Management Response and Action Plan

Background to the evaluation

In September 2017, White Ribbon Australia engaged Institute for Public Policy and Governance and the School of Education, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at University of Technology Sydney (UTS) to carry out an external evaluation of White Ribbon's Breaking the Silence Schools Program, a respectful relationships professional development program from 2015/16 to 2016/17 and capture their findings in a report.

The tender document stipulated the report should include data analysis drawn from surveys, interviews and case studies, as well as recommendations for future program development, including evaluation processes, and recommendations on the feasibility of/methods for measuring longitudinal change among participating schools. White Ribbon also sought recommendations on future engagement with the Departments of Education and program sustainability.

The final report was delivered in March 2019, and can be found at www.whiteribbon.org.au.

White Ribbon response

White Ribbon welcomes the report and recommendations, which builds on data collected in the program, as well as additional data collected by UTS, including surveys carried out with teachers and students at participating schools, stakeholder interviews and case studies from schools from different parts of Australia.

The report provides a valuable insight into the program, its complexity, its implementation and uptake and has provided the White Ribbon Schools Team with direction and suggestions for further improvements to be made.

Key findings

The evaluation found that overall, the results of the BtS Program are positive and promising, and supports the emphasis on the whole-school approach as well as the need for active engagement of the schools principals and executive level.

What stands out is the increased preparedness of schools, and the level of knowledge and understanding with which they start the program. This leads to increased expectations on the program and how it is delivered, which will be taken into account in the further development of the program. The evaluation also shows school buy in and readiness is furthered strengthened by their engagement with complementary programs in the area of respectful relationships, such as student focused programs.

We are particularly pleased with the results that were observed in schools, which the evaluation qualifies as the early signs of attitudinal and behavioural longer term cultural change:

- an overwhelming majority of students (87%) affirmed that since starting at their school, they felt more confident standing up to their friends if they are treating a woman or girl badly

- three quarters of students (75%) reported that they know more about what counts as abuse or violence towards girls and women

- staff and students' knowledge and skills to safely challenge disrespectful behaviour towards women and girls increased after having participated in BtS training

- a number of schools reported perceptible changes in behaviour and culture as a result of having run the program, including in the way that students treat each other at school and a closer connection to the local community

- the program has given both female and male students the confidence to 'call out' bad behaviour, and

- knowledge of financial abuse as a form of domestic violence was far greater among schools that participated or are participating in the BtS program when compared to the general public.

The evaluation reconfirmed programming decisions taken on delivery and implementation, showing that:

- The vast majority of respondents (83%) agreed that BtS has been easy to tailor to their school context and students were receptive to, and engaged with, the messages discussed in the BtS program. Importantly, 79 per cent of respondents mentioned that education on respectful relationships has generally been easy to integrate into the existing curriculum.

- Having well-trained facilitators that are very familiar with the school system helped engage participant schools to more effectively implement strategies that adopt a whole-school approach to BtS. Also, having principals and school network directors present at the workshops has brought a higher level of credibility to the program.

- Student-led activities are the other critical aspect, which can both reflect and support a whole-school approach. Schools that had implemented the program with some success often facilitated students to take the lead in organising and promoting BtS activities. This enabled them to build their confidence, leadership and capacity to organise and speak out on gender violence issues.

- Staff in schools found that the support White Ribbon provided to connect schools to each other was very helpful and they valued visits from White Ribbon staff, ambassadors and guest speakers to schools, especially schools outside capital cities.

- White Ribbon reached a diverse range of schools and students through the BtS program. In particular, regional and remote schools were strongly represented (39% of participant schools as opposed to 29% of Australian schools in general).

Recommendations

The report and recommendations re-inforce directions already taken by White Ribbon for the further development and strengthening of the Breaking the Silence program, such as ongoing support, adaptation for delivery in various contexts and more stringent monitoring and evaluation to be able to show how the program contributes to the prevention of men's violence against women and addresses the underlying drivers of violence.

The evaluation recognises the ongoing efforts by White Ribbon to address identified areas for improvement and provides suggestions for additional actions to be taken. In the action plan below, we provide an overview of how White Ribbon will work on the recommendations, taking into consideration available resources.

A word of thanks

We want to thank UTS for all the work, including visits to a number of schools to capture their experiences and the report they have produced. We also want to thank all stakeholders who agreed to take part in the evaluation, including the schools, teachers and students, Department of Education staff, BtS Facilitators and colleagues

Evaluation Recommended	Management Response to the Recommendation	Management Follow up		
		Action to be taken	Responsible and Timeframe	Is additional funding required to implement recommendation?
Rec 1: Keep encouraging schools to adopt a whole-school approach To continue efforts there is a need to encourage and provide resources to schools to help them develop a comprehensive plan that involves buy-in from executives, teachers, students and their parents, and extends beyond the school gates to the local community. Drawing on evaluation case studies, practical examples could be developed to illustrate how BtS can be integrated into a whole-school approach, including such things as planning documents, executive leadership, student-led initiatives and community partnerships.	**Agree** As recognised in the evaluation, this is the approach taken by White Ribbon and will continue to be the focus. The recommendation to provide resources and practical examples will be taken on board. We do however acknowledge and appreciate that schools function in different contexts and what they are able to do at any given time will vary. A school's journey can start with a focused action and over time grow into a whole of school approach.	- Review existing case studies and produce best practice examples to be shared through the online portal.	Depends on funding, as existing staff (2.6 FTE) capacity is fully allocated.	Yes
Rec 2: Continue to provide regular and ongoing support to participant schools, together with building awareness of existing support Routine contact, check-ins and follow-up support from White Ribbon is essential to help schools with strategies to implement BtS in the curriculum, and keep the momentum going in relation to activities and discussions around respectful relationships. This assistance also supports the sustainability of the program. Currently White Ribbon provides follow up calls after workshops and provides connections to other relevant programs and community initiatives. But there is a need to build	**Agree** The evaluation provided valuable insight in the fact that sometimes, support is available, wanted and still not used. This is a weakness we will address. The evaluation also highlighted the suboptimal use of the online forum, which has been noted.	- Promote the availability of ongoing support more actively and through various channels: in the workshops, the workshop materials, the online forum and follow up calls. - Explore existing forums within the education system that will enable us to provide support in a structured and effective way. - Organise and advertise Q&A sessions with facilitators on the online forum	Schools program coordinator, for the 2019-2020 cohort starting in Term 2 2019	No Not to explore – may need additional funding to use No

				Yes
awareness of existing available support from White Ribbon so schools proactively seek help, and emphasise the importance of community initiatives. It is also worth considering strengthening the role of BtS facilitators in providing ongoing support to schools after the workshops have ended.		- Upgrade technology - Strengthen curation of the online library to improve user friendliness		Not at this stage
Rec 3: Continue encouraging participation, interaction and knowledge sharing during workshops. Workshops are a great opportunity to share knowledge and practical examples of how to embed BtS and respectful relationships in the curriculum and school activities. White Ribbon should continue to focus on this area through encouraging participation and interaction during workshops, include classroom teachers with previous experience in implementing BtS to become workshop facilitators, and provide more practical examples of how to embed BtS in the school curriculum.	**Partially agree** BtS Facilitators have a keen understanding of the role and responsibilities of teachers, as well as the challenges they face in their work. They appreciate the need for active learning activities, and the value of sharing and networking. Workshop 2 consists mostly of participants sharing their experiences with the group and supports a community of practice. We will continue to prioritise Principals as facilitators. This is part of the approach as: - They are educational leaders - Have a whole of school view and approach - Bring gravitas and credibility to the program, especially for participating Principals and other school staff Facilitators are selected from schools that have implemented BtS and have hands on experience with the program.	- Review current training materials for Workshop 1 with the aim to create more space for interaction	Lead Facilitator, for the 2019-2020 cohort starting in Term 2 2019	No
Rec 4: Develop classroom materials and activities that are age appropriate for practical application Currently, White Ribbon does not prepare classroom materials for schools to use, but it does share with schools via the online library, various classroom materials schools have developed themselves. There is scope for White Ribbon to consider developing classroom materials, in partnership with educational/pedagogy specialists, to help	**Agree** This is a strong and ongoing demand from participants and we will aim to meet it.	- Review the online library and make it more user friendly – organising existing resources by age group and subject type, for example. - Engage educational/pedagogy specialist to review existing resources and use them to develop classroom for different age groups	Schools team, ongoing Schools Program coordinator, a.s.a.p, funds permitting.	No Yes

school staff target more varied groups of students and better implement BtS into their classrooms and existing curriculum.				
Rec 5: Link the program more directly with respectful relationship curriculum topics There are a number of opportunities to incorporate the program into various curricula and respectful relationship education programs across the country, and at the state and territory level, BtS-related learnings can be located and connected to the Health and Physical Education, Personal Development Health and Physical Education, and pastoral care curriculum areas for primary and secondary school years.	**Agree** Participants are well across where the program sits in their curriculum and to be able to effectively support them the White Ribbon schools team needs to be equally across. The team of Facilitators from different States play a key role in this, as they know their curriculum and the local context. The program aims to increase participants' confidence in providing respectful relationships education in a way that is appropriate for the group they are working with. This applies equally to States and Territories where the Departments of Education provide support and tools for RRE and those where this area is still under development. The evaluation states that many of the BtS activities are 'extra-curricular', which is interpreted as outside of the class room and set learning activities. In BtS, we consider curriculum to be what the school attempts to teach, whether it is written or unwritten, and includes everything that takes place within the purview of the schools.	- Continue to actively engage with all Departments of Education around the integration of RRE	Schools team, ongoing	Allocation of staff time.
Rec 6: Tailor program engagement for regional schools There is a need to engage with rural and remote schools differently as compared with metropolitan schools. Regional schools have specific requirements, which can be due to resource constraints and more transient staff. White Ribbon is currently adapting the BtS model to remote and rural locations. This includes the delivery of smaller workshops, training of local services providers and the	**Agree** We fully agree with the need to ensure the program is appropriate for all kinds of schools in Australia and the need to adapt its delivery to the specific circumstances of the schools. Exactly what is needed is as varied as the country is and will require consultation and collaboration with the Departments of Education and community groups.	- Explore use of existing technology available and used within the Departments of Education to reach remote and rural schools. - Strengthen mapping of and engagement with local service providers in areas of delivery	Schools team, ongoing	No Yes – staff time

development of tools for a more trauma informed approach. It is important to continue focusing in regional areas, delivering workshops via other channels and facilitating connections between local domestic violence services and schools.	The dependence on technology to reach remote areas poses challenges, as it doesn't always perform as expected. The evaluators stress the importance of engagement with local services in rural and remote areas, which we will take on board.	- Evaluate the current collaboration with service Providers in delivery as a model to more prominently address response to disclosures		Part of the ongoing collaboration
Rec 7: Emphasise the breadth and diversity of the ways violence can manifest Recognition of non-physical forms of abuse (for example, financial, social and verbal) needs to be strengthened and reinforced in the school context and wider community. This also includes emerging forms of abuse using mobile technologies and online platforms. There is a need to engage schools more strongly with the ways in which social media and new technologies are being used, keep materials current in the lives of young people and increase involvement and support of female staff, students and community members in the program, in order to highlight forms of structural inequality and oppression that impact different groups in different ways.	**Agree** We fully agree with the need to recognise non-physical forms of abuse as well as emerging forms of abuse using new technologies. Workshop discussions build on eLearning content that explores the continuum of violence including non-physical forms of abuse, and unpacks gendered drivers of violence. We also agree that materials must be current in the lives of young people. White Ribbon Australia highlights the positive role men play alongside women in preventing men's violence against women and addressing the impact of gender inequality on people of all genders. BtS participants' data on shows that approximately 35% are male and 65% are female, and the number of female facilitators is increasing, albeit slowly. We will continue to strive for the values of the program to be represented in the way it is implemented.	- Strengthen references to and information on emerging forms of abuse including use of mobile technologies and online platforms in training materials and online library - Review training materials and online library for relevance to young people, including highlighting student led initiatives. - Highlight the diversity of engagement with BtS in case studies.	Schools team, ongoing	Allocation of staff time
Rec 8: Effective and consistent data collection, analysis and reporting More effective, ongoing and consistent data collection, analysis and reporting would enable White Ribbon to better understand the program impact over time and in different locations. To understand change in participating schools over time, and changes in participants	**Agree** The ToR for the evaluation specifically asked for recommendations and tools to strengthen the Monitoring and Evaluation of the program. The recommendation provided falls short of what was expected, but does provide some useful avenues to explore further. It will need	- A review of the program logic and M&E framework is underway and links it more directly to the overall program logic of the organisation. - Current data collection tools and processes are being reviewed.	Schools program coordinator, for the 2019-2020 cohort starting in Term 2 2019	Yes. We can make changes to improve data collection within the program itself, but for in depth case studies, all staff surveys and

compared to the wider population, data collection will need to be resourced over time with items strategically linked to other data sources (e.g. from government departments and public surveys). There is scope to embed opportunities for data collection into program delivery, such as through annual telephone interviews with a purposive sample of principals across locations and school types, online teacher surveys, and conveniently sampled focus groups and consultations with students. More broadly, it is useful to be reminded that cultural change is hard (in any context) to quantify, and that there is great value in capturing and communicating rich qualitative stories of change for individuals and communities.	to be reviewed within the context of existing means within the BtS program.			interviews with stakeholders, additional resources would be required.