Engaging people with disabilities in the prevention of violence against women

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As the incidence of violence against women with disabilities is much higher than for the general population, a local project concept was developed to not only address this problem, but also to involve the target group in the development of a practical resource.

Further to this, young people with disabilities were identified as being a cohort where it was believed the most inroads could be made in the prevention of this abhorrent social issue.

A 10-minute DVD workshop resource entitled ‘Stop ~ Don’t Cross the Line ~ violence is everybody’s business’ was developed as a collaborative effort by incorporating community development principles across the entire process. Focus groups, consultation and workshops were undertaken with somewhat surprising benefits.

Most importantly, this project successfully involved the participation of young people with disabilities, plus their families and carers, in the planning, design, art work and even acting in the final stages of development and production of the end product.

The complexities of working in a smaller rural location also needed to be negotiated.

In particular, workshops conducted with groups of young people, both female and male, with disabilities, including cognitive, learning, physical and mobility, aided the development of scenarios for the DVD.

Some of the positive outcomes to date have been improved collaboration at a local level, improved information and skills imparted to the target cohort, and the distribution of the resource to many disability-focused organisations across the state. One of the strengths has been that the life of the project goes beyond the actual development process.

In November 2012 the workshop is to be presented to members of one of the original focus groups made up of young people with a disability, the primary target group. It is expected that results of this will be reported on in the final paper.