

Impact Toolkit Working Paper 1

December 2015

1. Introduction

The Impact toolkit comes from the project IMPACT which was supported by the European Commission's Daphne III programme. The project was titled, "Evaluation of European Perpetrator Programmes", starting in January 2013 and finishing at the end of 2014. The service coordinating of the project, Dissens - Institut für Bildung und Forschung e.V. from Germany, worked together with six other organisations, from Austria, Denmark, Spain and the U.K. and two associated partners from Germany and Norway. The partnership contained a mix of perpetrator programmes, researchers and programmes with a more general level of activities.

The rationale of the project was to promote women's and children's safety from domestic violence. The way this aim was envisioned in practice was to improve the quality of European domestic violence perpetrator programmes (DVPPs). To achieve this improvement the project worked on the development of tools and methodologies to harmonise and enhance the monitoring and evaluation of work with perpetrators across Europe.

The toolkit and associated documents are now available on the European Network for Work with Perpetrators (WWP-EN) website for programmes to use.

2. Purpose of toolkit

DVPPs are often asked about the evaluation of their projects, whether they "make a difference" and how they know if they "work". Practitioners in the sector do this work as they believe that abusive behaviour is learnt, and therefore, can be unlearnt. The WWP-EN "Guidelines to develop standards" first point in the section on "Approaches and attitudes in direct work with perpetrators" states that

“Perpetrator programmes are based on the belief in the ability of people to change.” However, this is not always the view of other agencies or sectors of the societies we live in, and often programmes are faced with the view that abusive men don’t change.

Numbers alone do not always show the true picture of the “success” of a DVPP. It can be difficult to engage men on programmes that do not take men from the criminal justice system. Programmes can find that abusive men can be difficult to retain, numbers on programmes can be low as compared to the possible actual numbers of abusive men in any given society.

For many DVPPs, it is very difficult to analyse the impact they may be having in terms of success rates in other ways. This could be for several reasons, some of which are very important in terms of WWP-EN being able to provide a toolkit to help address these issues.

- Many programmes run on very little resources and therefore staff time is a huge issue, often resources are geared towards programme delivery and programme evaluation can be left to one side or in the “too difficult to do” pile.
- It can be hard to know how and what to evaluate in a programme. There are many evaluation tools used in more generalist interventions, these are often not transferable to DVPPs as they are very specialist in both nature and the outcomes that are looked for.
- A further layer of complication is that, unusual in ascertaining “what works” situations, DVPPs are working to see outcomes for a third party, who is not necessarily the client. Programmes working to WWP-EN standards are putting the safety of victims (i.e. women and children) first in that the goal of the work is to increase their safety and this should be prioritised at every stage. This means that evaluation also has to take this into account, therefore an extra “layer” of monitoring is required, i.e. it is not enough to

only ask the client about the changes he has made, but also, ideally, the DVPP has to ask the same questions of his partner or ex-partner.

The Impact toolkit addresses many of these issues. Further, another purpose of Impact is to provide a way of programmes across EU combining data for analysis by researchers in the WWP-EN network. At the moment, there is no comparable data on the impact that a DVPP may have, across most countries, let alone across Europe. This will help us to learn more about what helps to end intimate partner violence, addressing our goal of helping programmes to be more effective in attending to the safety of partners and children.

3. What is measured?

Programmes can ask clients and their partners (or ex-partners) to fill out the questionnaires at 4 stages: at first contact; the beginning of the programme; the middle and the end. This gives us the ability to comment on several outputs and outcomes.

Ideally, a programme is looking for the following changes:

- reduction in the amount and levels of physical, sexual and emotional violence/abuse;
- increase in partner safety;
- reduction in feelings of fear from partners;
- fewer police call outs and
- reported improvements from partners on his parenting and ability to co-parent and on reduced levels of children's fear.

The man reducing his levels of violence/abuse might also be measured by the impact on partners and children as follows:

- reduction in feelings of anger and upset from children;
- lower levels of impact on the partner and children and
- improvements in the partner's improved well-being (less anxiety and depression).

However, long standing issues of ongoing trauma or post traumatic stress may influence these for some participants' partners and children.

Increased empathy for a partner and children, as he understands more the consequences and impact of his abuse, would also point towards the man changing his abusive behaviour. A programme would also look for increased acknowledgment of and more accountability about his violence from the man as a sign that he is changing his abusive behaviour. The following questions to him about his attitudes towards the following issues might be used to measure these:

- his increased understanding of the impacts on his partner;
- his increased understanding of her fear;
- the hopes and thoughts around his relationship;
- his reasons for coming to the programme and what he hopes to achieve as compared with how he answers the questions on what he feels he still needs to do at the midway stage and the changes he thinks he has made by the end of the programme.

There may be issues that change over time that are not indicative of a man's "success" or "failure" to make changes, for e.g. whether the parties stay together, as there may be other factors that influence this. However, partners are asked if a split that happens during the programme has been "amicable" which, if was the situation, would give signs to indicate that a man had not been abusive during the split and was not continuing abuse post-separation.

Impact measurements in detail.

- Outputs:
 - Numbers of clients and (ex)partners on the programme.
- Outcomes.

Both parties (both client and ex/partner) are asked if there are any changes in:

- frequency, severity and types of abuse/violence (physical, sexual and emotional) by male participants towards their female partners or ex-partners;

- safety and feelings of fear/safety by partners or ex-partners of men;
- the number of police call-outs;
- the lives of children whose fathers or step-fathers are on the programmes;
- the hopes of clients and their partners/ex-partners (also, whether these are achieved).

Both parties are asked to comment on the following issues at each stage:

- the impact on the partner (emotional and physical) and child/ren (including how they feel and if they are afraid);
 - the children's situation (e.g. who they are living with/whether there is child contact/if family services are involved);
 - if she is fearful of him;
 - the status of relationship (e.g. if they are together or apart)
 - their hopes and thoughts around relationship with (ex)partner.
- Questions that are only asked of the partner (or ex) are:
- her hopes for the programme (at the first two stages);
 - what she feels might stop him from changing (at the first two stages);
 - continued hopes (third stage);
 - overall impression of changes made (final stage) and
 - her well-being, if she is anxious or depressed, is asked about at all stages.
- Questions that are only asked of the participant/client.

Demographics and referrals:

- client's age;
- client's employment (at every stage to assess changes);
- client's income (at every stage);
- although the questionnaire is aimed at men and their female (ex) partners, it asks about the gender of client and their (ex)partner;
- how he was referred onto programme (first 2 stages).

Some questions aimed at the clients will track any changes in their attitudes over time:

- why he came is asked at the first two stages;
- his attitudes to the programme and to change progresses through the last two stages, from: what do you need to do? (half-way through the programme) to what changes have you made? (final questionnaire);
- he is asked about the impacts – their levels of fear and/or their feelings – on his (ex)partner and children at all stages.

Programmes are also encouraged to be reflective, in that clients are asked if they feel there are any changes to programme required. Both parties are given space to offer information about “Anything else”, (which is an open question) at the end of every questionnaire.

4. Available tools

➤ Hard copies of questionnaires

It provides programmes with a ready-made set of questionnaires and other tools that they can use to analyse their impact on their clients and the partners/ex-partners (and children) of clients.

Programmes can ask clients and their (ex)partners to fill out paper copies of the questionnaires at 4 stages: at first contact; the beginning of the programme; the middle and the end. This gives them the personal information on any changes the client is making, as detailed above.

The service can then fill out the “Content and context of DVPP”, which helps them to be clear on what kind of set up they have and approach to the work that they use.

These two tools give them information that they can use in the “Report Pro-Forma” to give a robust picture on how the programme is making changes (i.e. outcomes), how it is structured and fits into the localised picture.

➤ Online database

DVPPs and other interventions can apply to use the ready-made set of online questionnaires used at the same intervals as the paper/hard copies. The information is submitted to an online database which is held by WWP-EN. The Network staff, together with academic researchers, then analyse the data and produce programme reports on the outcomes and outputs as listed in section 3 above.

This then gives programmes a realistic picture of the impact of their programme on their clients and the partners/ex-partners (and children) of clients.

Eventually, this should give WWP-EN enough information to analyse similarities and differences within DVPPs from the same countries and, in time, examine issues and trends over Europe. The eventual aim is to be able to use the data collected online in order to examine “what works” in terms of tackling intimate partner violence and to suggest improvements in DVPPs.

5. Interest and current use

Although the database was trialled in its development, an initial roll-out in the U.K. was designed to further test out the analysis and report format. This was considered important in order to test the analysis process, and so that we can develop templates.

A team from the University of Bristol is carrying out the analysis of Toolkit data which includes initial analysis for individual men, programmes and comparison of programmes. They are also training up WWP-EN staff on how to carry out analysis, testing, report writing, including those for individual men, programmes and comparing programmes.

The use of the database has been promoted through them and WWP-EN member of and chair Respect, the U.K. membership organisation for work with domestic violence perpetrators, male victims and young people.

Several U.K. based organisations are already using or interested in using the online database. One other organisation is using the questionnaires but collecting the data themselves that will be sent on to the University of Bristol team to analyse. The Family Drug and Alcohol Court Programme have also signed up to evaluate the impact of this form of court intervention on domestic violence. Some courts are working with domestic violence perpetrator programmes, others are not but wish to be able to measure whether and how the multi-disciplinary team's intervention affects men's abusive behaviour in the family.

There is also much interest from other programmes in Europe to start collecting data using the online version. The toolkit will be rolled out further in 2016.

6. Tools and training developed

➤ Training webinar

On 22nd December 2015, a webinar was held by Nina George (WWP-EN's Research and Development Manager) and Cassandra Jones (Ph.D. Candidate in the School for Policy Studies at the University of Bristol).

The webinar covered several aspects of the toolkit:

- purpose of the toolkit;
- different paper and online tools available (and who each are available for);
- timelines of questionnaires;
- outcomes measured;
- what the measurements, the questions are;
- which questions are asked of men only, women only and of both parties;
- how to register programmes on the WWP-EN programme database and
- how to access, fill in and submit the questionnaires to the online database.

There was much interest in the webinar, and attendees had many questions on the use and implementation of the toolkit.

From this, WWP-EN has decided to develop further in-depth training on the issues raised by the participants. These were in three categories:

- the development of the toolkit and academic background;
- using the toolkit and what it can do (in terms of data collection),
- building the toolkit into programme delivery (which links with another important WWP-EN work stream on best practice in victim services, refer to “7. Emerging Issues” section).

➤ Expert essay

As part of the work plan for 2015, three expert essays were required. It was decided that one of these should be on implementing the Impact toolkit. This was written by Cassandra Jones and is available for members and other interested parties to read on the website. It is able to go into written detail that the webinar was not able to, being time limited.

➤ User Manuals

WWP-EN has created two user manuals for interested parties. These are in powerpoint format and illustrated for easy reading and user-friendliness.

The first manual explains in detail the process programmes use to sign up to the WWP-EN database. This initial stage is important as WWP-EN’s website should have an up to date record of perpetrator programmes across Europe, and vital for the use of the online Impact toolkit, because the “short name” for the programme is generated by registering on the programme online database.

Once having followed the user manual to register their programme on the WWP-EN database, programmes can follow the diagrams and instructions in the Impact Toolkit Manual on how to then use their short name to access the online database and the 4 different questionnaires for clients and their partners or ex-partners.

➤ **Data protection/confidentiality policy**

There are several important issues around the use of the online toolkit. To this end a data protection and confidentiality agreement and policy exists to be signed by all programmes using the toolkit, as well as those accessing or processing the data.

- i. **Informed consent.** It is important that programmes ask for consent to get data from their clients (or partners who are not clients), this covers many of the difficulties around data protection. Consent also needs to be informed to be meaningful; therefore a transparent but user-friendly statement has also been written to help programmes be clear about this with clients.
- ii. **Governance.** Clarity is required on the decision-making processes and governance arrangements related to the toolkit. There are many issues around access of the data on the host website and expectations of those accessing and processing the data. Responses to these and other related issues are contained in the To this end, a working group consisting of WWP-EN board members, staff and members has been set up to consider these and other issues.
- iii. **Data and anonymisation.** The client codes used by programmes on the dataset, along with the other demographics that we collect thought the toolkit are enough to possibly (re)identify a client, and, as such, are not considered to be anonymous. This would only be an issue should someone breach the privacy of the website that hosts the data. To reduce the possibility further and keep client confidentiality only WWP-EN staff access the raw data, which is then only passed on once it is anonymised.

7. Concluding comments

Response to the toolkit so far has been very positive. WWP-EN has had interest from many quarters: perpetrator programmes; researchers and other data collection projects. It is clear that there is a great resource for European programmes that we have here.

That said, there has to be a balance established between further roll-out that capitalises on the keen interest from members but does not expand in ways that are not manageable by WWP-EN. Of priority would be to source funding to ensure that this does not happen and that the toolkit remains a viable project now and in the future.

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