship education and, in many instances, the level of commitment is determined by the teachers assigned to teach SPHE. It was reported that teachers may be allocated to SPHE or RSE as a consequence of timetabling rather than because of an interest in teaching the subjects. Although many teachers envisaged that the most sustainable future for the programme was to be incorporated into SPHE and RSE, the teachers were unanimous that not everyone could teach the Manuela Programme and several commented that it could be damaging if delivered badly.

The preferred option for most of the teachers was to have external experts either fully deliver programme or as in a support role, but there was an acknowledgement that this presented economic difficulties:

> *While someone from the outside is coming here, there's still a teacher here timetables for that class as well. So that teacher, in effect is free if you like. In other words, the Department are paying two, paying on the double for something that hopefully could be built into senior cycle RSE* (T2)

Better funded schools and schools that have a chaplain as a staff member were said to have advantages compared to other secondary schools. Chaplains were described as a key person within a school in having interaction with the students on a personal level as a primary responsibility and some flexibility in their timetables for programme delivery.

A teacher suggested that if such education was valued by the Department of Education and Skills, then they would be willing to resource them properly, to be delivered by experts rather than handing it over to teachers:

> *If we want to create a society that's going to be better informed, we need to put money into it .... I think giving it to teachers, that's all about money ... the Department and the politicians ... they're not thinking of the best impact of this programme, they're thinking the best way to get in delivered cheaply* (T3)

However, others argued strongly that the imperative was for the Department to support the upskilling of teachers involved with SPHE and RSE.

Stakeholders

The data from the interviews with the stakeholders is presented under the themes of process, outcomes and impact, and the future. A number of sub-themes are included within the themes of process and future.

Process

The four project workers were highly commended by the other stakeholders for their dedication, enthusiasm and commitment to delivering the programme. A key uncertainty prior to the role out of the Manuela Programme pilot was whether schools would be amenable to the programme. The level of access achieved was described as a direct result of the project workers' abilities:

> *It's incredible you know, it has really been. ... That was a worry we had you know would they buy into it or would the teachers buy into it, would the schools allow it, would they be afraid of it. ... Oh much better than I ever thought. But I do think that's down to the project workers. I think they had that skill you know to go in and not antagonise. They had the skill to go in and they were respectful* (S1)

The project workers themselves reported that most of the schools that they approached were open to the Manuela Programme. In the case of schools that chose not to take part, the reason given was scheduling difficulties, however project workers suspected that some principals may have been resistant to taking part"

> *Scheduling they'll tell you, but then you will have other teachers who will tell you that's absolute baloney. If somebody wants the programme scheduling is not an option and it most definitely isn't a hindrance when they're in TYs. So that is what they'll give you, you know, the formal line oh it's scheduling. ... And it could be a teacher that's pushing it but the block*

is coming from the principal. And it's really somebody who is wanting it but says their hands are tied (PW1)

One project worker recounted that the programme did not run in one school because too few students were given permission and returning parental permission forms to participate:

She said she could only get seven back and she was really horrified at this. She said I don't know why they're not returning them, I have no idea. Which I thought was really strange because every other school I've been to like there's been maybe one or two students who have decided not to participate, everyone else has. So that was a real outlier (PW2)

Co-Facilitation

Co-facilitation between the project workers and teachers was a key strategy to ensure that the Manuela Programme would be sustainable beyond the duration of the pilot study. The project workers' experiences of co-facilitation were largely positive. When the co-facilitation worked well, the partnership was described by one project worker as being "*Batman and Robin for the six weeks*". However, project workers also had experiences of their co-facilitator spending the class marking homework, co-facilitators who had clearly not read the manual prior to the class, and co-facilitators who, they believed, had a personal agenda different from that of the Manuela Programme. One project worker provided a vivid picture of the highs and lows of co-facilitation:

And sometimes the synergies are lovely between us and a teacher. You think 'oh my God they're so like-minded to me, how could someone else be so like me?' And the energy will bounce off them and the young people bounce off it. And then sometimes you're going 'oh mother of God I'm working with a corpse'. … It's so frustrating because you can see them [the students] *going 'oh well if you don't liven up there now I'm switching off'. And you're like 'okay, jazz hands!' So it can be brilliant and it can be so debilitating at the same time. … So it can be really tough. Sometimes with the heavier sessions you come out and you're going 'oh my God I'm absolutely wrecked'. And if something came up you kind of have to do a debrief with the teacher to say 'are you okay'. They're rushing off and you're like 'are you sure you're okay' … So it's really like you're juggling. I feel sometimes you're like trying to keep your plates going and you're like 'oh my God'. You're minding the teacher, you're minding the kids and then you've to try and mind yourself. So it's like a hamster's wheel. But if the synergies are lovely and they're a nice co-facilitator it's deadly* (PW1)

Although the project workers felt that most of the teachers who had co-facilitated with them were committed to the programme and to the values and the integrity of the programme, they had all encountered teachers who were clearly not interested or not suited to deliver the programme. One project worker described that she would not entrust the Manuela Programme to teachers that she does not have confidence in:

> *I would just not hand the programme over to somebody … I've said no to about three people … and they agreed then, you're not comfortable and you can do more harm* (PW3)

The level of comfort a teacher has with the programme and the relationship they have with the students was also seen as key to the successful transition of the Manuela Programme to the teachers. The presence of a particular teacher in the class was described as having a huge positive or negative impact on how the students experience and participate in the session.

The co-facilitation model used in the Manuela Programme pilot project was designed to build capacity within schools to maximise its sustainability. The progression from project worker to teacher was seen as a crucial aspect of embedding the programme in the school's curriculum and in line with evidence that demonstrates that the best person to teach SPHE is the classroom teacher:

> *At second level it is beneficial to have that class for another subject. Because in that you've built up a relationship with them, you know their names. It's so important to know a student's name particularly in a subject like SPHE* (S2)

However others were less convinced that teachers are always and necessarily the best people to deliver sensitive topics to students. A project worker described how they read a class differently than teachers do and another considered that not having prior knowledge of the students was actually an advantage rather than a disadvantage:

> *We don't know their backstory so we're all on the same level playing field. … Whereas everybody comes in, you're all the very same in front of me. We do our ground rules, we do our group contract so you're deciding what are the boundaries and off we go. You know you say listen you're all the same here. So yeah we definitely come with that* (PW1)

Class Dynamic

The project workers agreed that, as a general rule, a group size of no more than 20 was ideal. They found that smaller group sizes led to more and better discussions whereas, generally, big groups generated less engagement. The project workers' experiences of delivering the programme in girls, boys or mixed-sex schools were varied. One found that in girls' schools there was often a proactive and feminist engagement with the issues that was not as evident from the girls in a mixed school. And whereas one project worker experienced all-boys schools as more difficult, another project worker found the boys in all-boys schools to be receptive and engaging. It was also suggested that the dynamic differs, not just between schools but between classes and year groups within a school. It may be greatly influenced by a small number of students:

> *There's one school that I've been in three times. An all-girls school. Same teacher. And there was one year where the students were very hesitant. I mean they barely said a word. But there was a whole vibe of I'd say there was a lot of bullying going on. And so nobody wanted to say anything because they thought I'm vulnerable. Like anything is up for being targeted. So they*

> *were so hesitant to participate … One or two students if they're out sick one day and then they're in another session you actually see how one or two students can shift the entire dynamic in a group* (PW4)

Transition Year

Most of the classes included in the pilot programme involved Transition Year students in mainstream secondary or vocational schools. However, it was also delivered to a number of Leaving Certificate classes and in some non-mainstream education settings. Transition Year was seen as having many advantages as a setting for the Manuela Programme, including greater freedom within the timetable:

> *At the end of the day we have 42 teaching periods in the week and it's, you know, what's compulsory, what's curricular and then what you've got wriggle room for* (S3)

One stakeholder described the decision to recruit transition years helped to establish a precedence for Rape Crisis Centres delivering education in schools with which they had not previously worked:

> *The whole point of this was that there's a niche and a gap which was transition year. … [the] job was to crack open this hard-to-crack open piece for us which is transition year* (S4)

Running the programme in Transition Year was also considered to have distinct disadvantages, not least because not all students take Transition Year and not all schools offer Transition Year. Concerns were also raised that single-topic programmes such as the Manuela Programme may serve to minimise the importance of the topic and give the impression that it can be "done and dusted" in 12 hours. It was argued that issues concerning consent and sexual violence should be embedded in curricula throughout the education system:

> *There needs to be a high level national approach taken, consensus taken about the importance of this and how it needs to be embedded right through from … primary school through post-primary school into third level* (S5)

Until the education system is transformed and while there is still a need for programmes such as the Manuela programme, many stakeholders suggested that it should be delivered to students at a younger age. The project workers agreed that Second Year in post-primary school would be the optimal stage for the students; they suggested that all the topics covered in the programme should still be covered but that the language and some of the activities should be appropriately modified.

The Future

Future of Sex Education

Some stakeholders expressed a sense of cautious optimism about the future of sexuality in Ireland although none felt that progress would be fast. The recent NCCA review of SPHE was seen to indicate a momentum within the Department of Education and Skills which was partly driven by recent Ministers. A number of criminal court cases, the MeToo movement and the 8th Amendment

referendum were also implicated in the perceived impetus. However, it was also noted that interest in SPHE- and RSE-related issues have been the focus of attention in the past but this attention had dissipated without significant reform.

Stakeholders who identified the optimal model for the effective delivery of sexuality education envisaged schools that had a whole-school approach. All teachers would have some knowledge and skills in SPHE, and specialised teachers who had chosen to teach the subject and received a high level of training were accredited. These teachers would be part of a team within the school supported by a committed principal. Alternatively, a number of stakeholders suggested that school principals should be relieved of the responsibility for wellbeing, including SPHE, and there should be a promotional post within schools. It was argued that it was essential that schools develop dedicated small teams to deliver SPHE rather than have classes spread across a large number of teachers each of whom teach one or two classes. SPHE teaching was thought to suffer from a low status in a school system which is very exam-focused. The turnover of SPHE teachers was said to be high in many schools because many teachers taught when timetabled to do so rather than because of a commitment to or interest in the subject. Lack of accreditation was identified as contributing to the perceived devalued status of SPHE teaching and to the standard of teaching provided in some instances. Full and equal professionalisation of the SPHE was identified as an imperative, with teacher training as the route to achieving this goal.

Teacher Training

Teaching SPHE was described as qualitatively different to teaching other subjects. Most subjects are taught didactically whereas SPHE requires a different style of teaching:

> *So all the information in an SPHE class comes from students themselves and that's why it's so skilled. The teacher has to know how to draw that information out, how to process it, how to generalise it and then how to apply it. So it's very skilled to do it well* (S2)

SPHE teaching was described as very complex work with a potential for causing harm if it is done badly. It was distinguished from other subjects that can be taught from a book without the teacher having a specific interest in the subject:

> *It isn't good enough just to take up that page and go into a classroom or whatever … and just do exactly what it says … you have to embody it and you have to understand it and you have to believe in it ... You can learn chemistry just to take it as an example, you can learn how to teach it even if you don't want to. But SPHE, if you don't have an interest in it, you are not going to do a good job* (S2)

Effective teacher training for SPHE, it was argued, would require teachers putting the time and energy into their own personal development:

> *So that they know their own attitudes and values and some of their triggers … and they would know their vulnerabilities and they have some notion of boundaries and their boundaries and the young people's boundaries and all those things that would be in that type of training. They would be in a much better position to facilitate a more organic or emerging programme* (S2)

Student teachers are reported to be interested in teaching SPHE. A 36-hour elective module offered in one teacher training college was oversubscribed and an evaluation of the module concluded that the students who took the course were more prepared, more confident and knowledgeable about SPHE than were other student teachers. The module was based on experiential learning and, importantly according to the stakeholder, it modelled the type of interactions that would take place in the classroom:

> *It was an experiential type of learning experience. Mainly a lot of engagement, activities, talking about things, getting comfortable saying, particularly, you know using the language even, modelling what they would be doing in the classroom* (S6)

The revised Junior Cycle curriculum includes a mandatory requirement for 400 hours in wellbeing. It was suggested that this will bring a new focus and profile to the area and allow schools additional time to explore SPHE topics. However, the concern was also expressed that students will experience "*emotional obesity*" and will become bored and desensitised to the issues:

> *They'll have it over the three years. They're just going to be completely browned off, you know they're actually going to switch off completely. It's not going to engage students* (S7)

Impact and Outcomes

The project workers described overwhelmingly positive feedback from students and teachers about the Manuela Programme. Some benefits of participating in the programme were immediately apparent:

> *I think it's a really excellent emotional and social growth. You can absolutely see it. Even in how the classes interact. I've had principals come up and say to me that it's a game changer in terms of how they are with each other* (PW3)

Establishing that it was possible to address the issue of sexual violence with school children was identified as an important outcome of the project ("*showing that you can address the power of sexual violence in a safe way with young people",* SG). Students themselves expressed gratitude to the project workers at the opportunity to discuss and be informed about sexual violence, as these were topics they had never learned from other sources:

> *There's so little opportunity to talk about rape and sexual assault, the impact on the victim. A lot of them say to you I never even thought about what would be consequence for a*

> *perpetrator. They've never even thought of that like. It's just that we cover that, other programmes do but they'll just say 'and rape happens' and go on to the next part. It's always kind of brushed aside. There's a nod to it but they're never given the chance to talk, explore it in a safe way. So I'm really thankful that we can actually talk about this stuff because we don't get it anywhere else and it's certainly not in school. We are really genuinely able to talk about that* (PW1)

It was suggested that the experiences of the Manuela Programme could provide learning for the mainstream and reassurance about the acceptability of the topics and materials covered:

> *I think the wider application is in what's the learning for that to go into the mainstream. So if we are developing the resource and learning activities for junior cycle or later on maybe for senior cycle, how may that be informed by what's worked in the Manuela Programme. You know, the type of topics, the type of approaches. … So what's worked and the world hasn't fallen in* (S8)

Project workers were confident that the young people who had participated in the programme were empowered to enjoy respectful and positive intimate relationships as they navigate their way towards adulthood:

> *And there is a confidence that young people have then about how they ask for consent and how they can either give or not give consent. That they have an understanding of that dynamic when they are in sexual romantic relationships that they can be comfortable talking about and be confident talking about it and that it breaks down that kind of barrier about discussing this with their friends and with their partners. So I think that's been an impact I think that young people would derive from it* (PW2)

A number of benefits were identified as accruing to the Rape Crisis Centres as a result of the Manuela project. The experiences of the project workers in delivering the programme to schools will be shared, benefiting all centres. Rape Crisis Centres have been involved in the delivery of education to classes in schools on previous occasions, with centres having delivered a variety of programmes. The collaborative development of the Manuela Programme has consolidated the educational resources into a cohesive programme:

> *Now all the centres have a programme, they don't have to make their own every time. So that wasn't there before, some centres had a programme and some didn't. So now there's a programme that every centre can use* (SG1)

A further important outcome for the Rape Crisis Centres was raising their profile with young people, part of a demographic at particular risk of sexual violence:

> *It has got that age group aware about the centres, about the services that are available, about the help they can get* (S1)

The pilot project was also said to provide important evidence about the willingness of teachers to teach the Manuela Programme and to be trained in delivering it:

> *How much training teachers need and how much they are willing to receive and how much they have benefited from when they've got it* (SG1)

An intended outcome of the pilot project was to influence the Department of Education and Skills and to influence practice in schools around the provision of education on gender violence. The Steering Committee proposed that the project has been successful in achieving this through the project workers' involvement with the review of RSE.

Future of the Manuela Programme

The views of the stakeholders about the future of the Manuela Programme were diverse. Some believed that it was not feasible to continue to deliver the programme as per the pilot, some believed it would be inequitable to do so, and others that it could and should be delivered to an expanded number of schools nationwide. Pessimism about the future was mainly focussed on achieving ongoing funding for the programme, the length of the programme, and its characterisation as a niche, narrowly focused topic.

The cost of running the Manuela Programme, as delivered in the pilot project, was considered by some stakeholders as unsustainably high. While acknowledging that the four half-time project workers recruited and delivered the programme to a large number of schools, it was not thought feasible to scale up the model to national coverage. Some stakeholders argued that it was inequitable to offer the programme to some schools and not others. Conversely, other stakeholders argued that the pilot project had identified that that the delivery model was not an expensive one, that it provided excellent value for money and that it was suitable for national scaling up. Some frustration was expressed about the perceived futility of providing funding to assess the effectiveness of a programme without the finances being available to ensure that an effective programme could continue. Likewise, a comparison was drawn between the amount of funding dedicated to addressing the consequences of sexual violence and the lower amount of funding available for prevention and education.

A number of suggestions were made about reducing programme delivery costs such as shortening it to four sessions or restructuring it into a one or two day programme. The lack of ongoing funding was associated, according to some stakeholders, with an absence of an identified "home" for the programme without which it lacks a sponsor and a funding stream. The vision that the Department of Education and Skills might assume responsibility for ensuring the future of the programme was dismissed by some stakeholders who pointed out that the Department offers resources but does not offer programmes and, at present, there is no national recognition of programmes. Others insisted that the natural home of the Manuela Programme was vested in the Rape Crisis Centres. One stakeholder

from a Rape Crisis Centre expressed determination to continue to deliver the programme to schools in the future and was aware of others seeking funding to do the same:

> *So she's looking for funding somewhere as well, you know. And we'll all be begging and borrowing, it's ridiculous … All we're missing is the money, the will is there, it's just the blinking money* (S1)

Other stakeholders also foresaw a need for ongoing support from the Rape Crisis Centres to the schools although the centres do not receive core funding to provide education:

> *They need ongoing support you know. And I suppose that's the piece that's going to be missing when Manuela ends. But the individual rape crisis centres might perhaps, that's something that we might look at actually formalising that the individual rape crisis centres would volunteer to continue to offer that. Because things arise and they're not sure what to do and young people come forward, so they need that ongoing* (SG1)

The possibility of a regional structure to support and train teachers to deliver the programme was also mooted. The hope was expressed that in schools that had demonstrated a commitment to the Manuela Programme and where the programme has been successfully co-facilitated, it would continue to be delivered to the students. However, it was suggested that all programmes end up being personalised to the facilitator to an extent and that dilution was inevitable and one project worker envisioned how this would happen:

> *It will be diluted. And you're gonna get teachers who have co-facilitated who'll say 'oh they actually hate the pornography part and I'm not doing that part and I'll leave it out'. And that's probably one of the most important ones. 'Well they won't be doing that'. Or 'I don't really like the sexual rights, I'll just give a definition and I'll leave it at that'. But you can't do that. You need to unpack that and go down deeper with it. You always have to drill back down and see what's going on. So I would be concerned that they can adapt it and tweak it and say 'listen we can't give the three classes but we'll give two' which wouldn't be too bad, but then they'll just say 'ah we'll just do a class here and a class there'. That continuity is kind of lost so I think yeah it will be diluted a little bit*(PW1)

Other stakeholders were more optimistic and looked forward to the future in which SPHE will be taught by a highly skilled, professionalised, accredited SPHE workforce who will have the skills and confidence to cover all topics with all students.

It was also acknowledged that there will be ongoing costs associated with keeping the Manuela Programme current and relevant. Session 4 was reported to need updating – all the videos and materials involving advertisements, music and film were thought to have a short shelf life and require regular refreshing to remain current. Some concern was expressed about the inclusion of programmes which focus on specific topics in the absence of comprehensive sex education. A number of

stakeholders argued for integrated, incremental sexuality education throughout a child's formal education, whereby the Manuela Programme and other single focus programmes supplementing this core provision. Otherwise, it was said, these single focus programmes can act as:

> *A neat fix for people who don't know what to do and would like to do something that is, you know, neat and quick* (S8)

It was suggested that single focus programmes should be provided by schools who have the capacity or opportunity to focus on specific topics:

> *And then for those schools that have the time or the particular interest or have the luxury of having the resource of the facilitators, then they can do the additional piece* (S8)

Student Consultation

The views of the students about their experience of the Manuela Programme are presented below. These findings were collected through participatory focus groups and free text writing in the Post Programme questionnaire. The data is ordered under the themes of facilitation, content, activities and structure, impact, and recommendations for the future.

Facilitation

Having an external facilitator was identified as a key determinant of the students' positive experience of the Manuela Programme. While some negative assessments were made (e.g., boring or repetitive facilitation), a large majority of the students spoke of the facilitators delivering the programme in an accessible, coherent, and down-to-earth manner. This resulted in a safe and comfortable learning environment. The facilitators were described using words such as friendly, approachable, fun, kind, lovely, enthusiastic, engaging, open and positive. Their ability to engage with potentially embarrassing and awkward topics, often using humour, was very much appreciated:

> *Didn't make sensitive topics awkward*
>
> *The more awkward classes were done well*

Students also valued that they were provided with a choice in their level of participation:

> *We didn't always have to call out our answer, we could write them down* (SFG4)

The most highly valued characteristic of the facilitators was that they were external and did not have an ongoing relationship with the students outside the class. This externality was reported to give students security and comfort including trust in the confidentiality of the learning environment:

> *You won't see them around again, so won't be that embarrassed*
>
> *They don't know you and you don't know them* (SFG4)

Likewise, the facilitators' lack of prior knowledge about the students was also reported to be an advantage due to their lack of preconceptions about the students:

> *They don't know you and they can't really judge you* (SFG1)

They [teachers] *have an opinion of you already and a judgement* (SFG1)

And if they know your family, you know what I mean, there's more connection … I think that's one of the things you're afraid of, if you give too much personal information that the teacher will try and do something about it (SFG10)

The facilitators were perceived by the students to have an expertise which brought great credibility to their message:

He knew what he was talking about … Because you think what he's saying is true (SFG9)

A number of groups talked about the discomfort that they felt when teachers were present in the room during the Manuela Programme classes. One group described teachers walking around reading what the students were writing. Most groups described the prospect of having the Manuela Programme delivered by one of their teachers as *"weird"* and / or *"awkward".* Students in one rural school were concerned about confidentiality in a locality where everyone was said to know everyone else and "*you'd trust no-one as well, like*".

Content, Activities and Structure

Length

The most commonly cited negative comments about the Manuela Programme referred to the length of the programme sessions. Students were unused to classes of two hour duration and most students reported that they did not have any breaks during that period. Thus, students described being less engaged towards the end of the sessions, having difficulty maintaining focus and losing the ability to take in new information. A mid-session break was frequently recommended as the solution to this issue although a few students suggested that even with a break the sessions were too long. Differing views were expressed as to whether the solution to this should be condensing the programme or expanding the duration of the programme beyond six weeks. A small number of students felt that the programme should be longer in any case allowing more time to be devoted to each topic and more time for reflection.

Activities

In contrast to those who advocated for more time to be spent on the topics, others endorsed the view that the programme was repetitive:

S*aying the same thing over and over again*

It was always going back to the same thing … like we are going back to the same debate … just looking at a different video (SFG7)

In particular some students argued that there was an over-reliance on the walking debates rendering them boring:

Like there was one class where we did full debates … She just reads things out, that's all … And they were all the same questions on every single story we read (SFG2)

Every class you just talk, walking debate, talk, walking debate (SFG)

Nevertheless the walking debates were also the most frequently cited favourite activities of the programme. Particularly given the length of the sessions, the students very much liked that they were out of their chairs and moving around. Students reported that they enjoyed the opportunity to voice their opinions and hear the opinions of others and that the debates encouraged them to engage in critical thinking and reflection:

Sometimes people, like, raise ideas that you hadn't thought about and that might make you move to the other side (SFG10)

I liked arguing and sometimes changing my mind about different topics (SFG1)

Conversely, students also reported being reluctant to express their views if they thought that those views might be received badly by others on the group. The exchange presented below is from a workshop in a mixed school:

I know that there was some topics, actually gender and equality, where the boys felt they couldn't walk to one side because they thought they'd get absolutely abused. But sure that's actually on them if they feel they can't stand up for what they believe in or whatever (Female)

It's harder because you are showing everyone the fact that you disagree (Female)

Well like, you don't want people to think about you in a certain way by standing out on the other side of the room and, you know like, it's more male so it's kinda hard, like walking on eggshells (Male) (SFG10)

The pressure described above was from within the peer group. However, students from the same school but who had a teacher-delivered programme spoke of perceived pressure from the teacher to change their views:

She'd make you feel bad for, just because it wasn't the ideal opinion

She'd point to you and say "improve on your answer"

Or even if you did, you'd be shut down …

Like there was a right answer and if you didn't have it then there was something wrong with you

It felt like it was wrong to disagree

Sometimes it was hard to explain why you were on a certain side, you know, but the teacher would always be questioning, questioning saying "but why"? And then it'd be all these people against you. And she'd be kinda going "well look at all these people who think this." So, like, they'd have a lot more argument so then you be like "maybe I should just sit" (SFG10)

However, another group discussed lack of moderation of the discussion during the walking debate and said that this left unacceptable opinions unchallenged. The students reported that they, themselves, were reluctant to challenge the student making those statements "*because it sounds like everyone is against them":*

> *Like a lot of times it would come up in the walking debates and stuff that someone would have a really messed-up opinion and, like, there's no way of dealing with it … Like if someone, if a teacher, if there was follow-up to deal with that and say like "no, that's messed up"* (SFG10)

Students valued the interactive and participatory components of the programme and considered that these promoted positive learning outcomes:

> *I liked how interactive the classes were. We weren't just sitting there listening the whole time* (SFG5)
>
> *If you had someone that was just reading off the page, saying it, you wouldn't get as much* (SFG5)
>
> *It's better than just sitting in the classroom reading a book about it like. If it was done like that, no one would listen to it, it'd be really boring* (SFG11)

In general, the videos and scenarios were a highly praised aspect of the programme except when the students perceived that, as with the walking debates, they were overused. One group proposed what they thought was a more interesting way of working with the scenarios:

> *If we could act out … actually solving the scenarios, actually doing them. Not just sitting there reading them* (SFG7)

The well-known 'Cup of Tea' video on consent proved to be particularly memorable and students felt it delivered its message well. The students were clear about their requirement that the videos, like the scenarios, were credible in their perspectives. For this reason, the Lucy's House party video was derided in a number of the workshops as one of the actors was perceived to be too old for his role:

> *The one with the 40 year old man acting there in the middle of it* (SFG10)
>
> *It was unrealistic, like it was 30 year olds in it* (SFG2)

Impact

Students' opinions on the impact of the Manuela Programme were identified through the use of the "Webs" and through discussion in the workshops. The most frequently cited impacts concerned consent, healthy and unhealthy relationship, education/sex education, awareness and help-seeking knowledge. These topics correspond closely to the primary learning objectives underpinning the Manuela programme. The students were unanimous in their opinions that the programme provided them with important and necessary new knowledge:

I learned a lot during the programme, some things I had not knowledge on and I feel well educated on the topic now (SFG5)

It felt like it was more based on us and leading into our actual experiences, that it was kind of, kind of more personal (SFG10)

The knowledge gained from the programme was variously described as up-to-date, appropriate, essential, key, valuable, useful and helpful. The students' responses also often emphasised their lack of pre-existing knowledge:

Even a lot of that stuff, it had never been talked about in school or, like, it's tough to talk about if with your parents, so it never really comes up (SFG10)

Made me more aware of topics they don't teach in school

Learning about topics that aren't talked about in school like porn (SFG12)

Learning about healthy relationships was supported by concomitant learning about the warning signs of unhealthy relationships. Recognising these warning signs enabled the students to "*get out of a relationship faster*" and understanding relationships was said to help students *"have more open discussions"* and *"make better decisions"* in their relationships. Students reported feeling empowered by the knowledge that they now had about consent and healthy relationships:

I think it's good for people to know that you are allowed to change your mind after you initiate sex or just say that you can't say that to me or do that to me

Because a lot of people feel manipulated by their partner

For it actually to be said, you know this is your right, you can do this if you are in a certain situation, that's really important for everyone to know (SFG10)

During the workshops, a number of students said that they thought that too much programme time was spent on the topic of consent and that the consent material was repetitive. Nevertheless, knowledge about consent was identified as a key impact. Students reported that the programme could provide participants with greater confidence in discussing consent with others, communicating consent verbally and understanding the constraining role of alcohol on consent negotiations. Many students expressed surprise that consent was required in a relationship and having "*more clarity"* about consent was identified as a programme impact. Knowing about consent was identified as helping students to "*understand if they're going to far"* and / or *"doing something inappropriate".* They also identified having gained a greater understanding of the law concerning consent, sexual assault and rape and a new understanding, in many instances, that males can be the victim of sexual assault. This topic was of great interest to the students, some of whom asked for more emphasis on it in the programme. Students reported having a better understanding of rape, and the serious impact it has:

Educate kids on how serious rape is

Make young people be aware about sexual violence and what they could do to prevent it from happening in the future

Alongside a better understanding of what constitutes sexual assault, students reported feeling empowered to seek assistance if they became victims of a sexual assault themselves and better equipped to assist others:

How to help others going through that situation

In one group, students suggested that developing empathy for victims might deter potential perpetrators from committing assaults.

A small number of potentially negative impacts which might occur as a result of participation in the Manuela Programme were identified. Students identified that the programme content might make students sad or upset or "*could give them a negative reflection of people".* Two comments referred to negative impacts on younger students with one warning that "*I think they are too young to learn about the stuff we talk about such as pornography, consent, relationships and sexual stuff".* It was suggested by one group that *"some people might have no interest"* and taking part would be a negative experience (*"would have a bad impact on people who had no interest"*).

Recommendations for the Future

In each workshop, the students were asked to make recommendations for the future of the Manuela Programme including any changes they would make to it. While not unanimous, there was widespread agreement across the workshops that the programme should be compulsory in second-level education. Some students believed that most students would not choose to take part in a voluntary programme:

Not a lot of people would pick it like, if it was an option

It's, like, because they'd think it's because it's not interesting or they think it's, like, what they already know (SFG2)

Students spoke about the inadequacy of the sex education in schools in general and the importance of the topic:

It's not a topic that's not ever talked about in school (SFG11)

Most students also considered that parental consent should not be required:

I don't think that parents should have a say because ... Everyone's gonna go out at some stage so it kinda applies to everyone no matter what your mother or father say (SFG1)

There was less consensus about the appropriate age at which students should participate in the programme. Most students thought that for reasons of exam pressure, it should not be taught in the Leaving Certificate year. Some thought that it was both useful and practical for timetabling purposes

to locate it in Transition Year. Others argued that Transition year was too late to provide optimal benefit:

> *A lot of us had had a lot of experience already and it could have helped a lot of people if it had happened at an earlier time* (SFG10)
>
> *I think at this age, you know, some of the damage has already been done. So then when you are talking about it it's, I think it impacts us a bit more because you realise that things have happened like, you know, you think I wish I has known that when I was 16 like, you know* (SFG10)

Likewise, some students felt that the topics covered in the Manuela Programme would not be suitable for younger students, yet others argued that the adaptations could be made for younger pupils to ensure that they received the benefits of the programme in a timely way:

> *If they're younger then you could bring it down to where they understand it. You know what I mean and you can explain it to them in a way that they get it because it can happen to young kids as well, more so than when you're an adult. And when it happens to kids then they don't know what's going on so* (SFG13)

A number of students were positive about the prospect of teachers delivering the Manuela programme in the future:

> *If they were trained then it would probably work grand, like* (SFG2)

However, most viewed the prospect with horror and reported that it would inhibit their participation in the sessions:

> *You'd be scared to say anything* (SFG2)

They did not like that they would have an ongoing relationship with the teacher:

> *You wouldn't get so involved if you've got a teacher talking to you and then you see them in the corridor. That's too weird* (SFG7)
>
> *You couldn't take a teacher seriously next time you saw them* (SFG6)

It was suggested that the impact of the programme would be diminished:

> *To have an external person coming in, it's just more effective*
>
> *And, like, you'd respect it more if there was someone coming in from the outside* (SFG6)

Some argued that the topics covered in the programme were not ones that teachers would either be knowledgeable about or comfortable teaching:

> *A teacher would seem more forced to do it*
>
> *Like it would be awkward for them as well, you know. They probably wouldn't really talk about it in the way* [the project worker] *would*

Plus, like, the teachers you have for the rest of the year but [project worker] *is only in for a couple of weeks*

You're locked in with a teacher because you'd be seeing them every day (SFG3)

I'd say that they'd want to get out as much as you, like … they'd want to get the class over as much as you do (SFG2)

One group who had participated in a teacher-delivered programme reported that, apart from the walking debates, the sessions were much like any other lesson:

Your one was at the top of the room reading stuff out (SFG7)

Students in another school who also had a teacher-delivered programme agreed with each other that the teacher's religious beliefs were apparent:

It's not that they can't be Catholic, it's just that religion doesn't really have a place and she kinda made it have a place. Just because you are Catholic and abide by Catholic rules that doesn't mean that's how most of us are living as well (SFG10)

One focus group recommended that students should be allowed to sit in groups with other students of their own choosing. They spoke of being uncomfortable talking about sensitive subjects with classmates with whom they do not normally mix, and were concerned both about judging people and being judged:

If we were able to pick our friends that we were used to for ages for talking to, that would be good. But I tell you that it's really uncomfortable to be sitting with people that I don't talk to (SFG7)

In two groups the students recommended that there should be an increased emphasis on the consequences of sexual assault. Although they described that the topic was touched upon, they were interested in more specific information:

If you'd get into trouble for it, like ...

Like the consequences about how much jail time you would get. And what that would do to your life

And what happens after jail as well, when you are out

I think that we mentioned that once, maybe, throughout the entire programme. And that you'd be registered as a sex offender and things like that. And that was it, we didn't get anything after that (SFG10)

This group also referred to the consequences for the victims of sexual assault and agreed with the comment by one student that the outcome described was too negative:

It would be good just to inject a little more hope into it you know. Like once you're raped, like, your life is over, like, forever and you are never going to have it like. Like we did this

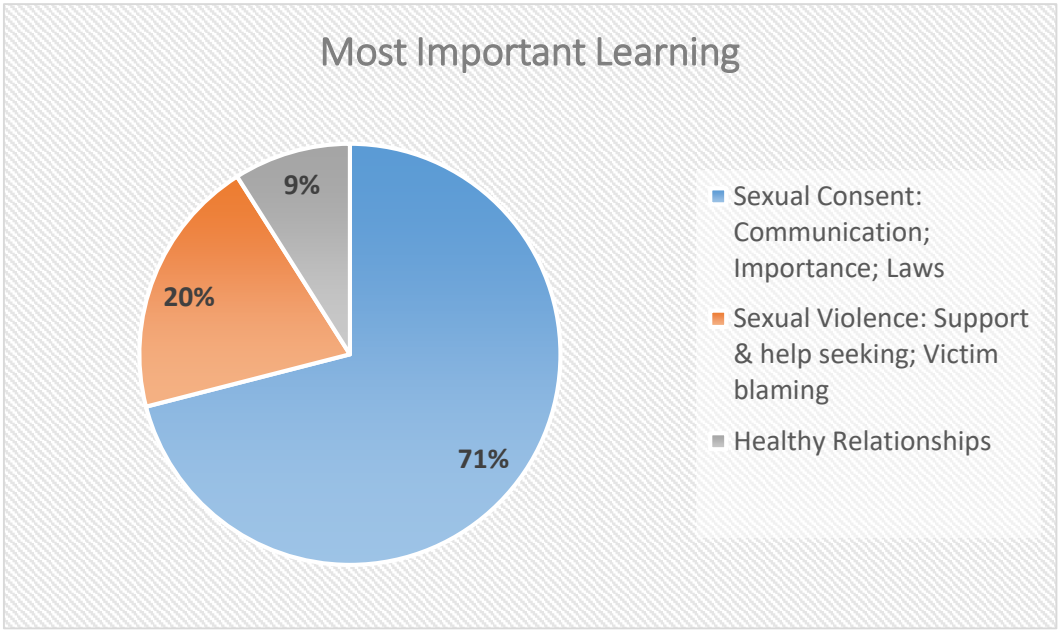
board thing and it's like you will be, like, disconnected from your body and all sorts of horrible things, like. It's like a lot of people it does happen to them and you can, like, make a full recovery and stuff (SFG10)

Text Box Responses

The views of the students were also sought by way of text boxes in the post-programme questionnaire. The pie charts below present their responses to the questions: "*What was the most important thing that you learned from participating in the Manuela Programme"* and "*what was the most surprising thing you learned from the Manuela Programme?*

Most Important Learning

Comments were made by 253 females and 282 males on what they thought was the most important thing that they learned. The responses related to three main themes, with sexual consent accounting for over 70% of the responses.



Sexual Consent

Most frequently, comments about sexual consent centred on communication, including the importance of asking for consent, legal issues including the age of consent, the effect of alcohol on consent communication, with the importance of this topic encapsulated in the recurring assertion that "*consent is everything*". Other responses within this theme addressed the topic of sexual assertiveness, with a greater proportion of females responses compared to male responses addressing this topic. Common responses pertaining to sexual assertiveness included statements on the acceptability of asserting one's sexual preferences *("it is okay not to want to do certain sexual things"*) and the importance of being able to say no (e.g., "*you should always feel free to say no*", *"don't be afraid to say no because you don't want to ruin the mood or make it awkward*").

Sexual violence

Females were somewhat more likely than males to refer to sexual violence when commenting on the most important thing that they learned from participating in the Manuela Programme (30% of females, 19% of males). Most responses referred to the causes and impact of sexual violence. With respect to causes, responses ranged from the view that alcohol contributes to rape and that most rapists don't watch porn to those which stressed that rape is about "*power, not love*". Some students from the same class quoted an inaccurate "*statistic*" that 84% of males commit rape unknowingly. A number of students emphasised the seriousness of rape, which was described using terms such as "*bad*", "*serious*" and "*no joke*" while others described the negative impact of rape on both victims and perpetrators.

Other common responses pertaining to sexual violence included statements regarding help-seeking and support services, with many students expressing an enhanced awareness of the range of support services available to victims, and greater confidence in handling disclosures. Students also mentioned the importance and acceptability of victims seeking help (e.g., "yo*u should never keep it to yourself and always talk to someone about it*"). Statements were made on victim blaming, such as "*it's never the victim's fault*". A smaller percentage of respondents identified the benefit of understanding different forms of sexual violence and how to prevent it from happening.

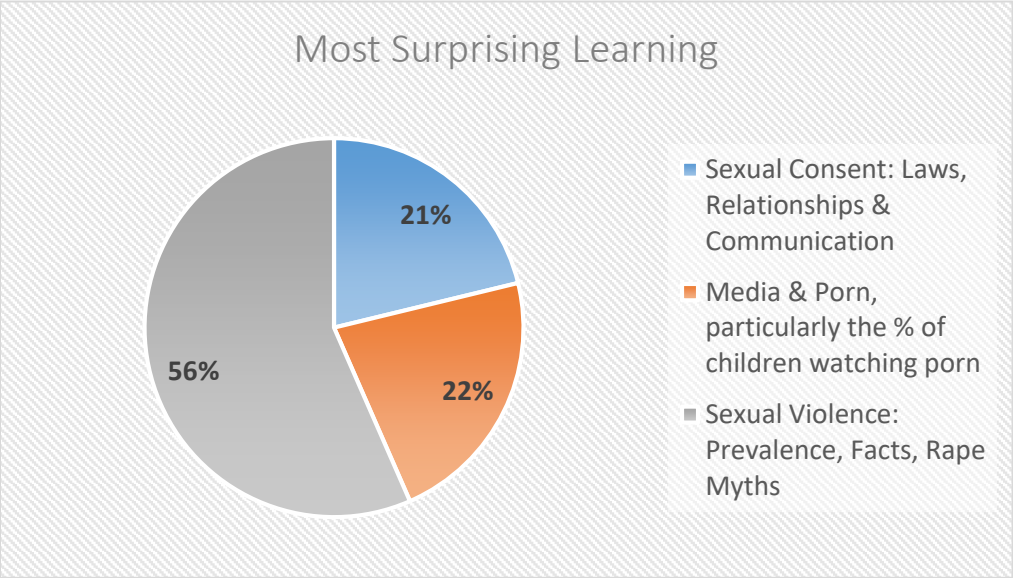
Relationships

As with comments about sexual violence, females more frequently included a comment about relationships (25% of females, 11% of males). The comments frequently focused on knowing the differences between a healthy and unhealthy relationship, including recognising *"red flags"* that distinguish an unhealthy relationship. Some students characteristics of a healthy relationship, such as the importance of consent, respect for boundaries in relationships, and the need for trust-based communication:

I think the most important thing I learned from the programme was the importance of consent , respect and boundaries. These three things are the foundation of any good relationship and also communication

Most Surprising Learning

In total, 494 students (238 females, 256 males) indicated the most surprising thing that they learned from the Manuela Programme. The three dominant themes were sexual violence (56% of responses), media and porn (21% of responses), and sexual consent (21% of responses).



Sexual Violence

Most comments in response to this question referred to issues relating to sexual violence. In particular, a number of students referred to sexual violence prevalence rates in their responses, with many directly citing the 'one in four' prevalence statistic. Others made reference to statistics on false accusations and sexual violence facts more generally. Some students commented on facts relating to men, such as the high percentage of male perpetrators, and that men can be raped. Other frequent responses pertaining to sexual violence included responses concerning rape myths with students commonly referring to victim blaming and false accusations.

Sexual Consent

Statements relating to consent featured prominently in students' responses to this question. These included comments addressing the legalities of consent including the age of consent and alcohol. Other responses addressed consent communication with students asserting the importance of asking for consent as well as the need for consent to be ongoing ("*you have to keep asking*") and enthusiastic.

Pornography and the Media

Pornography and the media featured frequently in the comments of the students. Most responses addressed beliefs around pornography and the porn industry, for instance the observation "*that porn affects porn stars in a negative way*". Other frequent responses within this theme included those pertaining to the number of children that have watched pornography, negative impacts associated with pornography, and responses relating to the laws around sexting (e.g., "*that if you take nude pictures it is child porn*"). Some responses attributed a negative impact on people's relationships and sexual experiences to pornography use. Other responses addressed media representation and music with a focus on the inaccurate portrayal of women and their objectification in the media as exemplified by the comment (e.g., "*the amount of ads/companies that manipulate the idea of women as sexual objects to try and get people to feel they need a product*").

Irish Post-Primary School RSE Policies – A Brief Review

In accordance with circular M/95, all Irish post-primary schools are required to have an RSE policy document in place (Government of Ireland, 1995). A review of the RSE policy of ten schools was conducted to provide further context to inform the evaluation of the Manuela Programme. The ten schools were chosen to represent a broad cross-section of settings and were selected on a convenience basis. Five of the schools had participated in the Manuela Programme and the policies were provided via the project workers. Policies of five additional schools were downloaded from the schools' websites. The schools included in the review were from urban and rural settings, seven were Catholic faith schools, half the schools were co-educational, two were all boys and three were all girls schools. For the purpose of this review, each school was given an identification code.

Table 24: Post-Primary Codes and Demographics

	School Code	Type	Gender Type	Location
1	U1C	Non-denominational	Co-educational	Urban
2	U2C	Catholic	Co-educational	Urban
3	U3C	Non-denominational	Co-educational	Urban
4	U4G	Catholic	All-girls	Urban
5	U5G	Catholic	All-girls	Urban
6	U6G	Catholic	All-boys	Urban
7	U7B	Catholic	All-boys	Urban
8	R8G	Catholic	All-girls	Rural
9	R9C	Catholic	Co-educational	Rural
10	R10C	Non-denominational	Co-educational	Rural

NCCA RSE Policy Development Guidelines

Guideline Summary

The purpose of a school RSE policy is to provide information and guidance on how RSE is implemented in the school. In 1997 the Department of Education and Science issued Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy Guidelines to assist schools with the process of developing a local policy. The 1996 Department of Education guidelines advise that schools set up an advisory group comprised of teachers, management staff, and parents to discuss core issues that require consideration in the process of policy development. Such issues would include an evaluation of the current provision of RSE in light of the policy guidelines and the school's respective needs. A plan for the implementation of RSE should also be established, with attention to the areas of cross-curricular overlap, training and staffing requirements, and programme objectives.

The guidelines required that a draft policy statement be devised. The policy typically begins with an introductory statement outlining the purpose of the RSE policy, the policy development process and who contributed to it. The document should also include a description of the school's characteristic spirit and ethos with a clear statement on how the policy reflects the respective school ethos. A definition of RSE and a list of RSE programme aims should be included, with consideration to the RSE aims and objectives listed in the NCCA curriculum guidelines. Also, the policy must identify the relationship between RSE and SPHE, as well as specifying what the school currently provides, with direct reference to relevant programmes and cross-curricular overlap.

School policies should identify a process for the management and organisation of RSE. The NCCA policy instructions advise that areas such as programme timetabling, teacher allocation, parental

involvement and withdrawing pupils from RSE are addressed in this section. The instructions also highlight negotiating key ethical issues in the provision of RSE such as confidentiality, offering advice to pupils, child protection laws, pupils with special needs, and the protocol for visiting speakers. The final section should specify teacher training opportunities and relevant programme resources, as well as outlining the process for programme review including the next review date.

The guidelines are reflective of a Catholic ethos. The aims and objectives of RSE include promoting knowledge and respect for reproduction, the promotion of family values, and appreciation of the responsibilities of parenthood. Several religious textbooks are included in the recommended curriculum resources. Included in the sample statements within the guidelines is the description of homosexuality as "a lifestyle" and the primary rationale for including homosexuality in the course curriculum as being to avoid homophobic bullying. The guidelines do not address other sexual orientations and gender identities.

School Policy Analysis

Similarity To Sample Policy Document Located On Department Of Education& Skills Webpage

Many of the policy documents of the ten schools (especially U1C and R9C) were predominantly modelled on the sample RSE policy located on the DOE website (Department of Education and Skills, n.d). One policy copied the majority of its content directly from the sample template without any adaptations to accommodate its respective context (U1C). The most frequently copied components of the RSE sample policy included the RSE aims and objectives (U6G, U2C, U1C) and the school's review practices. It would appear that some schools do not tailor their RSE policy with consideration to their specific school context, and that their policy development process did not entail meaningful consultation with the larger school community.

School Ethos and Ethics

Many of the Catholic school policies emerged as vague and contradictory with respect to their statements regarding the influence of school ethos on RSE programme provision (U6G, U7B, R8G). For instance, although certain Catholic schools stated that they were committed to delivering education on all aspects of sexuality (including those that conflict with Catholic teachings such as sexual orientation and contraception), this was often qualified by the subsequent assertion that they intended to do so in a way that was consistent with their Catholic school ethos (U7B, U4G), for example:

> *Schools are required to deliver on all aspects of the RSE curriculum, including those related to the RSE curriculum, including those in relation to sexual orientation, contraception, sexually transmitted infections etc. … this will be done within a context in which teaching of the programme is informed by the school's ethos* (U7B)

A number of schools made reference to the Equal Status Act (2000) in their statements regarding sexual orientation (U4G, U6G), while equally emphasising a commitment to teaching on such subjects in a way that is consistent with their Catholic school ethos. It appears that some Catholic schools transposed components of their statements on homosexuality and contraception from the Department of Education's sample policy statement (R10, U1C). Other schools made no explicit referral to these areas (U7B, U3C, U2C, U5G). Similarly a number of the policies from Catholic schools included statements around family planning, contraception, and reproduction that foreground a Catholic ethos, including the following:

> *The preciousness of human life…as the starting point for all areas of the RSE programme. The gift of a child is not available to all individuals and so before the issue of contraception is dealt with the issue of assisted fertility is addressed with all senior students* (U7B)
>
> *To support young people with help and guidance in preparing them to live their lives as members of a Christian family* (R9)
>
> *This topic* (contraception) *will be dealt with in an age appropriate, sensitive way and within the ethos of the school and guided by the DES, RSE curriculum guidelines* (U4G)

One school was distinct in its integration of additional important terminology into the ethics portion of their policy including definitions for transgender, gender transition, and abortion (U1C).

What Schools Currently Provide

Most schools provided detail on their current provision of RSE. Some referred referring explicitly to Circulars M11/03 and 0037/201 which establish the requirement for all schools to timetable a weekly SPHE class and the need for senior cycle students to receive RSE. Senior cycle students were stated to receive RSE either through Religious Education (R10C, U7B), by designating dedicated RSE time blocks throughout the year (U2C, U5G, R8G), or through modules such as Personal Development (U6G) or Wellbeing (U4G).

With respect to cross-curricular links with RSE, most schools responded with similar statements, directly citing the RSE curriculum overlap presented by subjects such as Geography, Science, English, Home-Economics, Art, Religion, and SPHE. Other schools went beyond this to highlight initiatives unique to their school setting, for instance, U2C referred to their transition year students' participation in a Law module that included a course component on sexual consent in the context of the law. Other schools also identified the informal role played by a supportive and respectful school climate in RSE (R9C, U1C). This resonates with the NCCA RSE policy guidelines which affirm the importance of policies reflecting a whole-school approach to RSE.

Confidentiality, Offering Advice, and Child Abuse

School RSE policies are expected to provide clear instruction on the area of confidentiality including its limits, as well as the related areas of offering advice and child protection. Four schools made direct reference to the limits of teacher-student confidentiality, including the importance of teachers informing a student when a conversation can no longer be kept confidential; that is, if the child discloses that they are engaging in underage sex, or if the child is regarded as being at risk. Nonetheless, three of the analysed policies lacked detail on the issue of confidentiality (U3C, U2C, R8G), while a further three policies did not make any reference to this issue (R9C, U7B, U5G).

Six of the ten schools made explicit reference to child protection guidelines and staff members' consequent responsibility to report abuse cases to the relevant authorities (U1C, U2C, U3C, U4G, U7B, R10C). Best practice guidelines also guide schools to include instruction on giving advice to students and answering explicit questions in their RSE policy. Most of the policies of the schools included in this review took similar positions on this issue; stating that teachers are not to offer individual advice to students, and that class conversations should remain general and situated within the framework of the course curriculum. Some schools also advised that teachers apply their professional judgment (R10C, U2C) when answering explicit or sensitive questions and to refer students to relevant health professionals if deemed necessary. Three schools did not include guidance on this issue (U5G, U3C; U7B).

Informing and Involving Parents Including Withdrawing Students

All ten of the analysed documents designated a section of their policy to issues around parental involvement in RSE, including a parent's right to withdraw their child from RSE and the importance of parental inclusion in the policy development process. However, policies differed in terms of the level of detail provided on parental involvement. Schools described keeping parents informed by making their RSE syllabus and / or their RSE policy available on the school website (U7B, U2C). Schools also stated that they inform parents prior to programme commencement either by notifying them through an RSE information letter (U2C, R10C, U3C), by phoning parents individually (U2C), or by providing parents with hard copies of the RSE policy (U5G, U6G, U7B).

Some policies stated that parents could voice any concerns around RSE provision at parent teacher meetings and information sessions (R10C, U3C), with one policy specifying the requirement for parents to sign a consent letter prior to enrolling their child in RSE (U4G). Two policy documents (R9C, R8G) were not specific in their statements regarding parental involvement. Neither provided examples of specific measures to demonstrate how parents are kept informed. Some schools also identified a designated liaison person (either the SPHE coordinator or the principal) that parents could consult if they had any queries or concerns around RSE provision (R10C, R9C).

With respect to withdrawing students from RSE, nine of the schools identified a parent's right to remove their child from the module, with many providing a detailed overview of the standard protocol

for this process (R10C, U4G). Some schools specified the requirement for parents to discuss their concerns with the principal or SPHE teacher prior to confirming their decision to withdraw their child (R10C, U2C, U7B) while others asserted that parents would not be required to provide any reason for withdrawal (U1C, U4G).

Teacher Training, Support, and Resources

Policies in nine of the schools addressed the issues of in-service staff development opportunities and teacher allocation. Specifically, a number of schools described their allocation of a SPHE coordinator tasked with the responsibility of coordinating RSE (U3C, R9C, U6G). Other policies cited their school's formation of a RSE / SPHE team consisting of staff with relevant skills and qualifications in areas such as counselling, religion, sexuality studies, and health. Some schools further elaborated on the opportunity for RSE teachers to train one another in their respective areas of expertise (U2C, R10C, U1C). However, with respect to formal in-service training opportunities, only one policy (U1C) referenced a specific training course, stating that teachers delivering senior cycle RSE are trained to deliver TRUST (The Talking Relationships, Understanding Sexuality teaching resource). By contrast, other policies did not provide examples of training opportunities, with some reiterating the sample policy's generic response on this issue (e.g., R10C, R8G).

Regarding the issue of programme resources and content, a number of schools provided a detailed list of available resources and online supports for RSE teachers (R10C, U3C, U2C) with one referring specifically to the Department of Education and Skills, SPHE / Wellbeing Support Service, other HSE initiatives and local Education Centre (U4G, U3C). One school reproduced the list of textual resources from the lesson guidelines which predominantly consists of religious textbooks.

Review and Evaluation Procedures

The guidelines advise that the final section of a school's RSE policy engages with the issue of policy evaluation and monitoring procedures as well as providing a "date for next review". Most policies were similar in their proposed evaluation methods. Feedback from the various members of the school community (pupils, staff and parents, Board of Management) represented the most common method of assessing the programme (U4G, U1C, R10C, U2C, U7B). Some policies were more specific, referring to particular evaluative methodologies such as committee meetings (R9C), teacher reflection, reviews (U4G) and written feedback forms (U3C). Others added that their revisions would take into account changing guidelines, legislation and information (U6G, R8G). Most policies stated their intention of conducting annual or biennial revisions of their RSE policy (U6G). However, none of the analysed school policies appeared to have revised their policy document by the "date for next review" specified (e.g., the date of next review for R9C was November 2016).

Table 25: RSE Policy Revision Dates.

		Frequency of Reviews	Last updated	Date given for Next Review
1	R10C	Not specified	February 2015	No date for next review
2	U2C	Annual	November 2018	November 2019
3	U7B	Not specified	Not specified	September 2019
4	R9C	Annual	November 2015	November 2016
5	U6G	Not specified	December 2015	November 2017
6	U1C	Not specified	December 2015	December 2017
7	R8G	Biannually	May 2017	May 2019
8	U5G	Not specified	Not specified	Not specified
9	U4G	Not specified	Not specified	Not specified
10	U3C	Not specified	May 2017	Not specified

Conclusion

A wide range of perspectives were canvassed in the course of the evaluation of the Manuela Programme. Across the perspectives there were key commonalities of opinion and some divergences of opinion. The Manuela Programme was widely perceived as a valuable, student-oriented education resource. Its association with Rape Crisis Centres was seen to set it apart from other programmes and offer an important credibility to the message being delivered. The project workers were a tangible symbol of that association. Both students and teachers largely considered that the project workers had an expertise that was key to the success of the programme. Their independence from the school was described by the students as very important. Most reported that the programme could not be delivered as effectively by teachers. Teachers themselves varied in confidence in programme delivery, particularly on modules that covered sexual or gender violence and pornography.

It was clear from the review of a sample of school-level policies that there is variability in how RSE programming is planned, documented, and developed within the school community. All schools had engaged with the Department of Education & Skills requirement to have a policy, but the level of engagement ranged from a 'copy and paste' approach through to clearer evidence of commitment to contextualising the ethos and goals of RSE to the school environment. The length of time since the guidance was issued by the Department was reflected in the currency of the school-level policies. It is difficult to innovative and establish a dynamic, continuous engagement with the issues when the framework itself has not been renewed for some time. The matter of school ethos and its compatibility with a progressive approach to sexual health education was apparent in much of the documentation reviewed. Finally, there was a need to develop a more contemporary, inclusive language and vocabulary that reflects the Ireland of 2020.

It was generally, but not unanimously, felt that students should receive the Manuela Programme at a younger age. Students in particular were inclined to feel that the information was coming too late at

the point where they were in Transition Year and that they would have benefitted from being equipped with the knowledge at an earlier age. There was considerable consensus that the programme would require modification to make it appropriate for younger students. Transition Year, it was suggested, also had other disadvantages. It was not available in all schools, and not all students may avail of the year even where it was available. Most Transition Year programmes were described as offering a range of activities for the students, some of which may appeal more to the students than the Manuela Programme.

A key advantage of Transition Year was that it offered a flexibility that can accommodate a 12-hour programme. Whether the duration of the programme should continue unchanged was itself a subject of discussion in many of the qualitative consultations. The most frequent complaint from the students about the programme was the length of the sessions; some also considered that the programme itself could be condensed. Other stakeholders identified a number of advantages to reducing the number and length of the sessions. It might then be better assimilated into school timetables and it would be less resource intensive if shortened, and resource use could be critical if there was continued involvement from external facilitators.

It was widely agreed that the pilot project had generated valuable information about the acceptability of a sexual consent and gender violence prevention programme, both to school management and to students. It has had the impact of introducing an evidence-based, comprehensive programme. Yet it was not obvious which next steps to take to secure the programme for the future. Programme sustainability was a significant topic of discussion, and while non-student stakeholders recognised the critical importance of having a model to guide ongoing development and delivery of the Manuela Programme, there was no consensus on how this could be achieved. A range of opinions and suggestions were offered about how it could be sustained. The view was expressed that it should not continue in its current form as it represented an inequitable provision of important sexuality education.

Chapter 5: Conclusion and Discussion

The strengths of the Manuela Programme and associated challenges are highlighted in this section followed by recommendations for the future. The evaluation research has established that it is an effective programme, resulting in statistically significant changes in the knowledge, attitudes, and behavioural intentions of young people who part in relation to sexual violence and consent. In addition, the qualitative data identified a high level of positivity towards the programme across the range of perspectives included in this evaluation. The Pre Programme questionnaire provided an insight into the baseline tolerance of rape myths and lack of confidence around sexual consent that may exist among teenagers in Ireland as a whole. The Manuela Programme was delivered in the context of limited provision of education in relationships and sexuality in the second level education sector as a whole, and the scaling up of the programme would require extensive resource allocation.

Strengths

The research evaluation has documented a number of strengths of the Manuela Programme. Students, educators, and other stakeholders agreed that the issues covered in the programme were topical and addressed issues that are pertinent to the lives of the young people. Most students were enthusiastic about the interactive pedagogical approach used in programme delivery which prioritised independent thinking, activities, and peer-to peer discussions. This finding resonates with the preferences of young people recently articulated in Irish research (NCCA, 2019) and corresponds with international best practice guidelines as well (Kirby et al., 2006; Pound et al., 2017; UNFPA, 2014).

The student ratings of the programme components indicate a highly positive response. Female students in particular tended to say they would not make significant changes to the programme, for the most part it was aligned to their needs. While also positive, ratings made by male students were consistently lower than those of the females. The largest gender discrepancies were in the scoring of the scenarios and the videos as engagement strategies, which may suggest that the current format resonates less strongly with male students. This warrants further attention to protect the student-centred interactive approach of the Manuela programme identified by the students more generally as a key strength of the programme.

The programme learning objectives reflect the WHO (2006) multi-dimensional nature of human sexuality, which incorporates positive development and enhanced skills alongside freedom from harm, intimidation, and violence. In reviewing the evidence provided by the evaluation, it is clear that that objective of addressing attitudes and beliefs concerning sexual violence was addressed. In terms of self-efficacy about knowledge and skills concerning active consent, consent preparedness scores suggest a stronger sense of personal agency following the programme. However the findings were less striking with regard to increased behavioural intentions to implement verbal consent and reduce passive consent communication.

From the students' perspective the involvement of an external facilitator was an important factor in the success of the programme. The external facilitator was perceived as non-judgemental and lacking in the preconceptions that some teachers were thought to hold about some pupils, contributing to a valuable and distinctive learning space. This supported critical thinking and the freedom to explore views without judgment. A further strength of the external facilitators was their links with the Rape Crisis Centres which brought significant credibility. The association of the Manuela Programme with the Rape Crisis Centres was also described as an important factor in school decisions to support the programme. Some schools had pre-existing involvement with their local Rape Crisis Centres and in other instances the Manuela Programme constituted an important first link or partnership between the two organisations. A number of teachers expressed the hope that these linkages will endure into the future.

The pilot phase of the Manuela Programme has provided useful evidence about the feasibility and acceptability of the train-the-trainer model of building capacity within the teaching profession to deliver sexuality and relationship education. The Manuela Programme training was highly regarded by those who did it but most teachers developed their confidence about delivering the programme through co-facilitation and mentored facilitation. A more extensive or structured training and ongoing support programme could build on this strength. Potential accreditation or assimilation with an accredited module offered or supported by an educational institution could be explored as a means to enhance this aspect of the programme and potential impact on the professional culture within schools.

The qualitative data from the students on topics such as rape myths, false accusations, gendered expectations, and the causes of sexual violence suggests that the programme made progress in achieving the objective of students thinking critically about social norms that are tolerant of sexual violence, as well as empowering them to challenge victim blaming culture. They also demonstrated engagement with ideas relating to the different forms of sexual violence and its negative consequences for victims and perpetrators. This outcome is consistent with the learning objective of helping students to acquire an enhanced knowledge of what constitutes sexual violence and its impact.

Weaknesses

The Manuela Programme as delivered in the pilot project is highly resource intensive. It required the project workers to attend each school on six occasions in addition to visits to negotiate access to each school. As a pilot project, it was acceptable to confine programme delivery to four areas of the country, however equity would require that the programme is available to more widely and in all areas if the programme is to become an established part of sexuality education provision in Ireland. There was limited evidence collected on delivery of the programme in non-traditional educational sites or alternative settings, but the focus group carried out with a Youthreach group suggested the programme has valuable potential across these settings as well. Different views were expressed by

stakeholders as to whether an expansion of the current model of delivery is economically viable and whether the expense of this approach would be justifiable in the context of existing inadequate provision of other aspects of sexuality education across the country.

Training the teachers to take over the delivery of the Manuela Programme was a key strategy to ensure the sustainability of the programme beyond the pilot phase. The teachers who were interviewed as part of this evaluation were extremely positive about the programme and committed to the continuation of the Manuela Programme in their school. However, differing levels of confidence was expressed about facilitating certain aspects of the programme, most specifically the sessions on pornography and gender violence. Similar to the views of the students, teachers felt that the background of the project workers in the Rape Crisis Centres lent a weight and a credibility to the message that the teachers could not replicate. Most teachers indicated that they would need or appreciate ongoing support from the project workers. Unlike the students, many teachers considered that teachers were acceptable programme facilitators in the eyes of the students. Some teachers considered that teachers were the preferred providers of sexuality education. Interestingly a number of students suggested that teachers might find delivering sexuality education to their students as embarrassing as students found it.

Most students found the two-hour sessions difficult. They are unused to spending this amount of time in one class without a break. The evidence from the fidelity records indicate that the project workers were able to cover the material in classes of 90 minutes. Although this still represents slightly more than a double period for the students, it may be more acceptable than a two-hour session.

There were limitations in the evaluation research design itself that need to be considered when interpreting the findings and identifying future research priorities. For instance, the Post Programme questionnaire was delivered immediately after the end of Session 6. This means that the learning, attitude change, and change in behavioural intentions associated with programme participation are not assessed in the months after the programme was completed. Further follow up research was not possible within the project resources but is an important next step in future research. The inclusion of a control group helped to ensure the robustness of the study design, as it was found that changes in questionnaire responses did not occur for the control group. This lends more weight to the conclusion around real change having occurred for programme participants. However, the number of students included in the control group was not balanced with the numbers in the Manuela Programme intervention group. This has a bearing on the interpretability of the statistical analysis to a degree.

The questionnaire itself was designed using existing high quality and standardised measures that are frequently used in the research literature. However, given the limited development of measurement in relation to adolescents, the research team had to adapt measures that are more typically used with young adults in a college context. Piloting of the questionnaire helped to ensure that the questionnaire

was acceptable, but consistent feedback was received from project workers that the questionnaire was quite onerous in practice. It was not utilised in the Youthreach setting to reduce participant burden. For the purposes of the intensive research evaluation, the measurement tools that were included mapped on to the learning objectives for the programme, but in the long term a shortened and more accessible measurement tool should be used to assess the programme impact on an ongoing basis.

The questionnaire contained measures of attitudes, beliefs, and behavioural intentions. We purposely did not seek for behavioural data on students' sexual or intimacy experiences as this would have posed a risk in terms of privacy and intrusiveness. Nor did we seek information on sexual orientation in the demographic items. As a result, there is limited scope to assess how attitudes and beliefs may have linked to students' direct personal experiences and its relevance across different sexual orientations. Future research could expend the appropriate level of support and resources to address these issues, to deepen our understanding of the direct experiences that young people are having in Irish society, and to assess how these impact on engagement with programmes such as this one.

For the qualitative component of the study, there is a risk that students, teachers, and stakeholders self-selected to take part in the evaluation on the basis of a particular interest and enthusiasm for the programme, or indeed if they were particularly dissatisfied with it. We feel that this risk is offset by the large number of students who took part in focus groups across the country and the qualitative remarks included as free text on questionnaires. It is possible that the teachers we spoke to are not representative of the teaching community in general when it comes to implementation of sexual education programming. However, recent NCCA research demonstrates a high level of interest and engagement among teachers on this subject. If the teachers who took part were particularly interested in the topic or encouraged by their experience, it can be argued that this is a valid representation of those teachers who would in the front line as future champions and supporters of the programme. We did not have the opportunity to include teachers who led the facilitation of the programme independently, and as this experience base develops it should be studied further. Further coverage of views from school principals, Boards of Management, teachers who are not currently involved in sexual health education, and parents would help to provide more context on the cultural context of the Manuela Programme in future iterations.

Opportunities

In more recent times a new momentum has emerged to expand, develop, and modernise the provision of sexuality education in Ireland. Alongside this the Department of Education and Skills issued Circular No. 0043/2018 which asserts, inter alia, that wellbeing programmes delivered in schools and the outcomes of such programmes should "have been independently evaluated and / or informed by research and evidence" (p. 6). As the Manuela Programme is both evidence-based and has been

independently evaluated, it is well positioned as a programme of choice in schools and other educational settings.

As the pilot project ends, there is now a cohort of teachers who have facilitated and / or co-facilitated the Manuela Programme with one of the project workers. Project workers reported a strong demand from schools to host, or continue to host, the Manuela Programme in the future. A strong structure exists in the four pilot areas and a team of four experienced Manuela Programme project workers. These are strong foundations to further develop and expand the Manuela Programme. Yet flexibility will be required to meet the challenges of sustainability as well as the opportunities opening up through policy changes. The NCCA (2019) report shows that students want to be supported on a positive and ongoing curriculum that foregrounds consent, a context that the Manuela Programme will need to respond to in the future.

Many of the stakeholders interviewed for this evaluation pointed out that SPHE and RSE are the only subjects taught at second level by teachers who have not specialised in the subjects. This could result in variable quality of delivery and devalue the importance of the subject. The views expressed by the stakeholders were consistent with the findings in recent reviews of sexuality education in Ireland both of which highlighted the inadequacy of pre-service and in-service professional development of SHPE teachers. However, some stakeholders considered that the momentum to professionalise the teaching of sexuality education is unarguable and will be implemented in the near future. A cohort of specialised teachers of sexuality education could provide important partnership opportunities between schools and stakeholders to sustain the Manuela Programme into the future.

Most teachers, students and other stakeholders were of the opinion that young people needed the Manuela Programme at an earlier age. The pilot project targeted transition year as it is less time constraints than other years, particularly the Senior Cycle. However, revisions to the Junior Cycle may open up opportunities to position the Manuela Programme at this point in the students' schooling. The pedagogical approach within the Junior Cycle is more akin to that used in the Manuela Programme with increased emphasis on inclusive learner-centred education rather than the more exam-focused approach of the Senior Cycle years. The introduction of 400 hours of wellbeing education in the Junior Cycle was also seen by stakeholders to offer opportunities to adapt and develop the Manuela Programme into an age-appropriate programme delivered in a phased approach to younger students. A short refresher programme could also be designed for Senior Cycle students.

Threats

Preserving the integrity of the programme is a key concern in a future delivery model. The Manuela Programme is lengthy and complex and includes some topics that are particularly challenging to deliver. The fidelity records showed that some sessions were delivered less frequently than others. Teachers who have not had the opportunity to observe or co-facilitate a session covering more

difficult topics may be less likely to have the skill or the confidence to deliver such sessions themselves. This threat to the integrity of the programme may intensify as the training of teachers becomes further removed from co-facilitation with project workers, for instance if teachers themselves become trainers of facilitators within local networks. Likewise, the length of the programme may prove too burdensome for teachers or too difficult to accommodate into the school timetable, leading individual teachers to adapt the programme.

The integrity of the programme may also be threatened by the conscious or unconscious biases of the teachers who are delivering it. Students in one focus group spoke feeling pressure to conform to their teachers' opinions to the point of disengaging somewhat from the programme. While reflective of one group's experience it highlights the potential for such a threat. The resources used in the Manuela Programme were largely considered credible by the students and their suggestions for the incorporation of additional interactive activities into the programme highlights a general preference for interactive pedagogies that prioritise independent thinking, games, and peer-to-peer discussion. This finding echoes views expressed by students in the previous literature (NCCA, 2019) and international best practice guidelines which advocate for interactive pedagogies over instructive, teacher-led methods (Kirby et al., 2006; Pound et al., 2017; UNFPA, 2014). Another common recommendation put forward by students was the inclusion of additional realistic stories and case studies in the programme. This finding is largely consistent with the research describing students' interest in sex education that is directly relatable to their own experiences and focused on pertinent skills (Haberland & Rogow, 2015; Pound et al., 2017). In instances where a resource did not resonate with the students it could undermine the impact of the message. The resources used in the programme will therefore require regular review and updating if the programme is to continue to be relevant to the students. Such review and updating will require a significant ongoing attention and a level of financing. One teacher suggested a greater use of cartoon graphics as she believed these may have a longer life span.

Most students were adamant that the Manuela Programme should be compulsory. This view was based on the importance they attributed to the programme and their belief that many students will not opt into the programme voluntarily. Teachers and stakeholders expressed mixed views about compulsion with some arguing that it goes against the prevailing ethos of education and others suggesting that students who need the programme most are the ones least likely to opt into it. Positioning the Manuela programme in Transition Year has advantages, however it also risks recruitment to the programme being sporadic and unpredictable. Transition Year is optional in many schools and activities within the year are also choice-based, thereby restricting the potential reach of the programme.

Conclusion

The research evaluation of the Manuela Programme supports the programme as a methodology to engage adolescents on important topics that affect the achievement of positive sexual health and the avoidance of harm. Feedback on the experience of the programme and on the process used to engage with programme recipients suggests that it is consistent with international guidance on sexual health education, emerging national standards, and the preferences expressed by young people. As the evaluation of a pilot roll out of the programme, it is timely to offer suggestions intended to support its sustainability and scaling up to a national level. In support of these aims, feedback received through the evaluation highlights the need to ensure the programme is continually updated and monitored, that the content and delivery process is reviewed to consider positioning it earlier in the curriculum, potentially streamlined to ensure scalability and fidelity, and that strategy on programme development benefits from intersectoral input from stakeholders with a background in policy, practice, and research.

Appendix 1: Post Programme Questionnaire

Section 1: Information About You
What is your age
What is your gender (male, female, or another gender identity)
What is the name of the school or setting where you are taking part in the Manuela Programme.
Section 2: Consent to Different Types of Intimacy and Sex *You might find some survey items refer to types of sexual intimacy you have not experienced. Please answer these items anyway, based on your attitude or intention now if you were to have those experiences*
Section 2A: These items are about how you personally feel about sexual consent. 'Sexual consent' means *the freely given, verbal or nonverbal communication of a feeling of willingness to engage in sexual intimacy.* By 'sexual intimacy' we mean actions like intimate touching, masturbation, sexual intercourse, oral sex, or penetration. Please CIRCLE A NUMBER FROM 1 TO 5 to say how much you agree with each item 1=Strongly Disagree; 2=Disagree; 3=Neutral; 4= Agree; 5=Strongly Agree
I have all the skills I need to deal with sexual consent.
My peers think that sexual consent is an important issue.
I feel well informed about sexual consent.
I would be confident talking about sexual consent with my peers.
People my age think that talking about sexual consent with a partner is odd.
I'd find it difficult to talk about sexual consent with a romantic partner.

2B: If you were willing to take part in sexual intimacy, how would you let your partner know that you were willing to consent? By 'sexual intimacy', we mean actions like intimate touching, masturbation, sexual intercourse, oral sex, or penetration. Please circle a number from 1 to 4 to say how much you agree with each item 1=Strongly Disagree; 2=Disagree; 3=Agree; 4=Strongly Agree
I would say it is okay to engage in intimate behaviour.
I would not resist my partner's attempts for sexual intimacy.
I would ask my partner if they are interested in engaging in intimacy.
I would let my partner be intimate with me.
I would tell my partner what types of intimate behaviour I want to engage in.
I would let the sexual intimacy progress.
I would tell my partner that I am interested in engaging in being intimate.
I would not push my partner away.
I would talk about it with my partner.
I would continue with sexual intimacy.
I would let my partner go as far as they wanted.
I would give verbal permission to be intimate with me.
I would not say no.
I would let my partner touch wherever they wanted on my body.
I would verbally communicate I'm interested in being intimate.
I would not stop my partner's advances.
I would suggest being intimate to my partner.
I would let my partner start sexual intimacy and not tell them to stop.

2C: These are items about your personal attitudes to sexual consent during intimacy. We mean intimacy like intimate touching, masturbation, sexual intercourse, oral sex, or penetration. Please CIRCLE A NUMBER FROM 1 to 7 to say how much you agree with each item. 1=Strongly Disagree; 2=Moderately Disagree; 3=Slightly Disagree; 4=Neither Agree nor Disagree; 5=Slightly Agree; 6=Moderately Agree; 7=Strongly Agree
I would have difficulty asking for consent because it would spoil the mood.
I would be worried a partner could think I'm weird or strange if I asked for sexual consent before starting any intimacy.
I would have difficulty asking for consent because it doesn't really fit with how I like to engage in sexual intimacy.
I would worry that other people would think I was weird or strange if they knew I asked for sexual consent before intimacy.
I think that verbally asking for sexual consent is awkward.
I believe that verbally asking for sexual consent reduces the pleasure of the encounter.
I would have a hard time talking about consent during intimacy because I am too shy.
I feel confident that I could ask for consent from a new partner.
I would not want to ask a partner for consent because it would make me aware that I'm sexually active.
I feel confident that I could ask for consent from a partner.
I have discussed sexual consent issues with a friend.
I have heard sexual consent issues being discussed by other people my age.
I have not given much thought to the topic of sexual consent.

Section 3: Your Attitudes And Beliefs *Please read the instructions for each of the following sets of questions*
3A: There are lots of beliefs about how dating and relationships work for girls and guys. We want to know what you think. Please rate how much YOU agree with the following statements. Please CIRCLE A NUMBER FROM 1 TO 6 to say how much you agree with each item. 1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Somewhat Disagree; 3 = Slightly Disagree; 4 = Slightly Agree; 5=Somewhat Agree; 6 = Strongly Agree.
Guys like to play the field and shouldn't be expected to stay with one partner for too long.
Girls are attracted most to a guy with a lot of money.
A guy should always protect and defend his girl.
Guys should be the ones to ask girls out and initiate physical contact.
A girl wants a guy because she wants someone to protect her.
Girls like to admire guy's bodies and are attracted most to guys who are muscular and handsome.
Being with an attractive partner gives a guy prestige.
Guys who are able to date a lot of people (players) are considered cool.
In the dating game, guys frequently compete with each other for partners, and girls try to lure or catch partners.
It's only natural for a guy to make advances on someone he finds attractive.
It is natural for a guy to want to admire or check out other people, even if he is dating someone.
Guys are always ready for sex.
Most guys don't want to be ''just friends'' with a girl.
Guys are more interested in physical relationships and girls are more interested in emotional relationships.
It is up to the girl to keep things from moving too fast sexually.
Girls who play the field should expect a bad reputation.

3B: These items ask about your personal attitudes. Please CIRCLE A NUMBER FROM 1 TO 5 to say how much you agree with each item. 1= Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neutral; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly Agree
If a girl is raped while she is drunk, she is at least somewhat responsible for letting things get out of hand.
When girls go to parties wearing slutty clothes, they are asking for trouble.
If a girl goes to a room alone with a guy at a party, it is her own fault if she is raped.
If a girl acts like a slut, eventually she is going to get into trouble.
When girls get raped, it's often because the way they said "no" was unclear.
If a girl initiates kissing or hooking up, she should not be surprised if a guy assumes she wants to have sex.
When guys rape, it is usually because of their strong desire for sex.
Guys don't usually intend to force sex on a girl, but sometimes they get too sexually carried away.
Rape happens when a guy's sex drive goes out of control.
If a guy is drunk, he might rape someone unintentionally.
It shouldn't be considered rape if a guy is drunk and didn't realise what he was doing.
If both people are drunk, it can't be rape.
If a girl doesn't physically resist sex—even if protesting verbally—it can't be considered rape.
If a girl doesn't physically fight back, you can't really say it was rape.
A rape probably didn't happen if a girl doesn't have any bruises or marks.
If the accused "rapist" doesn't have a weapon, you really can't call it rape.
If a girl doesn't say "no" she can't claim rape.
A lot of times, girls who say they were raped agreed to have sex and then regret it.
Rape accusations are often used as a way of getting back at guys.
A lot of times, girls who say they were raped often led the guy on and then had regrets.
A lot of times, girls who claim they were raped have emotional problems.
Girls who are caught cheating on their boyfriends sometimes claim it was rape.
A person who has been drinking heavily can give their consent to sexual activity.

Section 4: This section asks about attitudes to pornography and sexting. 'Sexting' is when someone sends a suggestive nude or nearly nude photo or video using their phone. 'Pornography' is defined descriptions, pictures, movies, or audio of people having sex or engaging in other sexual intimacy. Please CIRCLE A NUMBER FROM 1 TO 6 to say how much you agree with each item. 1=Strongly Disagree; 2=Somewhat Disagree; 3=Slightly Disagree; 4=Slightly Agree; 5=Somewhat Agree; 6=Strongly Agree.
Sex in porn is like sex in real life relationships.
Pornography portrays sex in a realistic way.
People can get useful information from watching porn about different types of sexual behaviour
People can get useful information about how to communicate with a sexual partner from watching porn
It is the norm to engage in sexting.
Sexting is relatively harmless.

SECTION 5: POST MANUELA PROGRAMMESURVEY ITEMS
5A: The Manuela Programme was made up of SIX SESSIONS. Please let us know your opinion of each session, rating it between 1 – Very Negative and 7 – Very Positive 1=Very Negative; 2=Moderately Negative; 3=Slightly Negative; 4=Neither Negative nor Positive; 5=Slightly Positive; 6=Moderately Positive; 7=Strongly Positive FOR ANY SESSION THAT YOU DID NOT ATTEND, PLEASE CIRCLE 'NOT APPLICABLE' – N/A
Session 1: Consent *Introduction to Manuela Programme; Description of consent and law around consent; Respect for boundaries and the right to say no*.
Session 2: Sexual Violence *Definitions of sexual violence; Victim blaming and the impact of sexual violence; How to access services such as Rape Crisis Centres and respond to a disclosure.*
Session 3: Lucy's House Party *Lucy's House Party film presented 5 scenarios at a party (involving alcohol, sexual orientation, sexting, sexual violence); What constitutes healthy and unhealthy relationships.*
Session 4: The World You Live In *Challenges young people face in sexual violence; Topics such as social media, magazines, pornography, drugs and alcohol.*
Session 5: Prevention *Shared respect for boundaries, the right to say no, and bodily integrity; Ways of dealing with challenging behaviour.*
Session 6: Action Learning and Integration *Sexual violence prevention; Consequences for perpetrators of sexual violence*

5B: We would like to know your opinion about different aspects of the Manuela Programme. Please CIRCLE A NUMBER FROM 1 TO 7 to rate each one. 1=Very Negative; 2=Moderately Negative; 3=Slightly Negative; 4=Neither Negative nor Positive; 5=Slightly Positive; 6=Moderately Positive; 7=Strongly Positive
The activities
The videos
The scenarios
The group discussions
Walking debates
The length of each session (45 minutes)
The length of the Programme (6 weeks)
The people who delivered the Programme
The room/setting in which the Programme was held

5C: What Impact, If Any, Did the Manuela Programme Have For You Personally? By 'Impact', we mean changes in knowledge, beliefs, behaviour, or understanding. Please CIRCLE A NUMBER FROM 1 TO 5 to say what Impact it had, if any. 1=No Impact; 2=Slight Impact; 3=Moderate Impact; 4=Significant Impact; 5=Very Significant Impact
How I describe sexual consent.
My respect for personal boundaries.
My understanding of what is meant by sexual violence.
My recognition that consent is a mutual agreement.
My understanding of how healthy relationships differ from unhealthy relationships.
My ability to think critically about the media that I encounter.
My likelihood of engaging in sexual violence.
How I respond to social attitudes that tolerate sexual violence.
My knowledge about how to access support services for sexual violence.
My ability to have respectful sexual relationships.
My belief that sexual violence can be reduced.
My likelihood of engaging in blaming (self-blaming, victim-blaming).

5D: The final items below ask you to write in brief points that will let us know you think about the Manuela Programme, and to get your advice on any changes to the Programme. Please write in the text boxes below
What was the most important thing that you learned from participating in the Manuela Programme?
What was the most surprising thing you learned from the Manuela Programme?
If you were to change anything about the Manuela Programme, what would that be?
Do you have any other comments about the Manuela Programme?

Appendix 2: Student Participatory Focus Groups

Student Participatory Workshops

The purpose of these workshops is to use small group and consensus exercises to explore: 1) what the Manuela Programme means for young people in the context of growing up in Ireland, 2) how the Manuela Programme could impact the lives of young people, 3) their views on the content and facilitation of the Manuela Programme and 4) their suggestions for future implementation and development of the Manuela Programme.

The use of participatory strategies will result in visual representations and a mind-map of the participants' views on the topics. The emphasis on small group, consensus-based tasks is derived from the principles of participation, equity and empowerment.

Workshop protocol

Activity 1:

Introductions

Ice-breaker

Agreeing a contract about the conduct and confidentiality of the workshop

Consent to participate

Activity 2:

Students write on Post-Its what was good and was not good about the programme. They put these up on flip chart paper on the walls. These comments are used as prompts to discuss the programme

Activity 3:

On pieces of coloured paper, students write down the ways in which the Manuela Programme could impact other young people. One idea per piece of paper. In groups of 4, the students collate all the responses into groups of similar ideas.

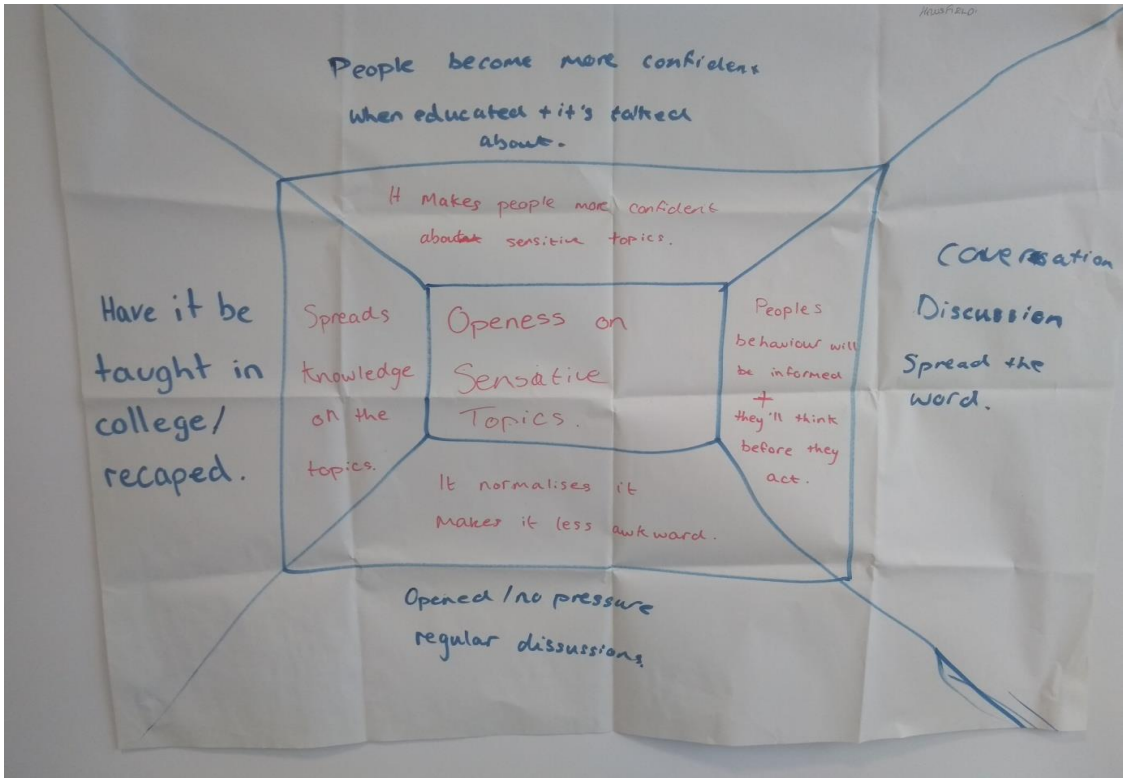
The whole group comes together to organise the responses onto chart-paper into a mind-map which displays their ideas and suggestions under themes which they have developed.

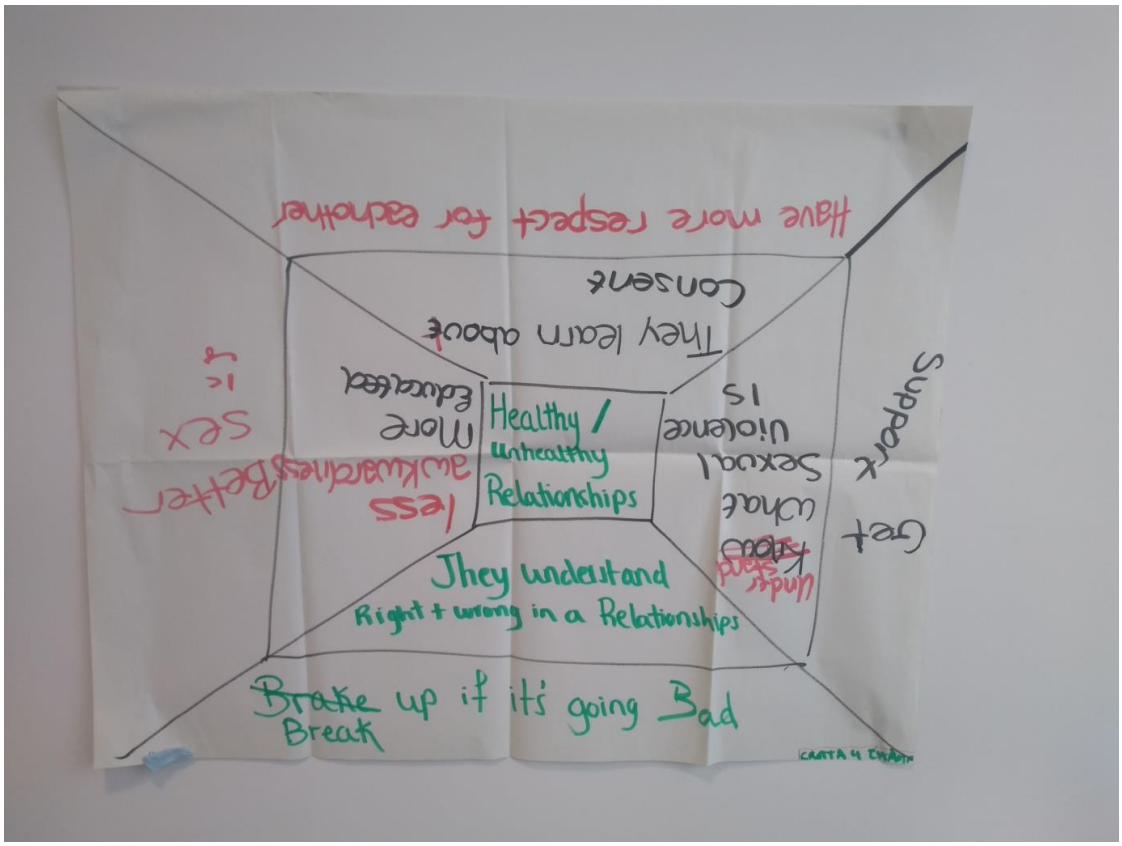
Activity 4:

While the students eat the cookies provided, further discussion takes place covering points that have not previously come up or returning to points that merit further discussion

Thanks to the students for participating

Appendix 3: Two examples of Webs created by students in focus groups





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