
Dr. Deborah Fry is a Lecturer in Child Protection at the University of Edinburgh where she leads a research team on Preventing Violence in Childhood and also co-leads the Safe Inclusive Schools Network.

The project

Dr Fry completed a consultancy funded by UBS Optimus Foundation to improve the effectiveness of a child protection programme with taboobreaker, an association based in Zurich which aims to prevent sexual abuse of children through play, developed and tested through workshops with children. Safebodyland is a school-based intervention programme specifically for child sexual abuse (CSA) prevention consisting of a teacher website, a virtual game and a set of activities for the classroom. It is one of several interventions developed by the taboobreaker association which is focused on developing and implementing evidence based programmes to tackle some of the most tabooed issues that children and societies face.

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Karin Stierlin, Founder of taboobreaker, commented that working in this way was particularly nourishing: “Our association has definitely benefitted from the evaluation. It’s been like having a pair of shoes. The left shoe is science and the right shoe is practice. You measure and get data, see the data doesn’t match with the idea, and so you adapt again and again to improve the programme.”

Taboobreaker are keen to emphasise how important it has been to have Dr Fry guiding them whilst they develop the programme. By combining the best of experience and practice during the development phase, the consultancy has improved programme design so that children can practice their learning in real world setting, and receive teaching on protective life skills. This holistic approach includes a classroom activity box, tutorial website for teachers and a game to teach children about personal space, emotions and seeking help.

The Impact & Benefits

The consultancy partnership between University of Edinburgh and taboobreaker meant that the programme designers were able to draw on scientific evidence to make the most effective programme design.

What happens next?

The partnership will continue after the development stage. The next step will be to assess programme effectiveness to see how it will change children’s thinking and responses to critical situations.

For more information on this case study or to find out more about starting a conversation with researchers from The University of Edinburgh contact University Consultancy Edinburgh Research and Innovation Ltd The University of Edinburgh, 1 Roxburgh Street, Edinburgh EH8 9TA +44(0)131 50 6745 enquiries@universityconsultancy.com www.universityconsultancy.com

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