



CarMiA – Caring Masculinities in Action

National Report – Spain

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INTRODUCTION

Gender-based violence is the ultimate expression of inequality and discrimination, as well as a fundamental violation of human rights. Gender socialization is behind men's violence against women within a triad that also includes violence towards other men and against themselves (Kaufman, 1999).

The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE)¹ places Spain above the European average in the slow progress towards gender equality, yet, with a wide margin for improvement.

Other indicators show that Spain has come a long way in the fight for the eradication of gender violence. These come, on the one hand, from the study and collection of information through observatories and the monitoring of police data or periodical surveys². And on the other hand, through the implementation of policies at different levels of public administration. In this regard, another significant event has been the accession to the Council of Europe's Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention)³. Besides, there's also the crystallization of the effort - initially by social movements and later by political actors - in a ratified agreement among all political parties (*Pacto de estado*) against gender-based violence in 2017.

Other recent laws, such as the Law for the comprehensive protection of children and adolescents against violence, or the Law for the comprehensive guarantee of sexual freedom, show that there are social and political spaces that take steps towards the end of violence and include advocacy as a resource in different sectors (justice, health, education, etc.).

The progress outlined above contrasts with the data collected by the 2019 Macro-survey, which indicates that 57.3% of women living in Spain (aged 16 or above) have suffered violence throughout their lives just because they are women. Besides, 14.2% of women have suffered physical and/or sexual violence by a current or past partner at some point in their lives.

It is also necessary to talk about the social perception of the problem of gender violence (only highlighted among the most relevant ones by 0.1 of the population⁴). In this sense, the *Barómetro Juventud y Género 2021*⁵ reports that the perception that gender violence is a very serious social problem has increased from 72.4% to 74.2% for young women, but it has decreased from 54.2% to 50.4% for young men. According to this study, the categories denying or limiting its importance have experienced a significant growth, especially amongst men, 20.9% of whom say that gender-based violence does not exist. It is equally noteworthy the increase in violence based on discrimination that is tolerated or encouraged. This is

¹ <https://eige.europa.eu/>

² <https://violenciagenero.igualdad.gob.es/violenciaEnCifras/macroencuesta2015/Macroencuesta2019/home.htm>:

³ <https://rm.coe.int/1680462543>

⁴ https://datos.cis.es/pdf/Es3371creenciasMT_A.pdf

⁵ Rodríguez, E., Calderón, D., Kuric, S., Sanmartín, A., (2021). Barómetro Juventud y Género 2021. Identidades, representaciones y experiencias en una realidad social compleja. Madrid. Centro Reina Sofía sobre Adolescencia y Juventud, Fad. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.5205628

reflected in the increase in hate crimes and incidents registered by the State Security Forces in Spain and which represent 28.62% more than in 2020⁶.

Regarding the inclusion of masculinities in public policies, there has been some moderate progress in recent decades with the extension of the paternity leave, and the possibilities offered by equality plans in several companies. Progress is also present in the awareness-raising actions for joint responsibility against male violence, aimed specifically at men. Specific departments or programs aimed at changing the situation of men in public administrations are still anecdotal examples in certain administrative regions (*Comunidades Autónomas*) and cities⁷. NGOs and some universities have generated an increase in research, training offers and good practices in intervention with men in some areas. The field of education has been the one that has experienced the greatest progress in actions to raise awareness and prevent violence.

There is still a long way to go in relation to men's involvement in a social transformation that consolidates egalitarian changes and puts an end to violence: only a minority of men take a public stance against male violence. Women - according to the aforementioned macro-survey - do not usually turn to them when they suffer abuse from their partners. There has been an evolution in co-responsibility in care tasks since 1981, when almost 40% of men thought that sharing domestic chores was not very important for a good relationship. Thirty-six years later, in 2017, only less than a quarter hold that opinion while 91.4% understand to a greater or lesser extent that domestic co-responsibility is a value that builds a harmonious coexistence⁸. Likewise, we are witnessing a particular advance in terms of co-responsibility and reconciliation, promoted by the Co-responsibilities Plan at state level and carried out by the different administrative communities. This is with a significant investment that includes awareness-raising measures, looking for men's involvement in caregiving, understood as a real alternative to violence.

REVIEW OF GOOD PRACTICES

The good practices reviewed for this report contain interesting and varied experiences in both form and content that can complement the overview of the state of play that has been presented.

The following criteria were used to identify good practices of programs and projects working at a national level to reduce gender-based violence:

⁶ [https://www.interior.gob.es/opencms/pdf/archivos-y-documentacion/documentacion-y-publicaciones/publicaciones-descargables/publicaciones-periodicas/informe-sobre-la-evolucion-de-los-delitos-de-odio-en-Espana/Informe evolucion delitos odio Espana 2021 126200207.pdf](https://www.interior.gob.es/opencms/pdf/archivos-y-documentacion/documentacion-y-publicaciones/publicaciones-descargables/publicaciones-periodicas/informe-sobre-la-evolucion-de-los-delitos-de-odio-en-Espana/Informe%20evolucion%20delitos%20odio%20Espana%202021%20126200207.pdf)

⁷ https://violenciagenero.igualdad.gob.es/violenciaEnCifras/estudios/investigaciones/2021/estudios/comparativa_politicas_masculinidades .htm

⁸ <https://www.men-in-care.eu/es/>

- the program explicitly addresses social constructions of masculinity and gender stereotypes associated with men, that are transmitted to boys and men.
- the program articulates and promotes alternative and non-violent masculinities.
- the program includes a peer-to-peer approach.

We shall analyze these aspects in the three selected initiatives below:

- *CHARLAS DE VESTUARIO* (Social Initiative Foundation, since 2020 to the present): training and awareness-raising activity carried out in three sessions in sports clubs and local sports schools. It is aimed at minors, young people, families and technical staff of lower categories of sports clubs and local sports schools.

Regarding the approach used towards violence and masculinity, we have dealt with content such as gender socialization, male gender mandates in sporting environments, the use of power, the incorporation of men into care and good treatment, analysis of different styles of masculinity; and specifically, visibilizing the normalization and reproduction of everyday violence and *machismo*, and a commitment to change and promote egalitarian attitudes.

Diversity is present when dealing with the dynamics of oppression-submission, bullying, gender violence... In particular, the normalization of violence among boys while doing sports is pointed out. Likewise, there is macho violence, such as homophobic, gender and sexual violence, used towards girls in various contexts outside sports.

The promotion of alternative masculinities is one of the resources for primary prevention, and its aim is to prevent violence before it happens. It has an educational, awareness-raising, feminist-empowering and male depatriarchalising approach. It encourages the incorporation of boys into care and good treatment, valuing the peaceful and egalitarian attitudes that they can foster and which can be shared during the sessions.

A peer-to-peer approach is not specifically present, although it does promote a social commitment in the contexts in which they participate. It highlights egalitarian and cooperative references in sports, social and gender justice values, as a dissidence to the hegemonic model of violent masculinity, to generate visibility and as a complaint against chauvinistic attitudes. In addition, the facilitator stands as a reference because of his or her age and involvement in the sport.

- *EXPOIGUALES* (Equal Men - *Ahige Andalucía*, 2021): An awareness-raising project carried out in 10 high schools in the city of Córdoba which includes: an awareness-raising photo exhibition, youth training work and a peer-to-peer approach.

The contents show structural patriarchal violence as a triad (M. Kaufman): against other men, against themselves, and against women. It shows the exclusion of men (both in images and texts) who do not fit in the hegemonic model as well as various forms of discrimination based on race, class, sexual orientation, age, power, etc.

The educational exhibition questions the traditional model of masculinity, showing men excluded by patriarchy and making men's new styles and values visible. Diversity is included in specific images and texts, and it is implicit in the photo exhibition's title which serves as the basis for the project "Many ways of being a man."

Thus, the images share the idea that another way of expressing masculinity is possible. Besides, it can adopt several shapes in everyday life: in relationships in general, within a peaceful conflict resolution, in ecology, within a couple, as part of the respect for diversity, etc. New ways of being a man is the basis for building a fairer world.

There is also a peer-to-peer approach, as the exhibition is presented to the students by a group from each educational centre, trained to act as guides. The young people, who carry out this activity as guides, have been trained beforehand. This process involves being exposed to the themes of equality, violence and masculinities while the images and contents are presented to them in an interactive way. They are also given a printed guide so that they can study the exhibition and prepare the guided tour for their peers.

SOLOS / ALUAHDANIA (*Homes Igualitaris - Ahige Catalunya*, 2022): single-sex shelters for intercultural learning with migrant children and adolescents, provided with various resources for the care of adolescents migrating alone. This is a collaboration with the Secretary of State for Immigration of the *Generalitat de Catalunya*. We had 5 workshops with the objective of promoting male gender identities addressing equality, non-violent self-expression and the development of caring social roles among boys.

The traditional male role is spontaneously and uncritically integrated as the main element of the boys' migration project: Becoming the main provider of the family of origin and being able to support it financially stands as their most important motivation. This naturalization of the role of provider may also involve the rest of the traditional male traits and roles such as the

subalternity of women, the neglect of self-care and care tasks, the emotional hardening and the instrumental use of violence, etc.

It has a specific session dedicated to violence and masculinity, and works on aspects that support it such as gender socialization, which can be expressed through sexuality. One alternative to gender socialization is care. The latter is also addressed during the session.

Its objectives include the promotion of diverse gender expressions (diverse masculinities) and the prevention of violence against the LGTBIQ+ community. It does not address homophobia directly, although it paves the way to do so in subsequent interventions by questioning the mandates of gender socialisation. It questions the category of MENA (Spanish word for Unaccompanied Foreign Minors) and identifies their reality as that of Children and Adolescents Migrating Alone.

The work is focused on questioning the traditional male role that has been spontaneously and uncritically integrated. To do so the processes of male gender identity construction based on domination have pointed out, enabling masculine identities centred on assertiveness and care. The same intercultural approach of the space was focused on taking into consideration the inequalities and hierarchies derived by their cultural origin.

All in all, the three programmes work on masculinities with young men, although the target population, the duration, the periodicity and the methodology used differ.

Masculinities and their relationship with gender-based violence are dealt with in all the initiatives studied with different nuances: the world of sport, everyday machismo, the link with the role of the provider, patriarchal violence as a triad, several forms of discrimination, possible alternatives, etc.

Diversity is a cross-cutting content that is directly and openly addressed in some of the good practices studied. Yet, in other experiences issues such as homophobia are not straightly dealt with.

Alternative masculinities are addressed by questioning the traditional male role since they propose the incorporation of boys into care or as the essential basis of a fair society.

We can draw lessons from all the experiences. Yet, *EXPOIGUALES* stands as the most obvious example of the peer-to-peer approach, which places the boys in the limelight, becoming agents of change among their peers.

FOCUS GROUPS WITH PROFESSIONALS WORKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

Four focus or discussion groups were conducted:

GD.1 Held in Barcelona on 20th July 2022, with three members of the Conexus Foundation, two women and one man, with extensive experience on working with young men and men who have suffered violence. This group also acts as a Technical Advisory Group.

GD.2 Carried out in Málaga on 27th June 2022 with 12 male teachers from the *Instituto Sta. María de los Ángeles* (high school).

GD.3 It also took place in Málaga on 10th August 2022, with male and female professionals from the *Proyecto Hombre Association*, which specializes in intervention with young people with addiction and behavioural problems, from a biopsychosocial perspective.

GD.4 Carried out in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, on 12th September, with the participation of 7 professionals, 4 coming from formal education and 3 from non-formal education.

Based on the data obtained in the 4 focus groups, a thematic content analysis was carried out. They were grouped into categories based on existing similarities and on the previously established criteria related to the focus groups' objectives. The structure of these results is based on this categorization.

Addressing the work on masculinities and violence with young people

In all the discussion groups, the importance of not generalizing when working with young people was pointed out, as well as the lack of networking and a greater connection between agents working with young people:

"Now we are going to start a project in a school in Girona, where we are going to try to involve the whole school community in a more sustained and comprehensive way, from the teaching staff, pupils and families. It would actually be desirable to do it in a more systematic and more regulated way." (GD1 Conexus, Barcelona)

The non-formal education professionals from Las Palmas highlighted that the global situation of society, which favours the appearance of violence (social precariousness, uncertainty and lack of hope in many cases) must be considered. At the same time, we need to address the specific violence that manifests itself in the different working areas with young people.

When it comes to tackling violence, the Barcelona discussion group stated that violence will not be eliminated. However, it is important to focus and make an effort to reduce it, and to make the means and resources explicit in order to tackle it.

The same group indicated that the approach should be from a **processual perspective** (gradual, evolving), showing how violence unfolds during the evolution of relationships. Besides, violence does not usually occur all of a sudden, in isolation, but through a process in which its intensity increases.

It is necessary to avoid separating prevention, detection and intervention, but rather to integrate them into a complex and continuous process, where actions must be sustained through time. They should even be part of a curriculum that helps to understand structural inequalities, and which contributes to detect and work on the violence in their socialization processes. Therefore, a conscious effort is needed to work on how to improve the ways of relating, especially when conflicts arise:

"By working on stories of relationships, for example, with Tik tok or Instagram, they can recreate a process of a relationship that ends in violence" (GD 1 Conexus. Barcelona).

DG. 1 We considered it necessary to work with both mixed and non-mixed groups. In any case, the main priority was protection, especially for dissidents and people socialized as women. When there is a high level of violence or resistance, the non-mixed group reduces the possibility of these aggressions. It is beneficial even for boys, as it decreases male performativity, which is more likely to occur in mixed groups.

For this group using a **restorative approach** was important, since it is based on the restorative justice paradigm and the community's health and protection. Sometimes, when a prevention action is carried out with a group of young people, for example, in an educational environment, aggressions, whether symbolic or direct, appear. This approach tries to manage this aggression in a constructive and caring way, knowing that violence harms all parties and has an impact on the community (in this case, on the group). Therefore, it is a matter of moving through this aggression while, on the one hand, providing safety and care to the person who has suffered it. On the other hand, it is necessary to shift the responsibility to the person who has made the aggression, so that he or she can assume this responsibility without being overwhelmed with guilt or shame. The ultimate goal is that the community, or the group, can heal from the violence suffered and become more resilient. From this

approach, it is important to pay attention to how people talk and how they ask questions within the group.

"One way to act when faced with a micro-aggression that occurs in a group that is working on prevention would be: to point out and stop this aggression, to name how we are going to manage this situation, from a safe space and without violence, including the person who has exercised this micro-aggression because he/she is also part of the group" (GD1 Conexus).

Likewise, in actions with young people, it is important to avoid an adult-centered and non-inclusive approach, and to share it with the groups of young people. For example, when talking about violence with an intimate partner, it can be made explicit if these are heterosexual or homosexual couples, from a non-binary approach, etc. This clarifies the approach and avoids anyone feeling that they are not included.

In the discussion groups in Málaga and Las Palmas, we discussed the importance of working constructively with young people, avoiding prejudice or blaming them, while focusing on the responsibility when relating to others. To achieve this, it is essential to create trusting, friendly and safe spaces, and not to build anything behind young people's backs. We encouraged taking the actions to their meeting places, both face-to-face and virtual, while listening to them without making them feel judged (regardless of what they say) in order to work with flexibility.

"We dedicate little time to simply sit down to reflect, to talk without more to say; to simply share how we are living stories in the school" (GD2 Teachers. Málaga).

The DG of professionals from Las Palmas highlighted the relevance of including **intersectionality** and **diversity** in the approach, so as not to stigmatize anyone, given the variety of people, genders, ethnicities, cultures, social classes, etc. In this sense, we need to avoid the Eurocentrism of a white, bourgeois and hetero-centric society. Therefore, the starting point and the use of language are very relevant. And, of course, promoting open dialogues in which different identity factors and social dimensions have a space.

"If I talk about the gender wage gap, and suggest that this gap is not the same for white and non-white women, or migrants, I can ask; "do you think that for women who wear a veil this wage gap is the same?"

The DG of Las Palmas pointed out that in addition to preventing specific violence among young people, it is essential to address something more complex, such as the structures and dynamics of the society in which they live. These generate a complex problem that affects

everyone, although unequally according to their social class, gender or place of residence. The main consequence turns into a more vulnerable society, with greater uncertainty, used to living with violence. Therefore, the violence that occurs among young people is a consequence and an indicator of the model of society in which they live.

If we start from this reality, workspaces with young people should benefit from **the integrated or integrative view of** professionals in different fields (social, educational, leisure, health, etc.). People who also set an example by relating to each other based on care (rather than on competitiveness and the search for power) help to create an ecosystem of support and relationships towards a culture of care with young people.

"And yet, despite this violence, I find many elements of care, and I find today's young people more prepared and more aware of the reality in which they live than I was when I was young and my parents were. So, I also see very positive elements in today's youth, these are elements of hope" (GD4 Formal and non-formal education Las Palmas GC).

Boys' resistance

All the discussion groups agreed that when boys are involved, it is basic to take into account the resistance they come with. So while explaining the gender perspective, we should not pigeonhole men and women into certain ways of living and expressing themselves in the world. Let's leave the idea that women and men are victims and aggressors, respectively. We can rethink interventions as an opportunity to foster relationships that are more satisfying, more caring, more positive, and even more pleasurable.

They also agreed that resistance appears as soon as romantic love or relationships are mentioned. The reaction shared by many boys is that of feeling attacked and treated as abusers, and even more so if they show attitudes of hegemonic masculinity. Pointing out to them the performativity of this hyper-secure, protective or condescending masculinity makes them become defensive and closes themselves off to reflection. When they were asked about the transformation of these attitudes, for example, controlling behaviours, they resisted, justifying them in the face of some of their partners' actions.

From the Conexus discussion group, it was pointed out that instead of dealing with violence directly, it is possible to have an impact on power. Besides experiencing what it feels like to hold or to suffer violence through certain dynamics in order to reflect on it.

"It is important to be able to work on the costs of hegemonic masculinity, as long as we don't forget to ask: do you think it has any impact or any consequences when you relate to other girls or when you relate to your mother in that way...?" (GD1 Conexus. Barcelona)

In addition, there were the internal difficulties that female professionals in particular may feel in the face of resistance from young men, especially those with attitudes and behaviours rooted in hegemonic masculinity:

"When I am working and I see young people with resistance, how can I keep my focus without losing my centre and ask them questions with a listening and welcoming attitude?" (GD1 Conexus. Barcelona).

The Málaga teachers' DG pointed out how the use of social networks, hoaxes, rumours and fake news and the lack of critical thinking generate an increase in this resistance. In a diagnosis carried out in secondary schools, 35% of the boys were reluctant to take part in awareness-raising work or training on equality, which they were obliged to attend. They also stated that boys' resistance arises from the fact that they perceive that the violence perpetrated by girls against them is not reported or punished in the same manner. Some say that the fact that they are men immediately places them as potential abusers.

Boys talk about feeling unequal. And they feel rejected because, if a woman does it to them, she doesn't get the same punishment as if they do it to a woman. So they bring the whole issue of gender-based violence to this specific point. And they are also afraid to express what they really think (FG2 Teacher. Málaga).

In the focus group in Las Palmas, professionals working in non-formal education shared that the voluntary nature of participating in awareness-raising and training activities is an advantage when working with them, as children are more open to receiving information and participating in discussions.

What needs to be considered, what needs to be fulfilled for peer education?

The Conexus focus group points out the importance of young men who are going to train other young men, having discovered the need for another model of masculinity. They should have reflected on the use of power, on what privileges and costs the hegemonic model brings them, as well as on alternatives to this hegemonic model.

"It might be interesting to talk about the consequences coming from these toxic traits of masculinity and also to see the triad of violence according to Kaufman, not only towards women and girls but also towards other men and themselves" (FG1 Conexus. Barcelona).

Therefore, it is necessary to help them overcome the initial resistance and to see the benefits for them and their relationships when developing non-hegemonic, more egalitarian masculinities.

They also agree with the other professionals in the other groups that it is essential not to start the work from a confrontational position. On the contrary, it is important to generate spaces of trust and respect so that they can share their emotional world and values. This relationship among peers from an experiential point of view is very valuable.

A teacher from the discussion group in Las Palmas spoke of the example that can be set for CarMiA, an experience of social mentoring ([Camins Project](#)), which incorporates an intercultural and gender perspective. Here peer support has been very useful for the integration of Moroccan girls in new spaces, with new relationships, serving for mutual growth among the participants.

"For me it is a very important key, which is put into practice in concrete terms, tools that also reinforce processes of peer accompaniment, not just giving a talk but being able to participate in processes in which I can accompany you to something, to achieve something that for whatever reason may be more complex for you (GD4 Formal and non-formal education. Las Palmas).

This same discussion group pointed out that rather than inviting young people to participate, the most important thing is for them to have some independence, so that they can build their own spaces. Likewise, they referred the importance of generating memorable moments in which the children may show and empower themselves when exhibiting their work and their achievements.

Needs for professionals working with young people

All the discussion groups agreed on the need for people working with young adults to have basic training on equality. It was emphasized that this training should be on gender, sexual diversity, affective-sexual education and the prevention of violence. The need to incorporate good treatment on training and awareness-raising was also pointed out.

"In addition to training on gender and social skills, we have incorporated basic training on good treatment into the protocol for new professionals" (GD4 Formal and non-formal education. Las Palmas).

There is also a clear need to have a series of characteristics such as an open outlook, capable of welcoming young people's various expressions as well as the ability to listen to and connect with young people.

Some of the GD1 experts made comments on the importance of having self-care tools in the workplace, such as listening or supervision spaces. In this sense, both training and personal growth work, and even psychotherapy, are very valuable for professionals working with young people. It is extremely important to be able to relate to young people's experiences but without getting trapped in them.

"My intervention changed when I was trained in group facilitation, in restorative approaches and conflict management, because it allowed me to be much more confident in the relational aspect and in the management of conflicts and perceived violence" (GD1 Conexus. Barcelona).

Finally, organizations and professionals need to benefit from decent working conditions, as well as having a professionals' support network specialized on working with violence.

CONSULTATION WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

Three consultations or focus groups were held with young people, one in the city of Málaga and two in Barcelona.

Group 1, the Málaga group, was composed of six young men between 15 and 18 years of age from lower class backgrounds having done their Secondary Education (*ESO* in Spanish). This group was recruited through the "*Proyecto Hombre*" Association, which works with people with addiction problems from a biopsychosocial perspective. Therefore, it is a group of boys with substance consumption problems or violent behaviour, linked to such consumption (one of them has judicial measures because of violence).

Group 2, carried out in Barcelona, consisted of ten teenagers (five boys and five girls) aged 14 and 15. They are all students on their 3rd year of Secondary Education (penultimate year

of compulsory Secondary Education), in a semi-public school located in a middle-class neighbourhood.

Group 3, also held in Barcelona, was attended by eight young men between 16 and 21 years of age, most of whom are doing their baccalaureate program (post-compulsory Secondary Education), except for two who are not studying. The profile is diverse, there are male teenagers from low, middle or lower-middle classes. Half of the participants have a migrant background (from Pakistan, Moldova and Morocco). Two of them arrived five years ago on their own as minors from Morocco, and have been under the government's care until they have come of age. The other immigrant children were either born in Spain or arrived at a very young age. Five of them were recruited through a youth center they attended, and the other three came through personal contacts.

In relation to gender identity, expression and sexual orientation all participants fit into the binary male-female categories. Only one of the girls identifies herself as bisexual.

The groups were conducted between July and October 2022. Young people and their families, in the case of minors, were informed of the aims of the focus groups and their consent was sought prior to conducting the groups. The sessions lasted between 60 and 90 minutes, the audio was recorded with their consent and transcribed for later analysis.

The consultation was carried out through an open conversation using questions that addressed different topics related to the construction of masculinity, dominant and alternative models, sexual diversity and the perception of gender-based violence.

The dynamics of the conversations varied in all groups. Most of the boys' groups participated actively, while some participants were quieter. In the non-mixed group, the participation of the girls was higher, their speeches were more elaborate and their degree of maturity contrasted with that of the boys who were more childlike.

A thematic content analysis was carried out on the basis of the data which was classified into categories. The similarities among them were also considered, based on previously established criteria connected to the focus groups' objectives. The categories of analysis made up the structure of the results.

The vision of masculinities

There is a consensus in all three groups when it comes to identifying the most valued boys, those who are considered leaders. The **dominant masculinity** is mainly represented by boys who do sports. Although not in all the cases, the most popular boys normally have worse academic results than the rest. They often have disruptive behaviour, misbehaviour, and even violent attitudes. They are also boys who are more successful with girls since they flirt more.

Another interesting aspect to highlight is being popular and having money. This is a social projection of what hegemonic masculinity means for them (Connell, 1995). They also talk about a "verified" masculinity because *TikTok* has verified the account and the person becomes, therefore, famous. One of the boys thinks that what they are looking for is to resemble someone who has been successful, who is a celebrity.

The physical capital is also considered important in this dominant and verified masculinity. Physical attractiveness and having a strong body are certainly valued. The style is also mentioned, dressing well and taking care of oneself. We can see how the aesthetic pressure has reached the boys' world. Having a good body is mentioned as well and how this is shown in the locker rooms. An example of this aesthetic pressure is the case of boys who do not want to take their shirts off in front of others because they think they are not strong enough.

Strength is not only related to the body, but also to emotional strength: "men don't have to cry, men have to be strong." Boys recognize that they keep their emotions bottled up, they don't explain what they feel.

"You have to be quiet. In other words, you have a personal problem for yourself, you solve it by yourself, you don't need to involve others or make others worry, I think" (Group 3, men, Barcelona).

In general, they do not trust their families to explain their feelings. A few report having friends to whom they tell how they feel and the things that happen to them. There is also an agreement that women are more sensitive and tend to show emotions more than men.

One of the girls pointed out that boys tend to keep their emotions to themselves or that instead of being sad, they get angry and even react violently, such as slamming doors. Some of the participants in the Málaga boys' group also agree that they let off steam by punching "the *first*

thing that comes to hand." They also point out strategies to combat sadness such as doing sports or some activity that clears their heads.

Girls say that when a boy cries, he is more appreciated since they don't usually cry. So when they do, it must be because of something very hard, so strong that it can't be hidden.

Other valued characteristics of dominant masculinity are linked to the projection of the figure of the male provider. Thus, a man must take care of the family, have a stable job and have enough to live on. Although it is clear to them that in a heterosexual family, both men and women should work and contribute to the family's economy.

In the focus groups, there is an awareness that stereotypes continue to sway in society. Girls are still given more caring tasks (i.e. looking after younger siblings) and men are expected to be more active.

Regarding the **subaltern masculinities**, the less popular boys are shyer, less physically developed, smaller, shorter and less strong. They are quieter boys who do not usually play football and are more occupied with their studies than with flirting with girls.

Girls in the non-mixed group value aspects of dominant masculinity such as physical attractiveness and strength, but also expect boys to be sensitive and open, to have conversation and a sense of humour, and not to do things that make the girls feel bad.

Sexual diversity and inclusive masculinities

A man is constructed on the basis of a triple negation: he is not a boy, he is not a homosexual, he is not a woman (Badinter, 1993). In the discourses and narratives of the 3 focus groups, homophobia and misogyny continue to be part of the hierarchical markers among boys. The way to degrade and mark a boy as "not a man" is through insults such as "pussy" or "faggot."

However, among the participants in the focus groups, no clear rejection of sexual diversity was found. In the mixed group, the girls were more open, and one of them even acknowledged that she was bisexual.

In the two groups of boys, no homophobic or anti-sexual diversity discourse has been found, and sexual diversity is accepted.

"If you consider yourself a man, that's it. Then you have different tastes... There are men who like some things and men who like others, you know? There are men who like women, men who like other men, men who like both" (Group 1, men, Málaga).

In general, they talk about the person and their personality and do not give importance to their sexual identity or orientation. One of the boys in Group 2, boys from Barcelona, explains that he had a friend who made the transition to a boy, for him it was not a problem, nor was it a surprise: "everyone is what they feel."

Most say they know, but are not close friends with, people who are gay, lesbian or who identify as non-binary.

These more open attitudes to sexual diversity and identities show more inclusive masculinities (Anderson, 2009) that allow for the construction of social dynamics among adolescent boys, not based on homophobia, stoicism or rejection of feminine characteristics.

However, despite this greater openness, certain areas where sexual orientation can be a problem are also mentioned. In particular, the world of football is mentioned, where there is a lot of homophobia.

"With the football players, for example, among us, many people we laugh at them, we make jokes and call each other faggots to tease each other" (Group 2, men, Barcelona).

One of the boys thinks that if he were gay in football he would not be treated in the same way as he is now. He thinks there would be some change in the relationship with his teammates, although he doesn't think he would be treated badly either.

Sexuality

There is a consensus that they have not had sex education as such. Most of them have not talked to their parents about the subject and if they have attended workshops at school, it has been limited to the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases and reproduction. In this sense, access to and learning about sexuality, especially for boys, is through friends and through the porn they watch on the internet. Access to this type of content is at an early age, between ten and twelve. On the other hand, they are aware that it is fiction, that what they see is not real, even the relations of domination and violence that are present in most porn productions.

Equality / Inequality

There is a general awareness of gender inequalities in society. It is accepted that legislative progress has been made in this area, but that real equality has not been achieved yet in many areas.

One of the places where they detect inequalities is in the world of sports, where they believe that girls do not have the same opportunities as boys, nor are they valued in the same way, nor are they paid the same.

The girls in the mixed group are more aware of the inequalities they suffer and expose various situations linked to opportunities in the working environment.

Boys also mention the insecurity and violence that women face in public spaces and the better opportunities and salaries that men have.

Mention is also made of inequalities in the household, where women are mainly responsible for care and housework.

Violence and its prevention

They acknowledge that violence perpetrated by boys is more physical and can have worse consequences, while the violence perpetrated by girls is more psychological and verbal. It is accepted that boys' violence is more problematic, but they think that violence perpetrated by women should also be discussed.

The girls in the mixed group relate violence to the exercise of power and control over the other person. In the group of boys from Málaga, violence is related to aggressiveness, to testosterone, therefore, a biological explanation is given for it. Physical strength is also associated with a greater use of violence by men. In addition, it is thought that family experiences where violence is used (against a partner or children) normalizes violence and it is likely that these boys also use violence against their partners.

In their context, the most frequently mentioned problems are related to toxic relationships where one partner exerts control over the other. They mention examples of both, boys and girls, who are jealous.

Most of them have attended some kind of workshop or session at school where gender equality, gender-based or sexual violence was discussed. They do not have very good memories of those sessions, and they did not take them seriously. They think that these issues should be dealt with on a day-to-day basis, not in a one-off workshop. They also think that we should start talking about these issues at an earlier age, as they believe that in Secondary school certain dynamics are already ingrained and it is more difficult to eliminate

them. In fact, they are concerned about the younger generations who have "uncontrolled" access to the internet and to more violent attitudes.

They believe that it would have more impact if violence was addressed through real testimonies where personal experiences could be explained. They also talk about working on violence prevention through situations, theatre or role-playing. They think that it would be useful to have an Instagram account where people could ask questions or be given advice and information on how to prevent violence.

The boys who have participated in the non-mixed groups mention that these non-mixed spaces are interesting to reflect on this type of topics. They believe that it gives them the opportunity to open up and be more sincere.

In general, they are critical of teachers, who they believe should be more aware of this problem. They explain that many do not act when faced with situations of violence in the classroom; they often look the other way.

They also believe that attention should be paid to the informal spaces where most school violence occurs, such as the school canteens, the playgrounds, during sports activities, etc.

Regarding the campaigns they remember, the Barcelona boys' group mentions "We are looking for brave people who express what they feel" by Languí⁹. This is a campaign with a positive message that invites people not to remain silent in the face of bullying and harassment.

Male victimism, resistance and anti-feminism

In the two non-mixed groups, there have been discourses on the disadvantage of being boys compared to being girls. For example, they question positive discrimination (quotes for women) or the fact that men and women should be paid the same wage in certain jobs. They believe that they should not be paid equally in jobs such as working for the police, where men have more strength and stamina, which is what this type of work requires.

⁹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=omZkxy3wU1c>

In relation to the training they receive in equality in one of the groups they complain that there is a generalization about the use of violence by men. They feel attacked, they believe that not all men are rapists or harassers, as they are often told.

"A bit, a bit. A bit attacked, because they start to generalize a lot about men and say "all men, are harassers", in other words, not like that, but more or less, they put us all in the same bag, whereas very few do that, very few. " (Group 2, men BCN)

In relation to justice, in matters related to gender violence, they feel unprotected as they consider that the court agrees with the women. They express the social pressure they feel because of the risk of a woman reporting him out of revenge. They give several examples of friends where she is the one who exercises psychological violence and control over him and they feel threatened because she might report them. They think that women have more protection and more rights and some take advantage of this.

"Because whenever a woman, for example, says "this man has raped me" or "this man has done something to me", they are usually listened to. And even if they don't have proof, with a minimum of proof, even if the man is innocent, he can be judged even being innocent" (Group 2, men BCN).

They give examples they have seen on the internet showing the social helplessness they say men have.

"Boy: In fact, there are a lot of social experiments, on a Youtube channel, that show facts like this, that first there is a woman hitting a man and the man tries to defend himself, and when the woman is hitting the man those who are going to defend him, the answer is "surely the woman has some reason to hit the man", but in the case of the man they don't defend him, they say the opposite.

Facilitator: Do you think that men are more of a victim nowadays than women?

Boy: No

Boy: No, but there are many women who take advantage of them.

Boy: From the situation " (Group 2, males BCN)

They also believe that statistics do not capture violence by women against men because men often do not report it.

They recognize that these comments and opinions cannot be said in the open, even in front of the girls: "we'll get a big one."

This type of commentary, which is increasingly common in the Spanish context, warns of the need to address the issues of equality and gender violence from a different perspective. It is necessary to deal with these issues from the perspective of the discomfort as well as listening to them. We need to dismantle many of the hoaxes which they echo and which are very present in the discourses of some bloggers and streamers, followed by many young people.

Conclusions

While conducting this research, we have outlined the context in which we are working. We have found good practices in violence prevention work through caregiving masculinities that help us focus on further project actions.

The professionals participating in the focus groups pointed out different issues to be taken into account: The need to work from the knowledge of the social context and the influence of the differential socialization in the exercise of violence. We are also avoiding an adult-centered and non-inclusive approach in order to open up to diversity, the intersectional look and networking.

They recognize the importance of working constructively with young people, avoiding prejudices or blaming, and focusing on responsibility with transparent, flexible and trusting spaces. This work must have the integrated or integrative view of professionals from various fields (social, educational, leisure, health, etc.). These are people who can be references for the change we are looking for in young people.

They point out the importance of a processual perspective (gradual, evolving) of violence, and of connecting prevention, detection and intervention, with actions that must be sustained over time.

Two resources to create safe spaces for the youth (as well as to reduce male performativity in youth work) are the work with mixed and non-mixed groups. There is also the restorative approach, based on the paradigm of restorative justice and community health and protection, since it allows for deepening while caring for and preventing violence.

When engaging boys and young men, it is important to be aware of the resistance they come with and to replace polarized views with more constructive ones that facilitate participation.

Resistance arises when romantic love is mentioned or as a result of rumours and fake news on social media. They perceive that violence against them is not taken into account or that they are seen as potential abusers. It is positive to reflect on power dynamics through methods rather than directly addressing violence.

Professionals consider that young people need to reflect on the use of power, on what privileges and costs the hegemonic model brings them, as well as on alternatives to this hegemonic model.

Especially in peer work, it is essential to avoid a confrontational position. On the contrary, it is basic to create spaces of trust and respect so that they can experientially share their emotional world and values.

Basic training in gender, sexual diversity, affective-sexual education and violence prevention, as well as the incorporation of good treatment, is fundamental for those who work with young people. Open-mindedness, listening and self-care are also professional tools.

Among the young men who participated in the consultation there is a stereotypical view of the most valued masculinity. Popular boys, the dominant masculinity, is characterized by physical and emotional strength and linked to success in sports as well as with girls. Success and fame are something to aim at, because the boys try to emulate those "verified" and famous profiles on social networks. The cult of the body, the physical capital, is also important in this model of successful masculinity. Boys have been objectified and aesthetic pressure plays a relevant role in their lives. In contrast, subaltern masculinities are characterized by a weak, small, boyish body, not connected to sports and with little success with girls. The latter tend to be good students, unlike the first ones.

We can see in these antagonistic versions how the social concept of what a "real man" is is still in force, while linked to traditional hegemonic masculinity. There has been no break with the traditional hegemonic model. There is no mention of valuing care and non-violence.

Hierarchical markers linked to homosexuality and the denial of the characteristics of the feminine world are present in the jokes and insults among the boys. However, sexual diversity is accepted and there is no rejection of people with sexual orientations other than heterosexuality. In this sense, it seems that we are facing a more inclusive masculinity.

Access to pornographic content on the Internet is widespread among children. It is their main form of access to sexual "education."

The boys consulted have had some kind of workshop or training session related to equality or gender violence. However, they think that the training they received was not very useful. They see it as impractical. They think it would be more interesting if it were focused on testimonies, real situations or role playing. The boys, moreover, think that they should talk about violence against girls and not generalize and blame men so often. In fact, in the two boys' groups, they have been victimized and discourses denying or minimizing gender-based violence have surfaced. This is a growing trend in the Spanish context, fueled by references (bloggers, streamers) that have a great impact on young people.

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