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9 Men for Gender Equality – promising projects for preventing men’s violence against women in Sweden

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9.1 Summary

Män för jämställdhet (eng: Men for Gender Equality - MfGE) is a non-government Swedish organisation with a vision for “a gender equal society without violence”. Critical gender theory serves as the platform for the organisation and its projects. Two of MfGE’s projects: Jämt föräldraskap (eng: Equal Parenthood - EP) and Frihet från våld (eng: Freedom From Violence - FFV) are particularly good examples of how MfGE is working to prevent men’s violence against women. EP promotes equal parenting by developing and offering activities directed at new and expectant parents, with special focus on fathers. Half of their activities are directed at local parental and father groups across the country. FFV offers early violence prevention aimed at children and young people in order to limit the incidence and consequences of violence in young people’s intimate relationships by adopting methods that highlight the importance of bystanders. This programme is an adaptation of the American Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP). Although the programmes in their Swedish versions need further evaluation to establish their evidence base, their firm correspondence to what the literature identifies as important aspects for succeeding in preventing men’s violence qualifies them as promising projects.

9.2 Men for Gender Equality – promising projects for preventing men’s violence against women

In Sweden, men’s violence against women is an issue given priority in recent government documents (SKR 2007/08:39, SOU 2014:49) and is by the government appointed National Coordinator on Domestic Violence, Carin Götblad, regarded to be a public health issue. One of these reports states:

Domestic violence not only causes great human suffering, but also leads to considerable costs to society. Society must work preventively, but also react quickly where there are signs that children or adults are victims of domestic violence. (SOU 2014:49:1)

In this report, we will describe two examples of promising practices for preventing men’s violence against women in Sweden. The organisation of our choice is Män för jämställdhet (eng: Men for Gender Equality - MfGE), a non-government organisation with a vision for “a gender equal society without violence” (www.mfj.se).²

The organisation MfGE is working to create a gender equal society without violence by focusing on masculinity, violence prevention and gender equality. Men’s violence against women, children and other men is regarded as one of the most serious expressions and causes of gender inequality. The main goal of the organisation is to eliminate men’s violence and to promote women’s safety. This is achieved by developing methods for changing attitudes and behaviours of children and young people, expecting and new parents. Also, MfGE is addressing schools, communities and the general opinion as well as decision makers. According to MfGE, a gender perspective is the key to violence prevention (www.mfj.se).

We will, in this report, focus on two of MfGE’s projects: Jämt föräldraskap (eng: Equal Parenthood - EP) and Frihet från våld (eng: Freedom From Violence - FFV), as they are both good examples of how MfG is working to prevent men’s violence against women. The report describes the two projects separately, identifying key elements in violence prevention by using previous research and prevention theory and then discusses the implications and the international applicability of the projects.

² Interviews were conducted with Anna Lindkvist, head of administration for Men for Gender Equality, Mats Berggren coordinator of Equal Parenthood (EP), and Peter Söderström, coordinator of Freedom from Violence (FFV) in January 2015. Additional sources for this report are: MfGE web page www.mfj.se; study material for EP and FFV; and follow-ups and evaluations of the programs reference in the report.
9.2.1 The MfGE organisation

The organisation is based in Stockholm and has local offices in five other large cities in Sweden: Uppsala, Malmö, Göteborg, Umeå and Örebro. The initiative to what eventually became MfGE was taken by Save the Children Sweden in 1993, when men on the organisation’s Board of Directors decided to manifest a petition as a reaction against male violence and abuse of women in relation to the Balkan Wars. This eventually led to the official start of MfGE in 1999.

MfGE has an annual turnover of approximately 1.5 million Euros and receives an annual funding of about 100,000 Euros from the Swedish National Board of Health and Welfare, primarily used for administrating the organisation. Additional funding for funding the operational work comes from project grants running for one to four years, primarily from the Swedish Inheritance Fund, SIDA, World Childhood Foundation, and the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society. Several of the projects within the organisation fund themselves via consult fees and by selling products, such as films, lectures and courses. As an example, the organisation earns about 100,000 Euros each year from selling the course Machofabriken (eng: the Macho factory) and Jämställt föräldraskap (eng: Equal parenting – EP). MfGE is also working closely together with women’s organisations, such as Unizon, an umbrella organisation for 120 women’s shelters in Sweden. 75% of staff and volunteers at MfGE are men.

9.2.2 The theoretical platform of MfGE

In prevention literature (i.e. Nation et al. 2003), theory is understood to be a key element for successful interventions, both in terms of etiological theory used to understand the causes of violence, and intervention theory describing the best methods for change. More specifically, Barker et al. (2007) emphasize that efforts directed at boys and men with a gender-changing approach appear to be more effective than programs that lack a critical gender perspective. Kelly and Lovett (2012) argue that prevention strategies must address the causes of violence against women, which are rooted in gender orders (cf. Hearn 1998; Connell 2009), the persistence of gender inequality and the associated entitlement that many men still hold with respect to women and girls. MfEG positions itself as explicitly feminist and a feminist power analysis constitutes the theoretical platform of the organisation together with critical masculinity theory. Hereby, men’s vulnerability is understood in the light of men’s privileges and power (www.mfj.se). Violence is understood as being an expression of power and control and caused by gender based power inequality and the abuser is understood to be entirely responsible for the violence, regardless of what the perpetrator says. The presumption in this theoretical perspective is that there are always alternatives to violence.

Furthermore, violence is understood along a continuum, from milder forms to more severe violence, whereby milder forms of violence cannot be understood as separate from severe forms (see Kelly 1988). This means that efforts to counteract milder forms of violence may help to prevent more severe forms of violence. Violence must also be understood in relation to gender and sexuality, including man to man violence. MfGE refers to critical masculinity research arguing for the importance to see the connections between boys’ and men’s violence and gender-stereotyped masculinity norms, and understand the structural ordering of gender power as the main reason and explanation for male violence (cf. Hearn 1998).

According to MfGE, gender inequality is rooted in gendered power structures, meaning that societies are organised around gender and sexuality which has profound consequences for men’s and women’s everyday life in terms of power, influence and value. Furthermore, MfGE argues that the ordering of gender power gives men more power and influence than women, but it is also detrimental to and causes difficulties for many men (www.mfj.se). The ordering of gender power does not only refer to the relationship between men and women as groups, but also to the relationships within the groups respectively, as it structures power relations among men and among women. The power relations among men are important also in understanding male-to-male violence and homophobic violence. Social norms about sex and gender have considerable impact on boy’s and men’s lives. According to MfGE, how boys and men are engaged in gender equality and issues of sex and gender needs to be developed, in politics, as well as in practical gender equality work.

MfGE are aiming to offer prevention programmes with a critical gender perspective for the prevention of violence to be even more effective. Thus, gender theory serves as a platform for the entire organisation, as well as, the basis for separate projects and prevention programmes within MfGE. The importance of theory is well established within MfGE, and the organisation has an ongoing and well-established dialogue with feminist and masculinity researchers both in Sweden and internationally.
9.2.3 Key elements in prevention programs

Prevention literature has identified key elements in effective or promising elements in prevention programs (e.g. Berkowitz 2002; Lonsway 2009; Flood 2011; Kelly & Lovett 2012). In line with Alan Berkowitz, Michael Flood (2002) argues that a successful prevention programme targeting men's violence against women is comprehensive, in that it includes relevant community members and systems; intensive, involving active participation, sustained over time, relevant to the audience, in that it acknowledges the needs of the participants, and based on positive messages reinforcing healthy behaviours and norms, encouraging individuals on what they can do.

In a review-of-reviews, Nation et al. (2003) identified nine characteristics of prevention programs as being effective across several different targeted problems. Five of which are related to the program. The first principal relates to the program being theory driven, referring to the need for scientific justification of a prevention intervention, both etiological theory explaining the causes of the problem and intervention theory focusing on methods for change. Varied teaching methods like some type of active, skills-based component are argued to be important, as well as interactive instructions. Further characteristics are, sufficient dosage, referring to the need for participants to be exposed to enough of the intervention for it to have an effect, and comprehensiveness, defined as providing an array of interventions to address the targeted problem, i.e. multimodal interventions. Also, it is important to engage not only peers and parents, but also schools and communities. A final characteristic which is consistently associated with positive outcomes in prevention programs is the need for children to develop positive relationships both to parents, peers and significant others.

Other principals are related to matching the program with the target population, and include the intervention being appropriately timed, i.e. the intervention should be timed to occur in a child’s life when it will have maximal impact. Often interventions are implemented after a problem behaviour is exhibited or at a time when the programs are developmentally less relevant to the participants. The programs should preferably be timed to focus changeable precursors. Also, the program needs to be socioculturally relevant, meaning that the relevance of the program to the participants is a primary concern in producing positive outcomes. In tailoring programs to be socioculturally relevant, deep structure modification is needed rather than just a language translation. Also the program need to address the individual needs of participants, as one-size-fits-all work best for those who least need the intervention, and may even exacerbate problems experienced by those most in need.

Characteristics related to implementation and evaluation of prevention programs include well-trained staff, as a high-quality program can produce disappointing results if the providers are poorly selected, poorly trained or poorly supervised, while well-trained staff can enhance the impact of the program, and outcome evaluation, meaning that it is necessary to determine program effectiveness and avoid anecdotal or case study evidence (Nation et al. 2003).

In the current report, we will discuss the programmes offered by MfGE in relation to key elements of successful programs, and we have chosen characteristics relevant to the programmes. The key elements used in this report are i) how comprehensive the programs are, ii) the theory behind them, iii) how intense and varied the methods are, iv) the focus on positive messages and relationships, v) how relevant the programs are socioculturally and developmentally. Finally we discuss vi) the training of the leaders, vii) and the results of available evaluations.

9.3 Equal Parenthood (EP)

Equal Parenthood develops and carries out activities promoting equal parenting among new and expectant parents, with special focus on fathers. EP has two main strands of activities, first they offer Föräldra- och Pappagrupper (eng: Parental and paternal groups) locally across the country, second they offer a variety of activities to health care organisations. The origin of EP is the parental and paternal groups first set up some 15-20 years ago, incorporated in MfGE in 2003 as the so called Pappa på riktigt-project (eng: Daddy for Real).

Approximately 50% of EP activities are directed at local parental and father groups across the country, and 50% are directed at health care organisations, such as maternity centres and child health centres. Parental groups are organised all over Sweden, and EP has contact with all of the 20 county health care organisations.
Male involvement in and responsibility for their child/-ren and the importance of a joint parenthood is emphasised and EP works to increase gender equality both nationally and internationally. The EP project hereby offers primary and universal prevention in the sense that the EP groups and information material is offered to any new or expectant parent, without indication of violence. However, the project is based on the idea that the time of becoming a parent may be a risk-period for violence to develop and also a period when individuals may be particularly prone to change. While this does not mean focusing on a risk-group, it does address the general population at, what can be called, a risk-period in life. Therefore, we claim that EP is to be considered a mostly universal prevention-project (aiming at the entire population), but with certain aspects of selective prevention (aiming at a specific risk-group).

9.3.1 Comprehensiveness

The activities offered to health care facilities are quite extensive and varied as EP offers conferences, inspiration days, courses/trainings, lectures, seminars and workshops on gender-equal parenthood for health professionals that meet parents in their daily work, such as midwives and paediatric nurses. The general goal is to make health care practitioners improve their ability to offer equal parental support and highlight the importance of gender equality in parenthood and how the role of the father affects young children. To health practitioners, EP offers the following programs:

- **Jämställt föräldrastöd** (eng: Gender Equal Parental Support), a course for midwives, paediatric nurses, family centres and others in the perinatal care chain.
- **Möt pappan/partnern - skapa delaktighet i föräldraskapet** (eng: Meet the father/partner - creating participation in parenthood), a workshop with lectures and practical exercises about meeting the wishes and needs of fathers wanting to be better prepared for their child’s birth, including how to take good care of a new born child at home before, during and after birth.
- **Metoder och verktyg i föräldragruppen** (eng: Methods and tools for parental group leaders), is a course including how to handle silent participants, new family constellations and promote a gender sensitive content for both parents.
- **Om Amning!** (eng: About breastfeeding!), inspires new thinking about information leading to higher frequency in breastfeeding and more gender equal parenting.

These activities indicate the scope of the work EP does with health care facilities, and this aspect of EP can be considered to be rather comprehensive. Aspects of the issues covered in the above described activities are also included in the parental and paternal groups that EP offers.

The remainder of this report will be devoted to the paternal groups as they illustrate how MfGE works first-hand with men and fathers. Fathers visiting clinics running a EP programme are offered to participate in the groups. Participation is voluntary and the groups gather all interested fathers/ fathers-to-be including parents of diverse ethnic backgrounds and diverse family structures. The paternal groups usually meet 4 times, starting right after the child is born and running for up to 5 months. The goal is to improve fathers’ knowledge of and attitudes towards gender equality in relation to their partner relation, and to increase their involvement as caretakers. The goal of the paternal groups is to offer fathers/fathers-to-be alternative and more gender equal strategies in the relationship and in their fatherhood.

9.3.2 Theory

The theoretical underpinning of the paternal groups is made explicit in the course material for new group leaders (Kursmaterial, PGR 2010). References are, for instance, made to scholars arguing for the opportunity for new parents to meet and talk about their new life (Hwang 2005). The point of departure for the parental and paternal groups is children's rights according to the UNCRC and the theoretical argument that engaged fathers are in the best interest of the child (Kursplan, PGR 2010). In particular breast feeding is highlighted, and how the father can support the mother and appreciate the importance of breast feeding. This is done in relation to attachment theory (cf. Bowlby 1969). The Swedish gender theorist Yvonne Hirdman (2001) is referenced and gender is described as a social construction having practical implication for, among other things, how health care is organised (Kursmaterial PRG 2010).

Parenthood, motherhood and fatherhood is described referencing current research showing parenthood to be engendered entailing different things to mothers and fathers (Elwin-Novak 2005).
Parental leave is shown to be a choice for fathers and an obligation to mothers (Bekkengen 2002), and men are seen as “good fathers” when chaining diapers or otherwise care for the baby while the same thing is seen as “natural” for mothers (Nathorst-Böös 2007). In relation to violence, shaken baby syndrome is discussed.

9.3.3 Methods

The basic method of the paternal groups is group discussions on specific themes combined with home assignments. The leader of the group works as a moderator stimulating conversations between the participants. In the instructions to the group leader it is stated: “You are not a daddy-expert!” (Kursmaterial PRG 2010). The group leader is to set the tone and frame the discussions, rather than teach or deliver facts. The group activity is also described as a process offering insights into how to be different and more gender equal father. The contents of the discussions are to be formed by the individual leader and by the participants themselves within a set framework. Some themes are defined as obligatory and that they are touched upon sometime during the sessions. The obligatory themes are:

- Tensions and anxiety before birth.
- The fathers role during delivery and not being able to do more.
- The time following the birth, being together and getting to know each other in the new situation.
- A shared parental responsibility caring for the baby.
- Tiredness, happiness, stress. Difficulties in time management and mood swings.
- What can you demand of yourself and others?
- Postpartum depression.
- The importance of having your own time and paying attention to your own needs.
- The importance of showing appreciation and encouraging each other.
- Changes in the relationship and sex life.
- Shaken baby syndrome.

The first session is devoted to The New Life, and covers the participants’ feelings related to the child-birth, and the parents’ roles within the family. The assignment for the participants is to talk to their partners about how they divide chores and time spent with the child. Is this random or planned?

The theme of the second session is What does it take for my child to have it as good as possible? Night time routines are discussed, as well as, feelings such as anger and joy. The interaction between child and parent, and how to set boundaries for your child is discussed. The assignment for the following session is to, together with their partner, define the term Gender Equality, and what it means to be a good parent.

The third session poses the question What does it take for us as a couple to have it as good as possible? Statistics and facts on conflicts between parents are presented. The discussions are centred on issues of changes in sexual practices and couples communication. The home assignment is to, together with their partner, draw a circle illustrating how time is divided in the household between family, work, leisure, couple time, child time, sleep etc.

The final session is called What does it take for me to have it as good as possible? Participants discuss what changes are following the birth of the baby, what differences can they identify between now and then, and what are their thoughts on the future? In particular issues related to parental leave. The last assignment is to appoint somebody to convene the group in the future.

9.3.4 Positive messages and relationships

The group conversations are focusing on the positive relationship between the parents, between father and child, but are also facilitating positive relationships among the men taking part in the activity. Importantly, the leader of the paternal group is not viewed as an expert, but rather as a facilitator of dialogue. Research argues for the importance of parental support to be non-stigmatizing (Moran & Ghate 2005), which the method of the EP groups is judged to be as the working principle is not to impose ideas, frames or knowledge but to empower fathers to see their own competences and abilities as parents. The goal of the groups is for men to discover their own capability as fathers to enhance gender equal parenting.
9.3.5 Relevance to the audience

Fathers taking part in postnatal services often express that the information is directed at the mother and is not always beneficial to them as fathers (Premberg, Hellström & Berg 2008). Fathers also describe feeling unprepared for the birth and caring for their new child, as they feel that prenatal education not is geared towards them (Thomas, Bonér & Hildingsson 2011). This is a shortcoming that the EP paternal groups is aiming to redeem. In the course material (Kursmaterial, PGR 2010), it is described as rare for men in a Swedish context to have the opportunity to talk to other men about their lives to any greater extent. Having a space exclusively for men to talk about the experience of becoming a father is however welcomed by men (Borglund & Svebeus 2013), and the EP paternal groups is offering men such space. Furthermore, research has argued that initiatives to include fathers must be sensitive to the differences between groups of fathers (Thomas, Bonér & Hildingsson 2011). The EP paternal groups have no specific design tailored to different groups but are flexible in making it possible for the individual group leader to shape the content of the discussions to the particular group.

9.3.6 Training of the leaders

The training of the group leaders is conducted by MfGE staff and includes a full-day workshop talking about the goals of the activity, i.e. the theoretical foundation in gender theory and children’s rights (UNCRC). Key to the success of the group is to find the right person leading the group. The group leaders are all male and themselves fathers. They are volunteers, and often have a professional background in teaching or social work, making them suitable as moderators. Research shows that a critical factor for a good outcome is the ability of the leader to build good relationships with parents and to work in partnership with them (Moran & Ghate 2005). This perspective is highlighted in the training as the leaders are thought of as guides rather than teachers or experts. Paternalistic attitudes should be avoided as the leader ideally is understood as equal to the participants.

9.3.7 Evaluations

The EP project has to date only been evaluated mainly for internal program development in its test version Daddy for Real (Schiratzki & Berggren 2009). The evaluation investigated several aims of the activity:

- Illustrate to participants how important the father is the child.
- To prepare the man mentally for the birth.
- Increase understanding between man and woman and thus strengthen couple relationships.
- Put the child’s right in the centre.
- To increase paternity leave and thus allow him to get some of the first time with the child.
- Highlighting the child’s right to bond with both mom and dad.

Between 2003 and 2007, Daddy for Real attracted 2600 fathers in Sweden, of which 1500 participated in all the sessions. By means of an e-mail distributed questionnaire responded by 490 previous participants (response rate 60.6%), Schiratzki and Berggren (2009) found that 63.4% of respondents were on parental leave with their child for at least five months and 69.1% indicated that they stayed home half or more of the days the child needs care because of illness on temporary parental benefit, which is almost twice the general number in official statistics (35%). Of their children, 84% were breast-fed (fully or partly) for at least five months, which is a relatively high level compared to statistics of breastfeeding in Stockholm County Council. The majority of respondents believed that their participation in Daddy for Real meant that they more equally shared the responsibility of children (58.7%). Of the participants, 80.1% claimed that Daddy for Real had made them change their attitude towards their children and the mother. Finally, Schiratzki and Berggren (2009) found that 66.1% of the fathers reported that their relationship with the children had improved and 60.8% that their relationship with the mother had improved from the Daddy for Real-groups.

9.3.8 Remarks

EP’s varied program activities provide an array of interventions to address the targeted problem, i.e. insufficient parental gender equality. However, it does not engage impacting systems, such as school or community norms. They use varied teaching methods, but whether the dosage is sufficient, we cannot judge. On the one hand, their own evaluation showed promising results, on the other, there are no
long-term follow-up and additional evaluation is necessary. By our assessment, the program is definitively driven by a clear theoretical framework of gender equality and masculinity. By addressing gender equality issues during pregnancy or just after the baby is born, the EP paternal groups is very well timed. They are also socioculturally relevant in the sense that the individual group leader can shape the programme after the participants using the course material as a frame to discuss issues deemed important by the participants themselves.

Also, EP uses a gendered and human rights approach while providing a local connection at the same time. In addition, the themes make it replicable while the idea that each group fills the theme with content makes it sustainable over time and cultures. Further, the project includes partnerships and community ownership (cf. Hester & Lilley, 2014). However, its evidence base is very limited and the EP project is in need of structured evaluation to determine program effectiveness and avoid anecdotal or case study evidence.

9.4 Freedom From Violence (FFV)

Freedom from Violence offers early violence prevention aims at children and young people based on a clear gender perspective, in order to develop methods to limit the incidence and consequences of violence. The FFV project focuses on the importance of bystanders, before, during or after a violent incident in young people’s intimate relationships. FFV spreads knowledge about violence prevention by offering schools and universities education, guidance and support in practical implementation. FFV offers primary and universal prevention designed to connect to other types of violence prevention efforts, including preventive interventions for at-risk groups, long-term care of victims of violence and practitioners and so-called indicative interventions for those who have already experienced violence (cf. Sjögren et al. 2012).

FFV can be divided in two parts. First, FFV works as a knowledge centre for violence prevention, offering lectures and conferences on violence prevention focusing on campaigns and systems change. In addition, FFV is lobbying national actors such as the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions, the Swedish National Agency for Education, the Swedish Police Service, the National Board of Health and Welfare. Second, FFV has developed and is offering a violence prevention programme aimed at school children 16 years of age. The violence prevention programme is an adaptation of the American Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP). MVP was developed in 1993 at Northeastern University in Boston, Massachusetts by PhD Jackson Katz. MfGE has translated the manuals and adjusted the content to the Swedish context, based on trials in Swedish schools and an understanding that some terminology and some themes and scenarios were not possible to translate and implement in Sweden. An example of adjustments made, is the issues of sexism, which has been toned down in the Swedish material due to the reaction by Swedish students. The cultural climate in Sweden does not accept or condone overt sexist attitudes or behaviours, so the examples from the US material were not relevant for the Swedish participants. In the remainder of the report, we will first concentrate on describing the Swedish version of MVP and second, draw on available international evaluations of MVP.

9.4.1 Mentors in Violence Prevention

Comprehensiveness

The programme is developed to be used in an entire school. All children in the class, irrespective of gender, participate in the programme. Ideally all staff, from head principal to service staff, undergoes the same violence prevention training. MVP has in that sense a universal and primary preventive focus on changing social responses (i.e. how the environment reacts) to violence.

MVP consists of an interactive 2-hour-session each week for 6-7 weeks (12-14 hours in total), alternatively as full days, half days or recurrent lessons.

9.4.2 Theory

MVP is based on gender equality and norm critical perspectives. It is based on an idea of the bystander’s power to intervene in a safe and constructive manner to prevent violence that occurs or to mitigate the consequences of violence. MVP is based on a social justice-oriented gender perspective, focusing on the role of the bystander and complicit silence exercised by members of dominant groups.
The starting points for the programme are questions of gender, race, and sexual orientation. Techniques for bystander intervention are taught as a way for individuals to interrupt the enactment of abuse. Violence, abuse and harassment are seen as micro manifestations of a macro system based on gendered power and control (as opposed to gender-neutral approaches) (Katz et al. 2011).

9.4.3 Teaching methods
The programme is an educational programme for the prevention of gender-based violence and harassment, recognising participants (i.e. students) as bystanders with the ability to identify and intervene in violent or potentially violent situations. Teaching methods include exercises, small group discussions, and short movie clips that illustrate the bystander’s importance. Themes covered in the programme are: Different types of bystanders, Domestic violence, Cramped gender rules, Sexual harassment, Sexual violence, and Homophobia. The core of the lessons is to encourage reflection on how to help others in a safe manner.

9.4.4 Positive messages and relationships
The message conveyed in MVP is that everybody can do something to prevent violence. Although the programme addresses pupils irrespective of gender, it provides an opportunity for young men to see their role in creating a positive peer culture in which abuse of women is seen as unacceptable (Katz 1995; Flood 2004). Importantly, the programme does not attribute blame or describe men as potential perpetrators, but rather creates awareness about violence and sexual harassment being everyone’s responsibility.

9.4.5 Relevance to the audience
Violence towards women and particularly sexual violence is judged relevant to discuss with 16-year-olds, as this is a period in life when young people are discovering and experimenting with both identity and sexuality. Therefore, the issue of the programme is judged relevant to the audience. The training material is made relevant to the audience by using current cultural references such as discussing the Swedish artist Yohio, who competed in the Swedish Eurovision Song Contest in 2013 or how to deal with expressions of, so called, online hate using a clip from the TV show Uppdrag Gransknning.

9.4.6 Training of the leaders
Initially, the MiGE staff was leading the MVP sessions with the purpose of developing the Swedish manual for the adapted programme. FFV has adopted a model for training session leaders inspired by a Master Trainer model in which the Swedish developers revive master training by the American MVP program developers. The plan is to have 4-5 Master Trainers in charge of training teachers and school staff, as well as young people in a peer-to-peer system. This has unfortunately not been carried out yet. During the programme developing phase, FFV staff has received supervision by the American MVP organisation.

9.4.7 Evaluations
The FFV project meets many of the above mentioned general characteristics of effective prevention programs. In addition, it seems to correspond well to the factors in the bystander that maximize the likelihood that s/he will help in emergency situations identified by a literature review by Banyard, Plante and Moynihan (2004):
- awareness of the problem and its negative impact on the victim,
- view victims as not the cause of their problems,
- is asked to make a commitment to help and see her/himself as partially responsible for solving the problem, and
- feels that s/he possesses the skills to intervene and has the opportunity to view others who models such behaviours.

While broader community norms also play a role, research (Banyard, Plante, & Moynihan, 2004) show that cohesive groups, talking about and developing consensus around helping others, are more likely to intervene in violent or potentially violent situation. In an international report evaluating MVP, Cisner (2009) found that both peer educators and workshop participants reported significantly less sexist attitudes and improved sense that they could intervene to prevent gender violence than a comparison group after MVP. In addition, workshop participants
attributed significantly less sexist attitudes to their peers after MVP, but peer educators’ assessment of their peers did not change significantly. However, the MVP program had a significantly greater impact on peer educators than workshop participants in terms of both decreased sexist attitudes and improved self-efficacy. Cissner (2009:58-59) concludes:

Overall, there is no indication that the MVP curriculum produced a significant impact on general rates of violence at Syracuse University. At the same time, changes in participant attitudes and predicted behaviors imply that over time, and particularly if the intervention is disseminated more widely across the student body, it is plausible to expect reductions in violence to occur.

Katz et al. (2011) advance these evaluation initiatives by presenting findings of an outcome evaluation in a high school setting of students that averages 16 years of age. Students in the MVP school perceived both aggressive and less aggressive behaviours as more wrong than did students in the non-MVP school, and that students in the MVP school reported being more likely to intervene than non-MVP students when they encounter situations involving more aggressive types of behaviours. However, no significant differences were found between the MVP and non-MVP schools regarding taking action in less aggressive situations (Katz et al. 2011).

The FFV, including MVP, has not yet been effect evaluated in Sweden, but a follow up of the 2010-2014 project has been conducted. In the four years (2010-2014) FFV were funded by Swedish Heritage Fund, the project reached 339 pupils aged 13-20 years, half of which girls, at three schools. The different schools in the programmes were quite different in terms of how many had Swedish as their first language, had an ethnically diverse family background, were high achieving and came from socio-economic strong families. In all, the project reached more than 77,000 people (including pupils, school staff, parents and other groups through conferences, lectures/presentations, media, manuals/books and other organizations), in events directly organised by the project, in events not directly organised and in second hand information relayed to family and colleges. In the report, the project managers write (FFV 2014:2):

We have also evaluated the program activities by handing out a questionnaire after each lesson and by talking to students and staff. The program managers have been asked to fill in a questionnaire after each application session. In addition, each action in schools was assessed during the day along with program managers to find ways that programs can be revised and thus improved.

The results of these evaluation activities are not published, but the project managers conclude that the participants expressed a great satisfaction with being offered the opportunity to speak about violence and especially appreciated discussing sexual harassment and sexual violence and think the lessons have been meaningful and they feel better prepared for intervening in destructive and violent situations.

The FFV-project has now evolved into Kommun fri från våld (eng: Municipality Free From Violence, building on the previous project encompassing the entire community in two municipalities in Sweden.

9.4.8 Remarks

Thus, the evidence that MVP changes violence-related attitudes is moderate and findings about behavioural change are non-existent. However, the evidence base being somewhat limited is not unique to MVP, as there is a general lack of robust evaluations of prevention measures (Hester & Lilley, 2014). It is generally difficult to demonstrate clear effects and results of universal intervention efforts, as the target is the general public and not a “problem group”. Also, behavioural change in bystander interference is not the same as decrease of violence. In the light of the evaluations done and the general state of violence prevention programme evidence base, we therefore suggest that these results taken together indicate that the MVP program can be considered as “promising”, as it uses a gendered and human rights approach, is sustainable and replicable by the manuals, and includes partnerships and community ownership (cf. Hester & Lilley 2014). FFV argues for the urgency in adults taking an active part in shaping non-violent environments for children and young people. The FFV programme also aims to prevent the continuation of gender stereotypes, and in addition addresses attitudes that can contribute to an acceptance of gender-based violence and improves understanding of the root causes of gender-based violence and what constitutes a respectful and healthy relationship.
FFV is comprehensive in providing an array of interventions to address the targeted problem, i.e. changing social responses to violence. Particularly, it engages impacting systems, such as school or community norms, engaging parents, peers and significant others. Like EP, FFV uses varied teaching methods, but whether the dosage is sufficient, we cannot judge as evaluations have not tested variations in impact between the longer and shorter versions of the activities. The program is based on relatively clearly theories of masculinity, violence and bystander activity. Whether adolescence is the best timing for these activities cannot be judged and we welcome evaluation of at what age the FFV activities might have best impact on later actual bystander intervention. By addressing violence prevention through the bystanders’ positions and possibilities to act, we believe the project has increased the relevance of the program to the participants. Although the MVP has been evaluated in the USA, evaluations of the Swedish version in the Swedish context are necessary for determining program effectiveness.

9.5 Concluding discussion

To sum up, both programs/projects include many of the elements that prevention literature has identified in effective or promising elements in prevention programs. However, the general lack of robust evaluations of prevention measures (Hester & Lilley, 2014) also includes these projects.

Together, the projects of MfGE promote changes in the social and cultural patterns of behaviour of women/girls and men/boys with the aim to eradicate prejudices, customs, traditions and other practices that are based on the inferiority of women, on stereotyped roles for women and men and encourage all members of society, especially men and boys, to contribute actively to preventing all forms of violence (cf. Council of Europe 2011, Article 12 §1, §4). Men’s responsibility is prioritized over the empowerment of women (cf. Council of Europe 2011, Article 12 §6). The projects do not, however, explicitly take into account and address the specific needs of persons made vulnerable by particular circumstances (cf. Council of Europe 2011, Article 12 §3). The projects do not explicitly address the role of culture, custom, religion, tradition or so-called “honour” (cf. Council of Europe 2011, Article 12 §5) but do not consider such aspects as justification of any acts of violence (cf. Council of Europe 2011, Article 12 §5).

The preventive measures to promote the disruption of the different paths that may lead to violence provided by MfGE challenge gender stereotypes through campaigns that are designed to highlight social norms based on gender stereotypes, challenge victim-blaming attitudes, and promote positive change in behaviour. Thus, the preventive measures include the societal, institutional, community and individual levels. However, they only indirectly review and amend legislation that reinforces, perpetuates or otherwise incorporates gender stereotypes and focus primarily on educating children and young people. The measures involve men and boys as agents of positive change, by engaging them at different levels of intervention, through the use of creative, participatory and interactive methods of inclusion and challenge resistance while ensuring that intervention is developed in co-operation with women-centred organizations.
These measures do not directly increase the leadership and agency of women in the economic and political spheres to counter the effects of negative gender stereotypes and inequality by mainstreaming gender within legislation, policy and practice. One could say that the FFV project addresses negative gender stereotypes and inequality in general, while the EP project targets the specific needs of women in relation to caring for the young child. The EP project indirectly, but clearly, promotes women’s rights by preventing the continuation of gender stereotypes and improving respectful and healthy relationships and father involvement.

MFGE do not, to our knowledge, collaborate with all media organizations to promote a culture of gender equality and awareness of gender-based violence against women and its root causes. But the organisation is working to expanding their presence on social media, primarily via the Fatta! Man project. To our knowledge, MFGE has not yet made available reliable, detailed data on how their work on FFV has received funding and is planned to start in 2015.

9.5.1 Implementation

In implementation literature, some key elements in implementing programs have been identified (Mihalic & Irwine 2003). Developing an appropriate program based on the criteria for what works in prevention is the starting point of a successful program. How it is implemented is, however, equally important, research shows. Cross and West (2011) argue that the effectiveness of programs cannot surpass the skills levels of the people implementing them, meaning that programmes that are too complex in structure or content will be difficult to implement beyond the scope of the programme developers. Extensive research argues for intervention fidelity, and a strong belief that all future implementations of an efficacious program must be delivered in a manner that is true to the original model to replicate positive outcomes (August et al. 2010). This is however difficult to achieve in naturalistic settings especially if the intervention is complex, and studies show that complex programs are often simplified in the implementation process (Rohrbach, Graham & Hansen 1993). A balance between intervention fidelity and adaptation is called for by August et al. (2010) promoting program developers to provide guidelines for adaptation. Also, developers need to collaborate with stakeholders together planning the program. This creates scaffolding around the program while fitting it to the needs of the community (August et al. 2010). August et al. (2010:85) promote the need to go beyond looking at the efficacy and effectiveness of evidence based programs “into the realm of community relevance and practicality”, and create interventions that are both adaptive and adapted.

EP paternal groups have developed over a period of time by EP staff. Importantly, this development has occurred in close dialogue with stakeholders, such as health care facilities and professionals. The EP paternal groups have also expanded to other countries and are currently in operation in Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Namibia and South Africa to mention a few. In implementing the paternal group programme, EP staff holds workshops to train session leaders. In these workshops the general theoretical perspective is presented, where after the participants themselves discuss themes and activities to fill the programme with. In this way the implementation becomes culturally sensitive while at the same time staying true to the core message of children’s and women’s rights and masculinity theory. No evaluations have been done on the implementation of EP in other cultural contexts. The mode of implementation, however, makes the programme itself highly flexible, and in line with implementation research (August et al. 2010).

FFV’s work to implement MVP can be considered in line with implementation research, as they have adapted the programme to fit the Swedish cultural context, using contemporary cultural references and omitting issues of sexism not relevant to the Swedish audience, while staying true to the core of the program (August et al. 2010). This is due to a close relationship with the American programme developers and continuous supervision. The effectiveness of the implementation of MVP in Sweden is, however, in need of evaluation. The recommendation for others interested in implementing MVP is to follow the example of FFV and do it in collaboration with the original programme developers.
9.6 References


Kelly, L. & Lovett, J. (2012) Awareness raising activities to fight violence against women and girls in the UK. Discussion paper-United Kingdom. 7-8 February 2012 European Commission (Justice)


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