

How to promote a culture of non-violence

"The Project No! is a prevention project and support strategy for children and young people that deals with violence against women and domestic violence," explains Catarina Alves, from the Benfica Parish Council in Portugal.



The Project "No!" is based on programmes that teach interpersonal skills and a culture of non-violence. The picture was taken to mark the National Child Abuse Prevention Month, where kindergarten children formed a human chain. (Photo: Project team)

"The project seeks to create a sustainable and integrated intervention with the community," explains Alves, one of the project team, in an email.

The project uses the training of professionals such as social workers, as well as children and young people, as a resource. "No!" is based on programmes that teach and develop interpersonal skills that are free of stereotypes, and a culture of non-violence.

What will project No! achieve?

Among other things, the project has created a local plan to prevent violence against women and domestic violence, as well as an interinstitutional commission for the prevention of violence against women and domestic violence with local institutions that work with children.

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Collaborating with schools allows us to work closely with children, teachers, non-teaching staff and parents, which is essential for raising awareness about these issues.

The project will also:

- Train local agents that work in different contexts and work with children and young people, in the area of violence against women and domestic violence, in order to ensure that a local culture of non-violence can be replicated.
- Support projects by local associations to prevent violence against women and domestic violence.
- Implement local primary prevention programmes aimed at children and young people through multi-session programmes in schools, namely those that work with a culture of non-violence, the promotion of non-violent forms of masculinity, social tolerance, combating gender-based violence and violence in dating, and the promotion of respect and equality.
- Instigate awareness campaigns related to violence against women and domestic violence, including the production of videos aimed at different age groups, the use of posters in public spaces, comic-strip competitions for children and young people, and campaigns on social media.

Read also: [Project NO! – Non-teaching staff training](#)

Collaboration – pitfalls and success criteria

The project encompasses a wide range of activities, all of which are reliant on communication and cooperation with various partners.

"It has been quite a challenge to implement some of the measures," Alves explains:

"Each partner's particular requirements and time estimates need to be communicated, so it has taken longer than expected to implement some actions."

"Not all partners could respond in a timely manner due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The process of establishing partnerships took much longer and there were many difficulties throughout the entire project," Alves writes.

"Do you have any advice for people establishing similar project in their own country?"

"Consider and guarantee the involvement of all project partners in advance and ensure their participation from the start of the project and throughout its duration," writes Alves in an email.

Other advice from the Portuguese project is to not stop encouraging the general public and young people to prevent domestic violence and promote gender equality.

The CIG-team has collaborated with various project partners, including schools.

"Collaborating with schools allows us to work closely with children and young people, as well as with teachers, non-teaching staff and parents, which is essential for promoting skills and raising awareness about these issues," Alves explains.

"With regard to our external partner The Centre for Equality (Hamar, Norway), we believe that sharing experiences and knowledge is fundamental to improving community interventions," Alves explains.

This project report is by: Catarina Alves, The Department of Psychology of the Social Rights Department at the Benfica Parish Council (Programme operator).

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