



## **Building Healthy Intimate Relationships**

*The Role of School: Evidence-based Policy Recommendations for Teachers' Trainings*

*September 2016*



Gender  
Equality  
Awareness  
Raising  
*against*  
Intimate  
Partner  
Violence

**Gender Equality Awareness Raising against Intimate Partner Violence**

# The GEAR *against* IPV Approach

The GEAR against IPV approach (**G**ender **E**quality **A**wareness **R**aising *against* **I**ntimate **P**artner **V**iolence) is a coordinated action of **primary and secondary prevention of Intimate Partner Violence** in **adolescents' relationships** through interventions in the school or in other settings, that are guided by specially designed educational material and are aimed at secondary school students' awareness raising and empowerment by specially trained teachers.

The main aim is to promote the development of **healthy and equal relationships** between the sexes and the development of **zero tolerance towards violence** by raising teens' awareness on:

- a) the characteristics of healthy and unhealthy relationships
- b) the influence that gender stereotypical attitudes and socially imposed gender roles have on their relationships
- c) how power inequality between the sexes is related to psychological, physical and sexual abuse against women/girls and
- d) how adolescents can contribute to the prevention of all forms of gender-based violence.

## The GEAR *against* IPV Educational Material

During the period 2010-2015, **National Packages**<sup>1</sup> have been developed and evaluated for **7 EU Member States**, after translation, completion and cultural adaptation of the **Master GEAR against IPV Package**.

Every GEAR against IPV Package consists of a **series of 4 Booklets** that have been developed to support the organization, preparation, implementation and evaluation of teachers' training seminars and adolescents' awareness raising workshops (in school or other settings), aiming to primary prevention of gender-based violence.



### **Booklet I**

**GEAR against IPV Package:**  
**Gender Equality Awareness Raising against**  
**Intimate Partner Violence**



### **Booklet II**

**Guidelines for Conducting a GEAR against IPV**  
**Teachers' Training Seminar**



### **Booklet III**

**Teacher's Manual**



### **Booklet IV**

**Students' Activities Book**

## Main Activities of the GEAR *against* IPV Approach

- A. Teachers' training seminars<sup>2</sup>
- B. Adolescents' awareness raising workshops "Building Healthy Intimate Relationships"<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> National Packages have been developed for Austria, Croatia, Cyprus, Germany, Greece, Romania and Spain. Together with the Master GEAR against IPV Package, they are available at [gear-ipv.eu/educational-material](http://gear-ipv.eu/educational-material)

<sup>2</sup> A detailed description of this activity and its outcomes is included in the respective report of each participating country and can be accessed at: [gear-ipv.eu/training-awareness-raising/teachers-training-seminars](http://gear-ipv.eu/training-awareness-raising/teachers-training-seminars)

<sup>3</sup> A short description can be accessed at the Policy Brief entitled: Building Healthy Intimate Relationships. The role of school: Evidence-based Policy recommendations for Adolescents' Empowerment. A detailed description of this activity and its outcomes is included in the respective report of each participating country and can be accessed at: [gear-ipv.eu/training-awareness-raising/adolescents-awareness-raising](http://gear-ipv.eu/training-awareness-raising/adolescents-awareness-raising)

## Teachers' Training Seminars

In the context of the GEAR against IPV-II project,<sup>4</sup> which was implemented from 2014 until 2016 with the co-funding of the DAPHNE III Programme of the European Union, **262 teachers/professionals**<sup>5</sup> were trained in **11 Seminars** that were implemented and evaluated in Cyprus (CY), Spain (ES), Greece (GR), Croatia (HR) and Romania (RO).

Table 1. Demographic data of trained teachers/professionals

		Country				
		CY	ES	GR	HR	RO
Trained persons (N)	Total	28	33	93*	53	55
	Women	28	29	80	51	45
	Men	-	4	13	2	10
Age (years)	Mean	40,75	37,94	42,2	39,8	41,44
	Range	25-55	24-56	27-55	25-64	25-54
Teachers (N)		26	29	87	53	55
Teaching experience (years)	Mean	15,08	9,03	15,26	13,6	16,4
	Range	2-28	1-30	0,08-27	1-39	2-35

## Necessity for Teachers' Training

*Because teachers lack opportunities to obtain relevant training...*

Table 2. Percentage of teachers declaring having attended a similar training in the past

		Country				
		CY	ES	GR	HR	RO
Have you ever received any training related to:						
	gender equality?	85,2	57,1	35,5	41,5	43,4
	dating violence?	21,7	54,3	3,2	39,6	15,7
	intimate partner violence?	39,1	42,8	7,5	30,2	19,2
	child abuse and neglect?	46,2	57,1	19,4	37,7	36,5

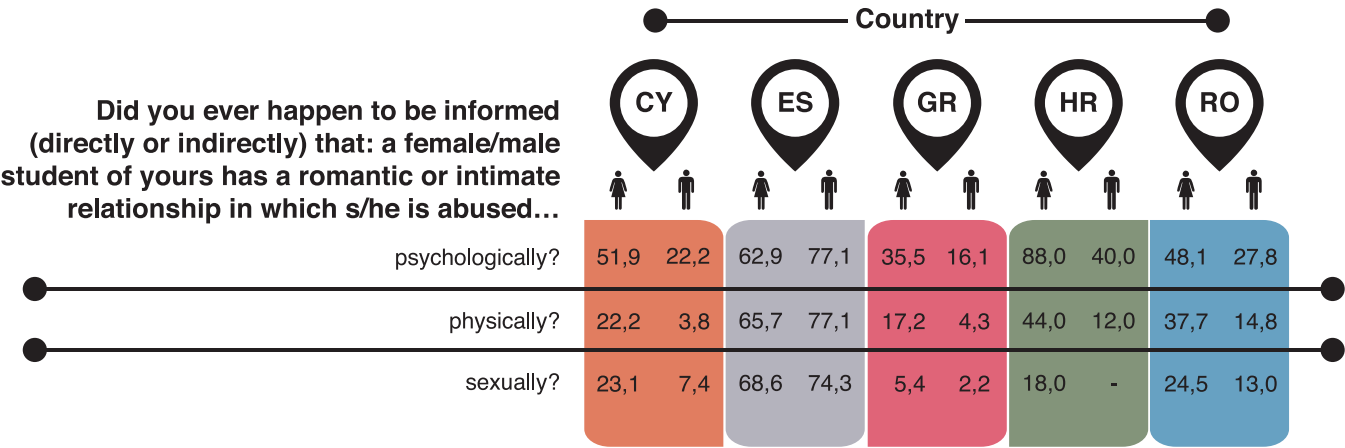
**Greece** manifests the **lowest percentage** of teachers previously trained on any of the issues mentioned above, whereas **Spain** shows the **highest percentage** on all issues apart from gender equality, where the greatest rate is reported for **Cyprus**.

<sup>4</sup> Gender Equality Awareness Raising *against* Intimate Partner Violence - II (GEAR *against* IPV II) [JUST/2013/DAP/AG/5408]

<sup>5</sup> Among Greek and Spanish trainees, 24 participants were teachers or professionals working with children/adolescents/young adults that are either hosted or visiting the facilities of organizations offering services to vulnerable and/or high risk groups (e.g. victims of abuse/neglect).

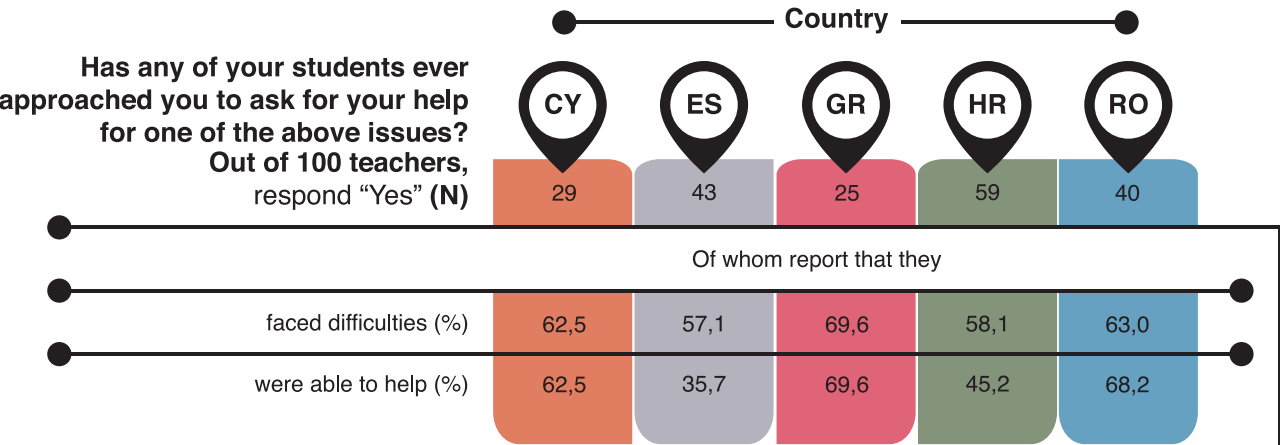
...but the problem is existent...

Table 3. Percentage of teachers declaring having been informed that a student is abused by her/his partner



Albeit the majority of teachers in all participating countries has not received relevant training (Table 2), they often become recipients (Table 3) of IPV disclosure in adolescents’ relationships; and this happens not only indirectly but also directly, as children approach the teacher (Table 3) they trust to seek help.

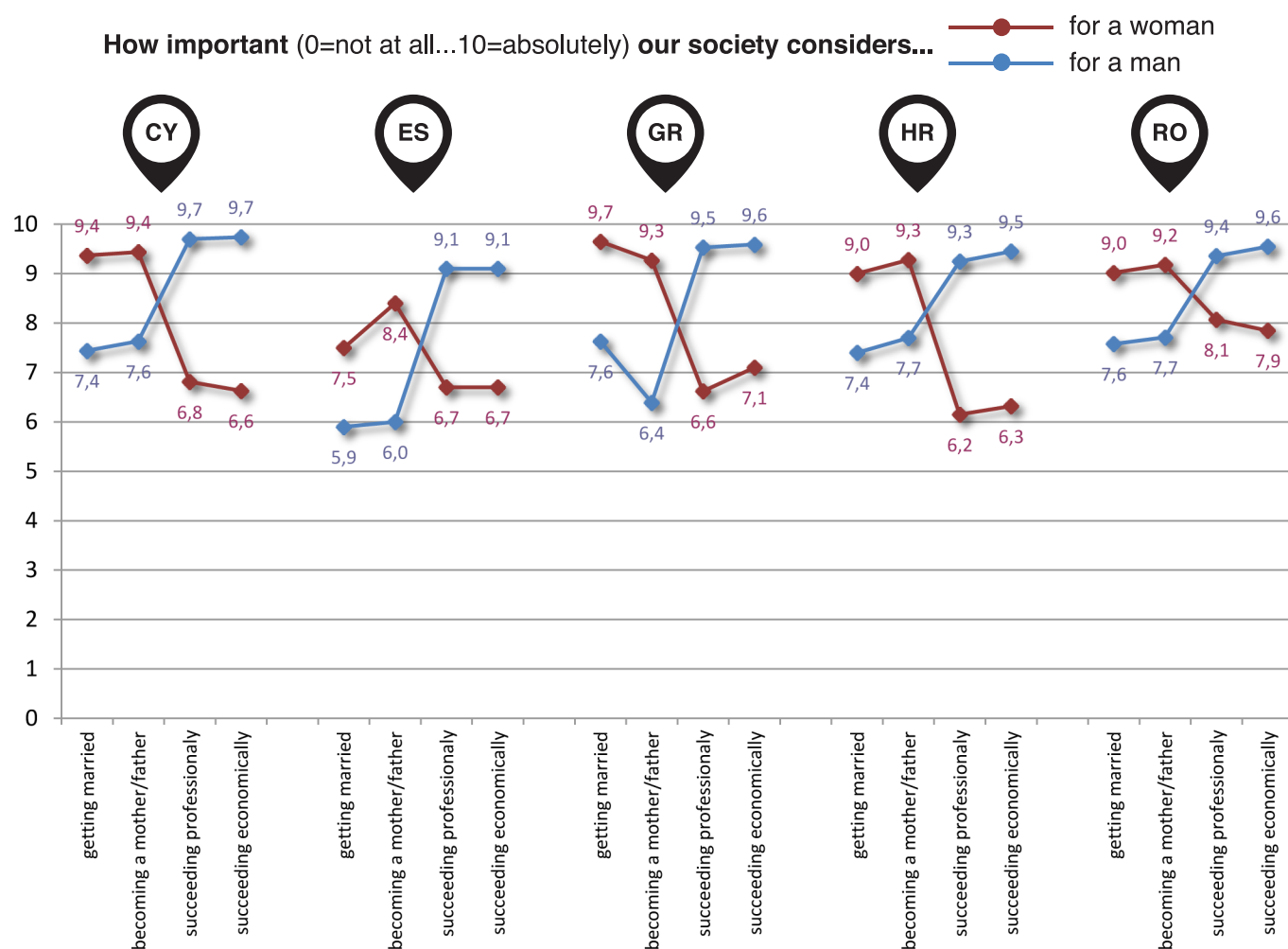
...and students ask for their teachers’ help...





Because there is a need to reduce gender inequality, which is still intense in...

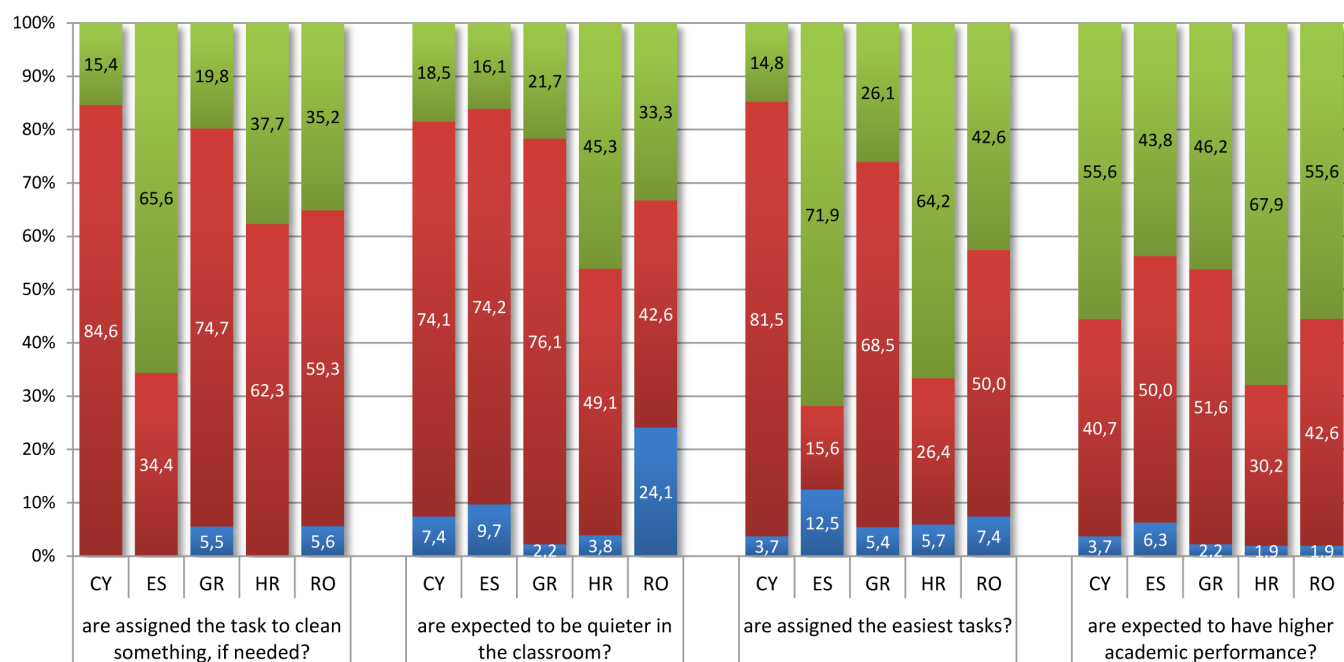
...social expectations



...the way students are treated in schools

According to your opinion, please assess if, in general, boys and girls are treated differently in the school setting by their teachers:

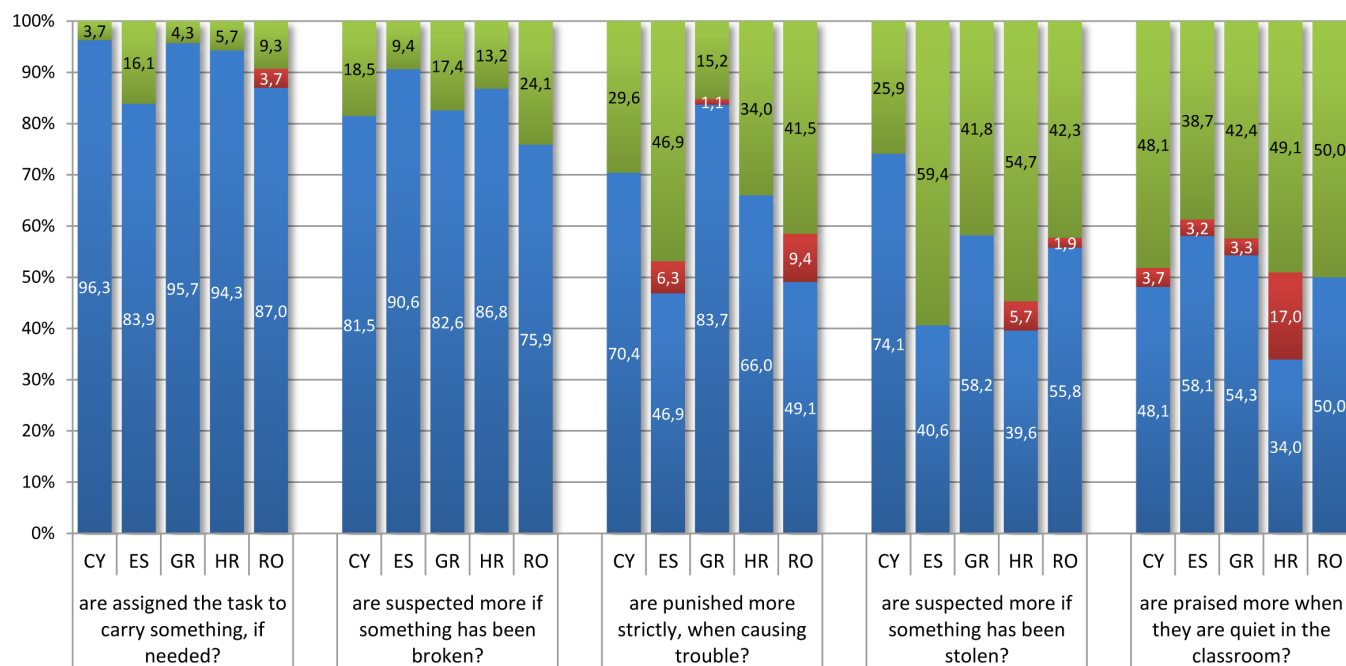
■ Boys ■ Girls ■ Neither (Boys = Girls)



Boys or girls...

According to your opinion, please assess if, in general, boys and girls are treated differently in the school setting by their teachers:

Boys Girls Neither (Boys = Girls)

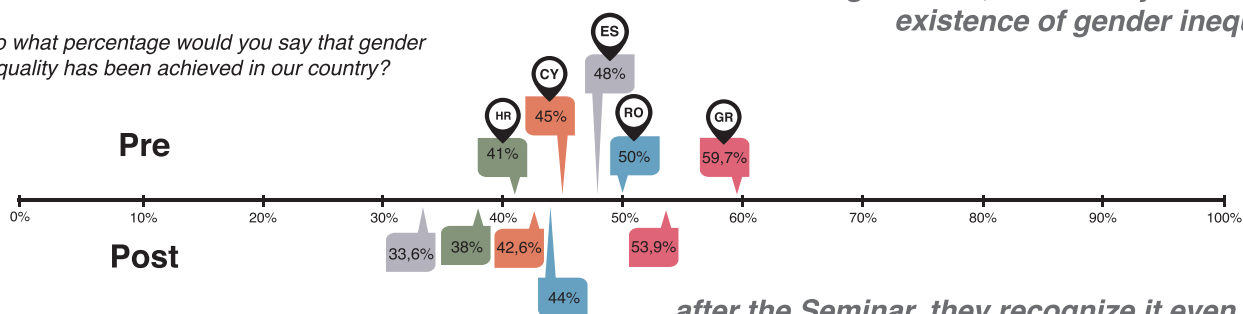


Boys or girls...

Because teachers,

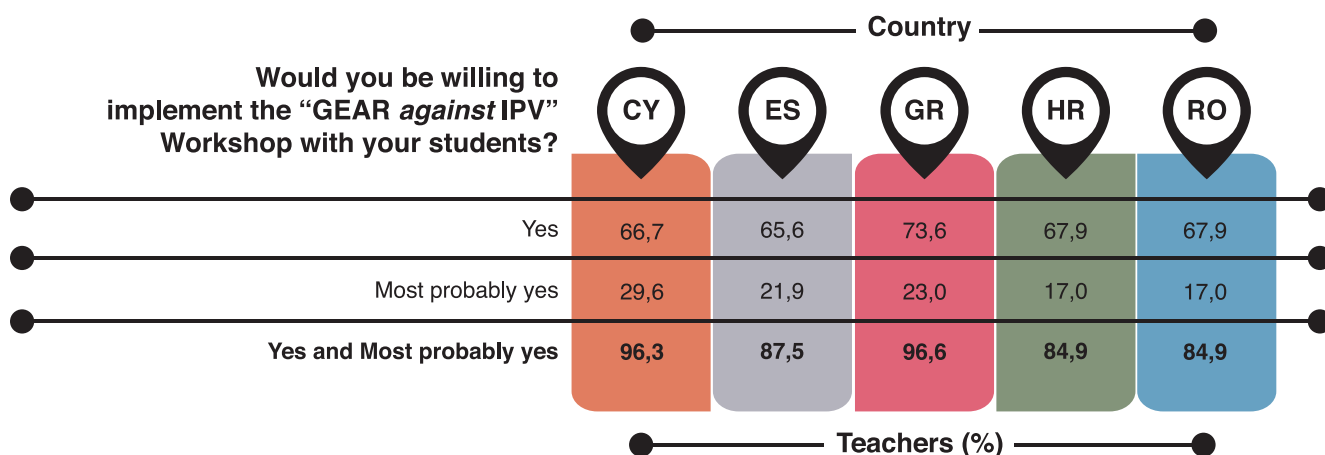
before the Training seminar, are already aware of the existence of gender inequality...

To what percentage would you say that gender equality has been achieved in our country?



...after the Seminar, they recognize it even more...

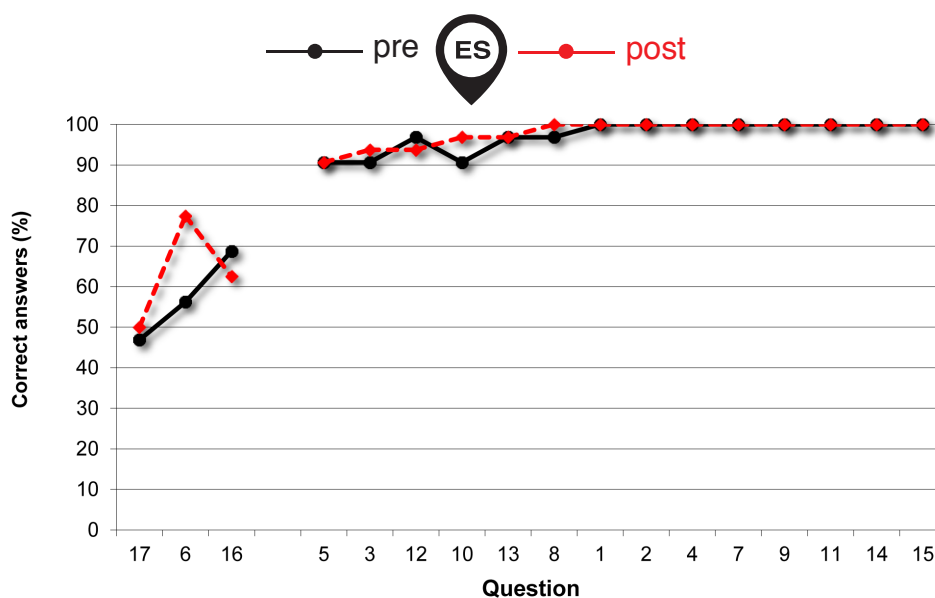
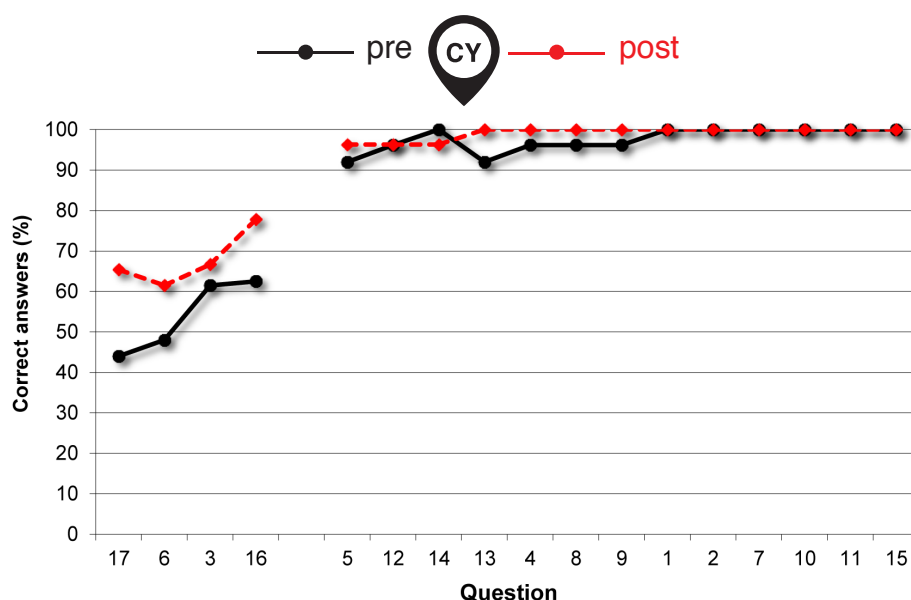
...and are interested in contributing towards gender inequality elimination and prevention of IPV in adolescents' relationships



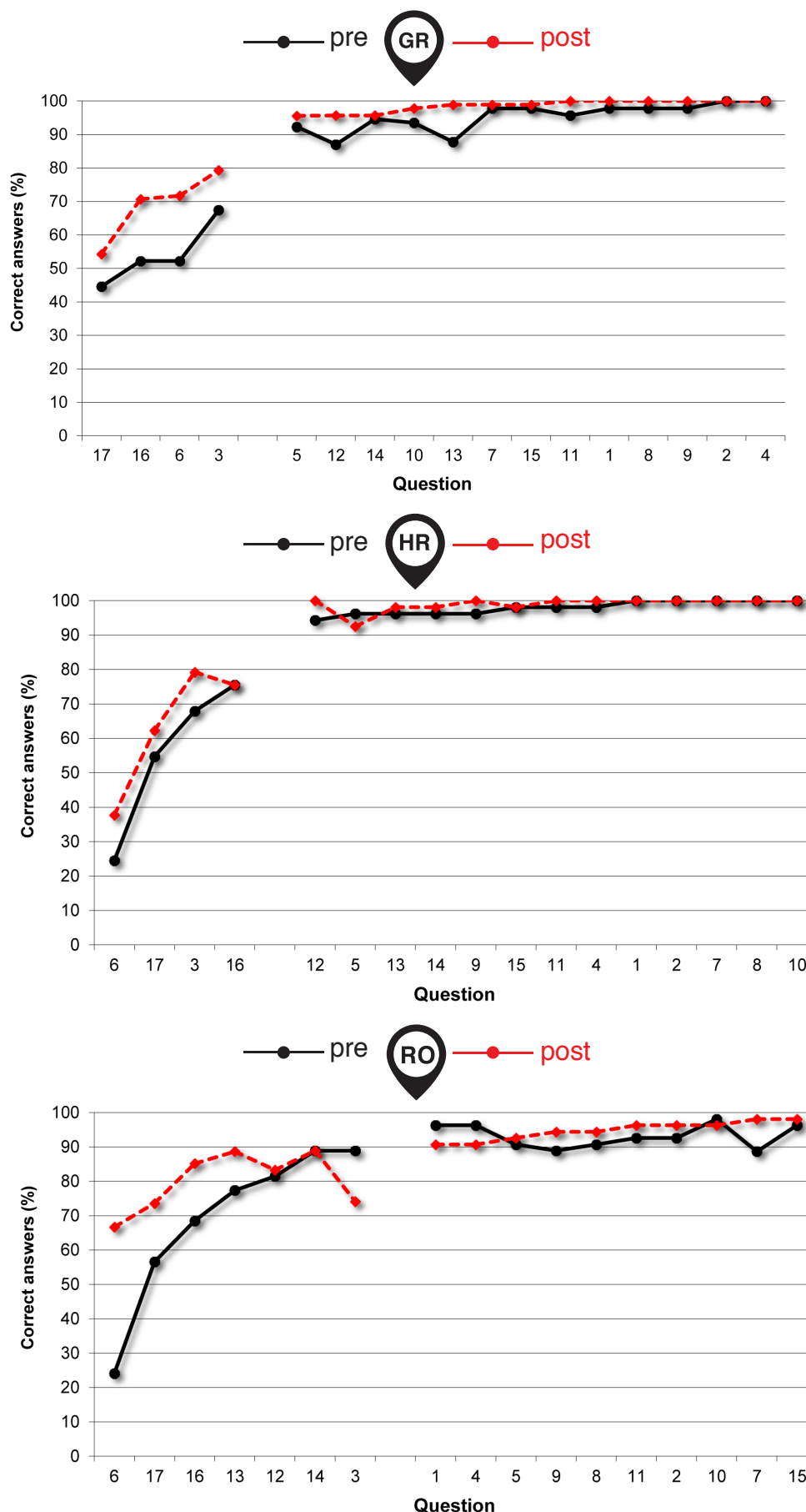
## *The Training seminar helped teachers not only to improve their knowledge...*

According to the best of your knowledge, please assess if each of the following statements is “True” or “False”

1. Violence in a relationship exists only among people who are poor (F)
2. Violence in a relationship exists only among uneducated people (F)
3. Victims of violent relationships are mostly women (T)
4. A person is abused only when physical violence exists (F)
5. Destroying personal possessions and property is not a form of violence (F)
6. Violent people are people who can't control their anger (F)
7. If she didn't provoke him, he wouldn't abuse her (F)
8. You can understand if a person is violent or not, just by his/her appearance (F)
9. Jealousy is a sign of love (F)
10. Girls are never physically violent with their partners (F)
11. When a boy caresses a girl and she says “no”, often it means “yes” (F)
12. When a person is being abused in his/her intimate relationship, it is easy just to leave (F)
13. A person's violent behaviour can change if his/her partner loves him/her enough (F)
14. Men are violent by nature (F)
15. Women are violent by nature (F)
16. Most girls believe that they must “play hard to get” before consenting to have sex (F)
17. Most boys believe that when a girl refuses to have sex with them, they're just “playing hard to get” (F)



...but also to detect their own stereotypical conceptions and to modify them



The Figures clearly show that some beliefs are modified more easily than others. More resistant to change were manifested to be the following beliefs:

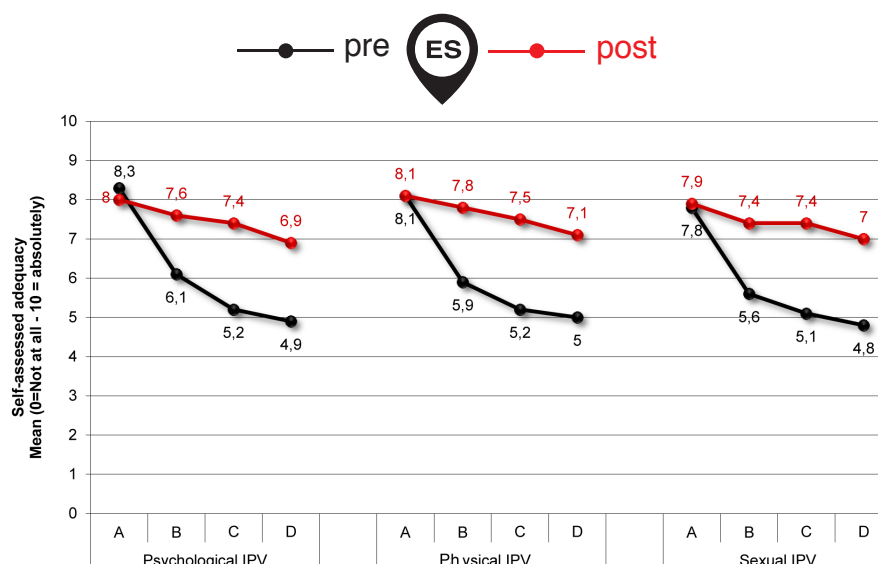
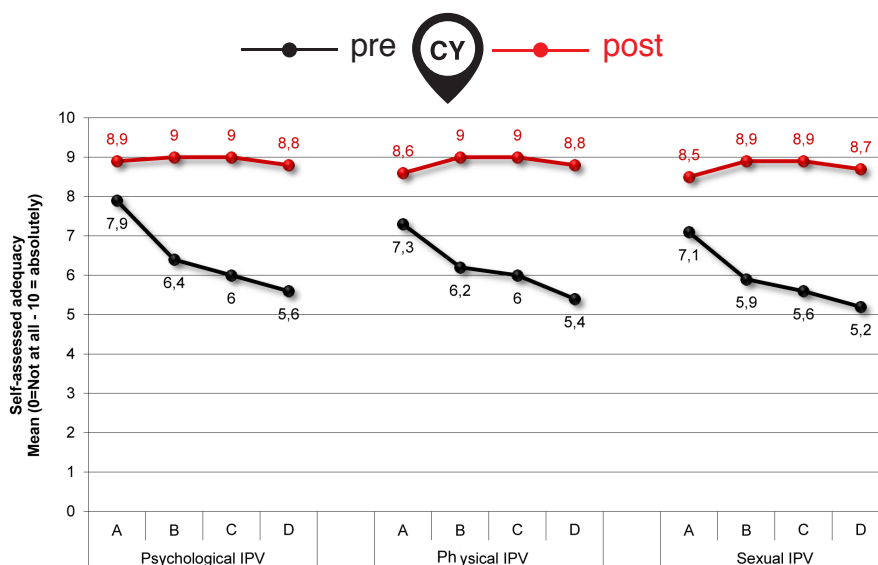
- **6, 16 and 17** across all countries
- **3** across all countries, except Spain

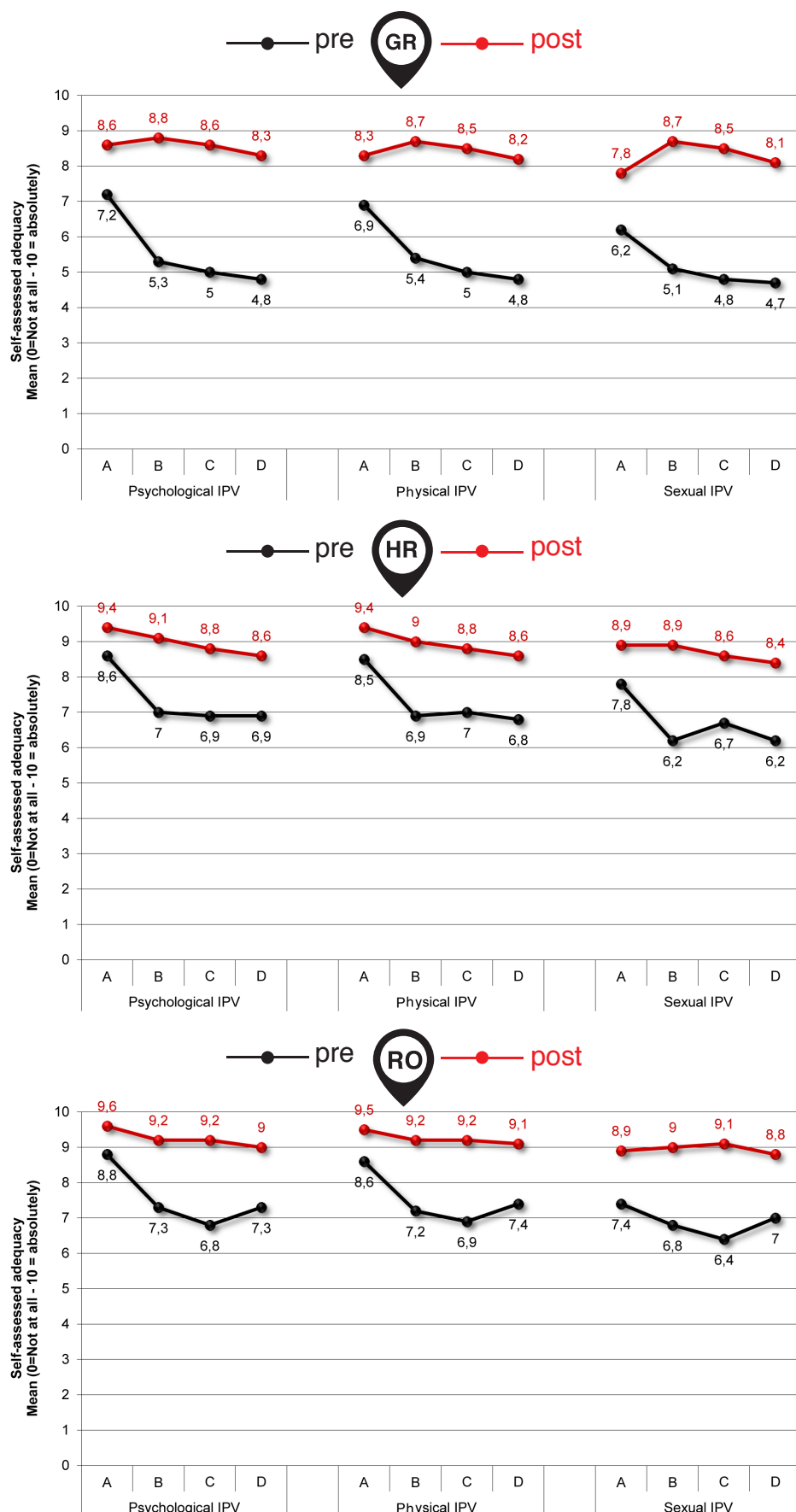
With respect to items **1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 15**, at least 9 out of 10 trainees across all countries have the correct answer before the training and all, or almost all of them, after the training. The same applies to items **12, 13 and 14** across all countries, apart from Romania where a higher resistance (smaller improvement) appears.

*Before the Training Seminar, teachers feel comfortable (A) to approach the issue of IPV in class, yet they feel unable to do so (B, C, D). After the Seminar, their self-assessments reflect that they are BOTH willing AND able to work towards this end.*

On a scale of 0 to 10 (0 = not at all ... 10 = absolutely), please rate the following:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>A. Comfort to approach the topic</b>                        | <p><b>Independently of the knowledge you have on these issues, how comfortable would you feel to implement in your classroom activities targeting each of the following topics?</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. psychological abuse in dating relationships (Psychological IPV)</li> <li>2. physical abuse in dating relationships (Physical IPV)</li> <li>3. sexual abuse in dating relationships (Sexual IPV)</li> </ol> |
| <b>B. General knowledge</b>                                    | <p><b>What rate would you give for the knowledge you currently have on:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. psychological abuse in dating relationships</li> <li>2. physical abuse in dating relationships</li> <li>3. sexual abuse in dating relationships</li> </ol>   |
| <b>C. Special knowledge for initial response to disclosure</b> | <p><b>What rate would you give for the knowledge you currently have on what you should say to one of your students who discloses to you that her/his partner:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. is psychologically abusing him/her?</li> <li>2. is physically abusing him/her?</li> <li>3. is sexually abusing him/her?</li> </ol>   |
| <b>D. Capability to help</b>                                   | <p><b>Based on the knowledge and skills you currently have, how confident do you feel that you can help a student of yours, who discloses to you that her/his partner:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. is psychologically abusing him/her?</li> <li>2. is physically abusing him/her?</li> <li>3. is sexually abusing him/her?</li> </ol>  |





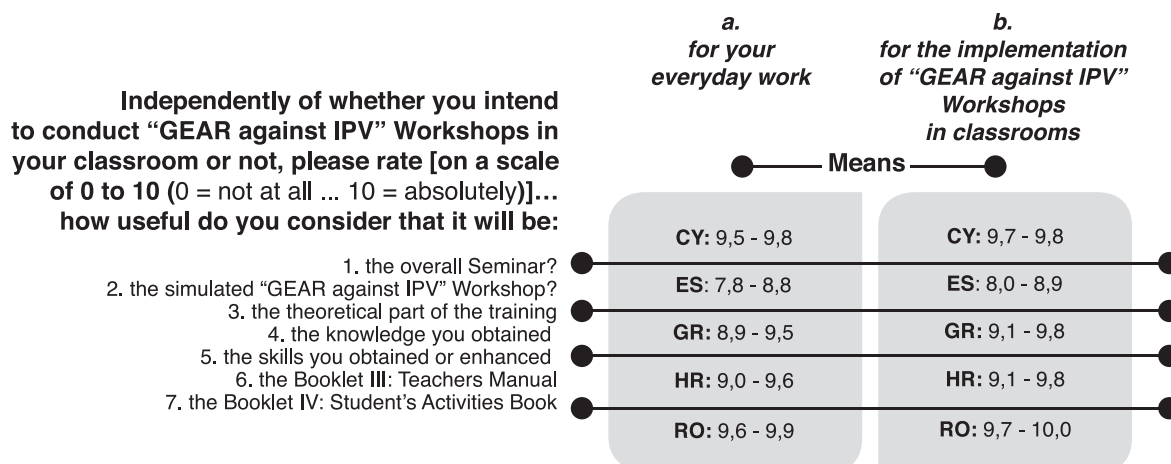
Across all participating countries, **before the Seminar**, teachers' assessments of their adequacy in terms of knowledge (B. general: 5,1 – 7,3 and special: 4,8 – 7,0) and capability to help a child who is being abused (D: 4,7 – 7,4) are close to the scale's medium or slightly higher; these scores are much lower compared to their ratings when asked to assess how comfortable they would feel in approaching the topics of psychological, physical and sexual IPV (A: 6,2 – 8,8).

**After the Seminar**, teachers from all countries report **feeling even more comfortable** in approaching the aforementioned issues (7,8 – 9,6) whereas the difference highlighted above is diminished due to an even higher rise in their self-assessed adequacy in terms of both knowledge (general: 7,4 – 9,2 and special: 7,4 – 9,2) and capability to help (6,9 – 9,1).

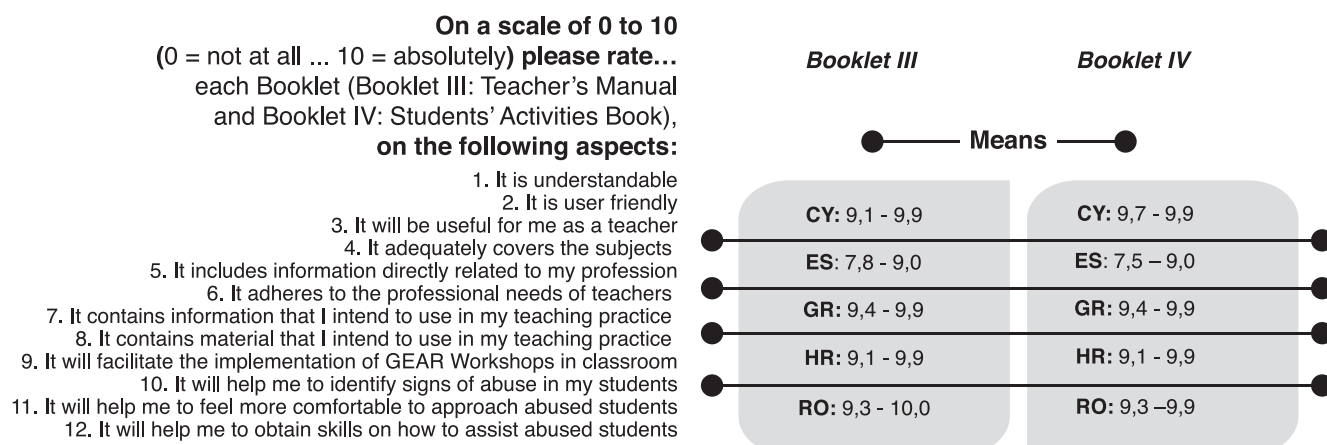
**In other words**, it is illustrated that, **prior to the Seminar**, teachers **have no personal reservation** to approach IPV issues (A), **yet are feeling inadequate** in terms of their knowledge (B & C) and certainty of their capability to help a child being abused (D). **After the Seminar**, however, teachers' **self-assessed adequacy** of their level of knowledge and certainty in providing help not only has risen profoundly, but also **is in line with** their self-reported comfort to implement activities tailored to various types of IPV: that is, teachers now feel **not only that they want, but that they ALSO can!!!**

## Teachers' own opinions regarding the Seminar they attended.

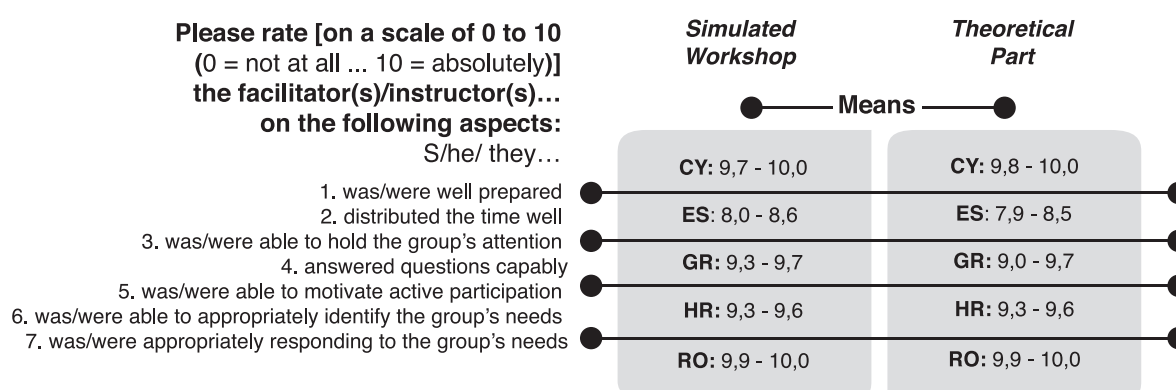
The **usefulness** of both the Training seminar and the GEAR against IPV educational material was assessed as **exceptionally high** by teachers in all countries, except Spain<sup>6</sup>, with respect to their everyday work as well as to the implementation of students' awareness raising Workshops in class. The Spanish teachers' rates, even though lower, they still indicate a high level of usefulness.



When teachers were asked to evaluate the **GEAR against IPV educational material** (Booklets III and IV) in 12 dimensions pertaining to issues of **quality and usefulness**, their **ratings reached the scale's highest edge** in all countries, apart from Spain, with the lowest mean across countries being 9,1.



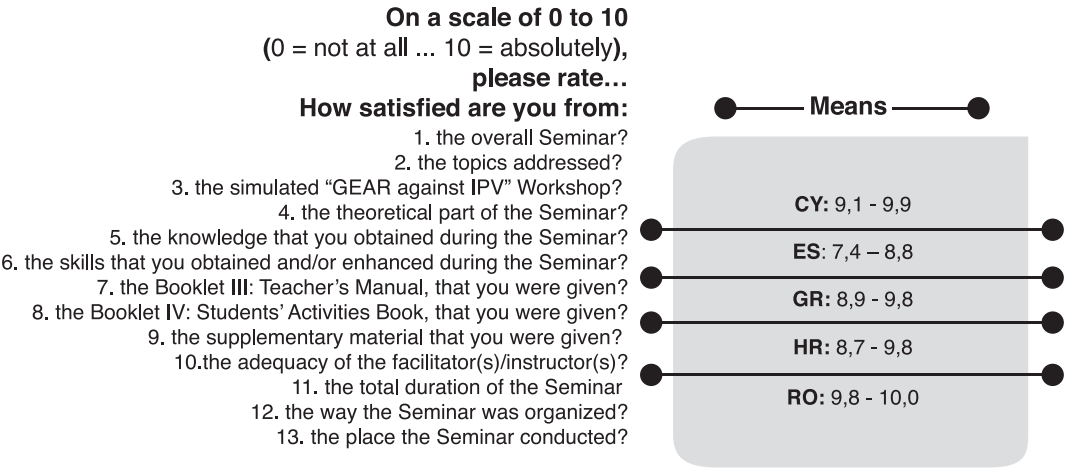
With respect to **their trainers' efficacy**, a crucial factor for the successful implementation of any training, Spanish teachers rated their trainers as very **effective** whereas teachers from the other four countries rated them as **perfectly effective**, providing a 9,0 as the lowest mean.



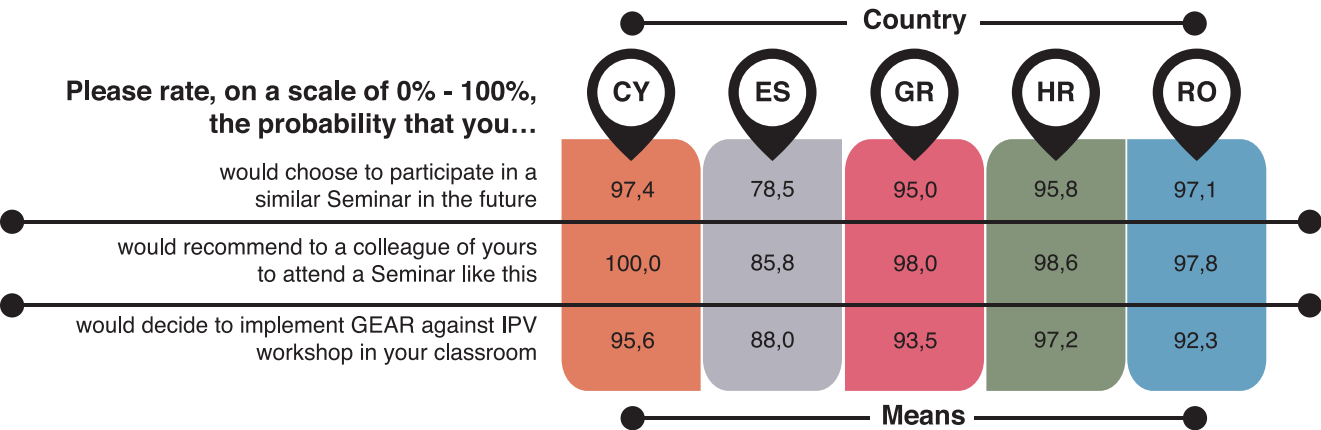
<sup>6</sup> A possible explanation of Spanish teachers' systematically lower assessments lies to the fact that, compared to their colleagues from the other countries, higher percentages of teachers had attended previous relevant trainings on IPV and dating violence (see Table 2) and, therefore, had already acquired some relevant knowledge and skills.



Last but not least, trained teachers assessed their satisfaction from the training seminar as exceptionally high in all 13 dimensions (direct assessment).  
Finally, the trained teachers in all countries, apart from Spain, expressed exceptionally high satisfaction in all 13 dimensions of the Seminar that they were asked to directly assess (the Spanish teachers' assessments, although lower, also indicate high satisfaction).



The high satisfaction of Spanish teachers and the exceptionally high satisfaction of teachers in the remaining countries were also **evident in their indirect assessments** for the Seminar.



# Why should a Country adopt the GEAR *against* IPV approach?

## Because...

...the **Council of Europe Convention** on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (**Istanbul Convention**) has been signed by **all EU Member States** as well by the **7 candidate and potential candidate countries** and has already been entered into force (Sept. 2016) **by 19 of them**.

## ...the educational system

- **cares for** children's and adolescents' safety, mental health and wellbeing
- **seeks** to promote gender equality
- **aspires** to hold a pivotal role in the primary prevention of gender-based and intimate partner violence in the future adults' general population
- **wishes** to be equipped with **properly trained teachers** who can contribute significantly in achieving the aforementioned goals

## ...the intervention is cordially welcomed and is highly accepted and appreciated by

- adolescents
- teachers
- schools
- adolescents' parents and the local communities

## and the GEAR against IPV approach...

**provides material** that consists a **precise fulfillment of Article 14** of the Istanbul Convention on Education, whereas all included primary prevention interventions are directly related to **approximately all Articles of Convention Chapter III** regarding Prevention.

- **introduces, in education, gender equality as a violence prevention means**, by mobilizing teachers and providing them with the skills and “know-how” that are necessary in order to implement such primary prevention interventions
- **its effectiveness is evidence based**: it has already been implemented and evaluated in **7 countries and appears to be effective in** increasing teachers' and adolescents' **knowledge** and **modifying** attitudes that are stereotypical and/or tolerant towards gender-based violence
- **when integrated into the school curriculum, it enhances**
  - a) **the preventative character** of the intervention, as it conveys the message that schools and teachers do care about and take action towards gender equality achievement and elimination of violence from adolescents' relationships
  - b) **the sustainability** of such interventions, as teachers comprise a permanent “task force” at schools and, therefore, they can implement such interventions on a permanent basis
- uses exclusively experiential activities through which, adolescents **are not taught, but guided to explore** their personal gender stereotypical **attitudes** about gender roles and their impact to their own lives as well as to **“discover” and to exercise life skills** that will help them to develop healthy relationships, free from any form of violence
- **allows**, through trained teachers, **access to the general population of children and adolescents**, even in remote areas
- **improves** relationships among adolescents as well as the teacher-students relationship
- **deals with issues that adolescents are concerned with in their daily lives**, yet the school, teachers and parents “avoid to touch” because they do not know how.

# Policy Recommendations

Since almost all children and adolescents attend school, **the educational system**, at all levels, is the ideal setting, where **properly trained teachers** can play a key role in the implementation of such **interventions targeting the general population**. The need for implementing in schools –even in primary education- interventions related to gender stereotypes and equality, as a means of primary prevention of gender-based violence it is, therefore, imperative.

## Systematic Capacity Building of Human Resources

**Development of National GEAR *against* IPV Packages** for countries where they are still not available.

**Approval and institutionalization** of use of the National GEAR against IPV Package (Booklets II, III and IV) in the training of teachers and other professionals providing services to adolescents as well as in the implementation of Workshops<sup>3</sup> with adolescents

**Institutionalization of Training Seminars**, which will be implemented every year

- targeted to**
- **teachers of secondary education**<sup>7</sup> and **other professionals** working in the school setting (ie. psychologists, social workers) from all schools across the country
  - **professionals working in the field of** health promotion and education, gender equality and prevention of gender-based violence as well as **professionals** providing services to adolescents of high-risk groups

- aiming to**
- theoretical and experiential training of teachers/professionals on issues related to stereotypical perceptions of gender roles, gender equality and gender-based violence in adolescents' relationships
  - capacity building and skills development for the implementation and evaluation of the experiential workshops for adolescents' awareness raising in school or other settings
  - development of skills related to identifying, handling and appropriate referring of cases of abuse of children, adolescents and adults

- Training Seminars' Features**
- **teachers' registration** should be on a **voluntary basis**, yet **attendance** of the whole duration of the seminar **should be mandatorily required** for a teacher to be certified
  - implementation should take place **in the beginning of the school year**, so as workshops with students in classes are timely conducted
  - **minimum duration**<sup>8</sup> of **24 hours** that includes **experiential, theoretical** and **practical** parts
    - ▶ **the experiential part** (simulated Workshop) should have a **minimum duration of 12 hours** and be conducted in **small groups** of 15-25 participants (similar size to a school class)
  - **trainees' groups should be mixed**, including teachers from big cities and the providence as well
  - **effectiveness evaluation** should be conducted for each Seminar (see Booklet II)

Provision of **constant support**,<sup>3</sup> **to the trained teachers**, during the implementation of Workshops with their students.

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<sup>7</sup> At a later stage, it is recommended that the training should be extended to **teachers of primary education**, so as to be properly equipped to implement with their students the Workshop's first part that deals with gender stereotypes and gender-based (in)equality

<sup>8</sup> **Ideal duration:** 32-40 hours

## ***Project Identity***

**Gender Equality Awareness Raising against Intimate Partner Violence - II - GEAR against IPV II**  
(JUST/2013/DAP/AG/5408)

## ***Coordinator***



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## ***Partners***

- Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies (MIGS), Cyprus
- Center for Education, Counselling and Research (CESI), Croatia
- Association for Gender Equality and Liberty (ALEG), Romania
- Plataforma Unitària contra les Violències de Gènere, Spain
- The Smile of the Child, Greece



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## ***Website***

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