

# Engaging youth in promoting positive masculinities to eradicate violence against women



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# Overview of the session

- Introduction. Carmen Vives-Cases
- PositivMasc videos and teaching guide. Krizia Nardini
- PositivMasc policy brief. Carmen Vives-Cases



## **Phase 3: Presentation of findings and development of guidelines and materials that support and promote anti-VAW masculinities.**

- Objective: to disseminate the findings of the Concept Mapping study and engage community stakeholders in the design of guidelines and materials that promote and protect anti-VAW masculinities.
- Activities:
  - Design of awareness raising materials that can be customised for use in community settings (e.g. youth clubs) and colleges of further and higher education: [SHORT-VIDEOS](#)
  - Draft a set of evidence-based guidelines for educators on how the issue of VAW and the promotion of anti-VAW masculinities can be addressed in educational settings: [TEACHING GUIDE](#)
  - Develop a set of strategies and resources to promote anti-VAW masculinities and challenge attitudes that tolerate VAW. One of the key objectives of these workshops will be to begin work on the: [POLICY BRIEF](#)



# Videos and Teaching Guide

Krizia Nardini

# POLICY BRIEF

## Promoting Positive Masculinities to Address Violence Against Women in Young People: Evidence From the PositivMasc Project

Carmen Vives-Cases, Nihaya Daoud, Claire Edwards, Ariadna Cerdán-Torregrosa,  
Robert Bolton, Emily Felt and Mariano Salazar



# POLICY BRIEF

- Purpose
- The brief process
- Main contents and findings
- Recommendations

# Purpose



To report the main findings from PositivMasc about how young people think about masculinities and violence against women and the assembled strategies to promote positive masculinities to prevent this type of violence from the perspective of both, young people and professionals from Sweden, Israel, Ireland and Spain.

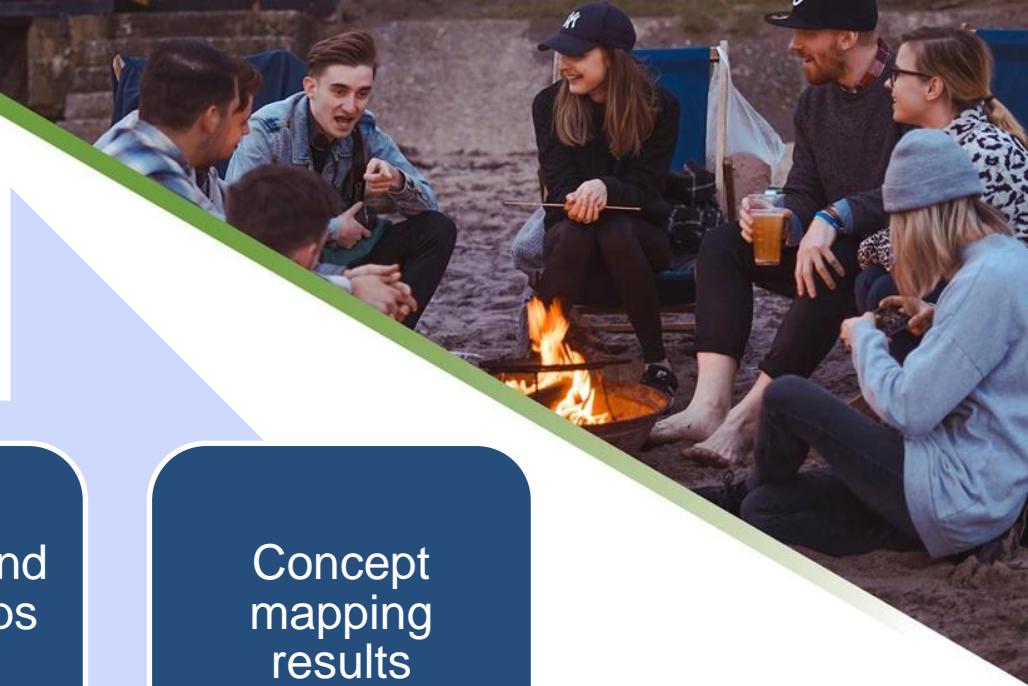


# The brief process

Literature  
reviews

Interviews and  
Focus groups  
results

Concept  
mapping  
results



# Main contents

- Executive summary
- Overview (the need)
- About Positivmasc project
- Main results
- Conclusions & Recommendations



## Common findings

- Young people recognized extreme forms of VAW and their connection with gender norms, but this did not translate into recognition of other types of violence (control in social networks, emotional manipulation, non-consensual sex in couple).
- More flexible and positive understandings of manhood are emerging among young people, but traditional, harmful understandings also persist.
- In all of the project countries, young people were able to describe their needs in contributing to prevent VAW, which were related to education on sex and consent, relationships, gender norms, emotional literacy and regulation, bystander intervention, conflict resolution and non-violent communication.

## Common findings

- A few EU level policy frameworks recognize the need to incorporate men, boys and masculinities into gender equality work, but there are gaps in connecting VAW to gender norms.
- In all four countries, there is insufficient policy attention to the link between gender norms and VAW than hinders existing NGOs and educational initiatives in this field.

# IRELAND

## Translating Consciousness of Men's Violence Against Women Into Action

The social, cultural, political and economic situation of post-independence Ireland, combined with Catholic social teachings and values, has shaped Ireland's response to gender equality and men's violence against women. These values have shifted considerably in twenty-first century Ireland, however, there are still barriers to translating a growing desire to address VAW into action. Inclusion of men in addressing this pervasive societal problem is needed.

### About the Fieldwork in Ireland

The Irish qualitative data was made up of one-to-one interviews with 14 stakeholders and 27 young people

### PositivMasc Findings in Ireland

- Young people associated particular types of behavior and practices with specific versions of masculinity, such as the "lad". A "lad" version of masculinity was viewed negatively by participants and was associated with strong peer group loyalty, sexual bravado, and the objectification of women. Participants described this "lad culture" as contributing to sexual harassment and violence against women in Ireland.
- Participants perceived formal education on sex and relationships in Ireland to be very poor and, for some, non-existent. They suggested that this need

Both young people and stakeholders perceived a positive change in gender roles and consciousness around VAW within Irish society.

Stakeholders perceived difficulties regarding how to discuss and implement formal education on VAW in schools.

# ISRAEL

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## A Complex Social and Political Context Shapes Perceptions of Masculinities, Gender Relations and Men's Violence Against Women

The socio-political context and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict have a tremendous effect on shaping perceptions of masculinity, gender relations and violence against women (VAW) in Israel. In 1948 Palestinians became an indigenous minority in their homeland, with the Jewish majority controlling country resources. The militarist discourse became dominant in shaping masculine identity and gender relations in Israeli Jewish society. The central role of the military in Israeli society and culture contributes to discrimination not just against Jewish women, but also against the Palestinian-Arab minority. In the last decade there has been a notable shift at the policy level towards VAW, however barriers remain to including men in combating VAW, specifically among the Palestinian-Arab community. Most VAW interventions focus on women, and men receive less attention in programs and policies.

### About the Fieldwork in Israel

- Masculinities among Palestinian-Arabs are shaped by the intersections of political forces and patriarchy that embody unequal ethno-national power and gender relations. Palestinian masculinities are socially constructed to resist oppression, which highlights the possibility for simultaneous liberatory transformation towards egalitarian gender relations and ending of subordination.
- Jewish young people understood masculine behavior on a spectrum, ranging from the hegemonic, militaristic discourse of the Sabra, to a preference for egalitarian masculinity. This egalitarian masculinity rejects stereotypical macho masculine identity and supports emotionally expressive manhood. These masculinities are influenced by the "Zionist ideology" and "the state's militaristic nature"; the "global neoliberal order" and values of "liberal-feminism"; the ethnic and racial hierarchy; and conservative religious beliefs.

There were different perceptions of masculinities and VAW among Jewish and Palestinian-Arab young adults.

Masculinities among Palestinian-Arabs are shaped by the intersections of political forces and patriarchy that embody unequal ethno-national power and gender relations.

For some Jewish young adults, the neoliberal feminist discourse acts as a barrier to understand the systematic, social, and structural features of VAW.

# SWEDEN

## Interventions to Reduce VAW and Promote Positive Masculinities Must Challenge Traditional Gender Roles in Society

Sweden is one of the most gender equal countries in the world and has strong legislation that aims to curtail violence against women. In addition, non-governmental organizations have developed interventions to challenge harmful, traditional forms of masculinity among young people. Despite these advances, the percentage of women reporting physical or sexual violence by their partners is higher than the EU average. Although governmental VAW prevention policies exist, they have been criticized for becoming gender neutral and failing to acknowledge the role that unequal gender relations have in the recurrence of VAW.

### About the Fieldwork in Sweden

### PositivMasc Findings in Sweden

- Young men and women understand and react to VAW in different ways. They recognized the most common forms of VAW (emotional, physical, and sexual). However, more insidious forms of VAW, such as controlling behavior and economic violence, were absent in some descriptions of VAW. Bystander intervention to tackle VAW and constraints on individual action were discussed.
- When discussing sexual violence and consent, both young men and women suggested that there are “grey zones” implicit in the nature of sexual communication that can lead to sexual violence; it can be difficult to determine whether the other

In general, participants rejected any justification for VAW. However, some young people’s discourses shifted part of the responsibility for sexual violence to women, since “a woman is partly responsible for her own safety”.

Young men and women understand and react to VAW in different ways. However, forms of VAW such as controlling behavior and economic violence were absent in their discourse

# SPAIN

## Young People Need Safer Social and Institutional Contexts for Healthy, Non-Violent and LGB-Friendly Masculinities to Flourish

Violence against women legislation in Spain dates back to 2004, with the ratification of Organic Law 1/2004, on integral protection against gender violence. Regulations enacted in 2021 have included strategies to address emerging forms of VAW, such as cyber-harassment and image-based sexual violence, forms of VAW that young people are exposed to in their everyday lives. There is no current legislation in Spain that addresses the relationship between masculinities and VAW. In Spain, as in other countries, violent attitudes and GBV continue to exist in young people, despite years of interventions designed to raise awareness. However, young people, especially those with experience in gender equality activism, actively challenge traditional, harmful gender norms.

### About the Fieldwork in Spain

In Spain, the project research included young women

### PositivMasc Findings in Spain

- Some young people were critical of the dominant construction of gender and the inequalities it perpetuates. These views were especially present among activists (of all sexual orientations) and among non-activist homosexuals and bisexuals. Young people expressed difficulty in putting these ideas into practice, due to peer pressure and institutional neglect. Their voices should be considered in developing policies to promote changes in the construction of gender.
- Young men suggested that beliefs linked to hegemonic masculinity - including emotional censorship, aggressiveness and hypersexuality - can lead to bullying, mental health problems, lack of affection in interpersonal relationships and illness caused by harmful behaviors (drug and

Young activists (of all sexual orientations) and non-activist homosexuals and bisexuals were more critical of the dominant construction of gender and the inequalities it perpetuates.

Some young people confused victims and perpetrators of VAW when discussing subtle forms of violence, victim-blaming for sexual violence, digital VAW and bystander intervention of men.



# Recomendations

- For policymakers
- Educators and stakeholders
- Researchers

## For policymakers...

- To develop strategies and initiatives that address the harmful, societal ideals of masculinities that continue to underpin VAW.
- To identify and address emerging forms of VAW, including cyber-harassment and image-based sexual violence, which young people identify as problematic and common in their everyday lives.
- To ensure the sustainability of gender equality work that integrates men and boys
- To include young people's voices in decision-making to address VAW from the policy to programmatic level.

## For educators and stakeholders...

- To work with peer groups and see them as resources to develop alternative and positive understandings of manhood.
- To promote bystander intervention skills among young people, which recognize both the supportive factors and the barriers and vulnerabilities they face when intervening.
- To engage families, coaches, peers and other actors in education and VAW prevention programs is recommended to support young people.
- To promote and sustain the well-being of young men as gender norms change and evolve.

## For researchers...

More research is needed on:

- Current and/or positive masculinities and the relationship to VAW prevention to help inform policy and practice.
- How gender socialization relates to social and online media.
- Emerging forms of VAW among young people to help inform interventions to address them.
- Creative and innovative methodologies such as the use of vignettes.

# POLICY BRIEF

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