



FLAGSHIP PROGRAMME



PREVENTION AND ACCESS TO ESSENTIAL SERVICES TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

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The issue

Violence against women and girls (VAWG) persists in every country in the world as a pervasive violation of human rights and a major impediment to achieving gender equality. Evidence shows that 1 in 3 women worldwide have experienced violence, mainly at the hands of a partner or spouse and that violence against women leads to a wide range of physical, mental and sexual health problems and it affects families and whole communities. Violence against women also has a significant economic impact and impedes the achievement of any global development goals.

Despite some progress, the rates of VAW remain alarmingly high, and many challenges still persist, including lack of strong political will; insufficient enforcement of legislation and allocation of adequate resources to implement laws, policies and programmes; insufficient monitoring and evaluation of their impact; and lack of coordination among different stakeholders.

General Recommendation No.19 of the CEDAW Committee affirmed that VAW was a form of discrimination, confirming that States have to address violence through this Convention. The Beijing Platform for Action (1995) identified violence against women as one of the 12 critical areas of concern that required urgent action to achieve the goals of equality, development and peace. The recently agreed agenda on the SDGs included ending VAW and harmful practices, as target areas, confirming that they need to be urgently addressed in order to achieve gender equality (Targets 5.2 and 5.3).

Our strategy for change

UN Women's Flagship Initiative "Prevention and Access to Essential Services to End Violence against Women" builds on the UN Joint programme of Essential Services for Women and Girls Subject to Violence. It also builds on inter-agency collaboration on prevention of violence against women to strengthen shared understanding and partnerships in this area.

The main lesson learned, substantiated by evidence, is that in order to effectively prevent and respond to VAWG, a comprehensive, transformative approach towards gender equality and women's empowerment is required which needs to result in comprehensive EAW laws and policies, prevention, provision of essential services and VAW data collection (see Gender Statistics).

UN WOMEN'S FLAGSHIP PROGRAMME INITIATIVES

Prevention and Access to Essential Services to End Violence against Women is one of UN Women's Flagship Programming Initiatives designed to ensure that UN Women can deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It will support national governments to address multiple SDG targets across multiple goals.

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UN Women therefore has identified the following three priority outcome areas, which will require actions from a coalition of partners to achieve transformative change:

1. Adoption of comprehensive laws addressing VAWG and gender-based inequality and discrimination (e.g. family law, access to resources).

Laws are important to address impunity, convey a message that VAWG is not tolerated and help women leave an abusive relationship and take their lives into their own hands. Implementation of such laws remains, however, a challenge. Strengthening women's organizations, including through capacity building, to hold governments accountable, advocate for their implementation, and building the capacity of institutions (police, justice, health and education sectors), through codes of conduct, reporting mechanisms and awareness-raising programmes to prevent and respond to VAWG is crucial (outcome 1).

2. Effective prevention strategy which includes mutually reinforcing interventions in order to facilitate transformative change in society by addressing the root and structural causes of violence.

It should focus on women's empowerment and women's rights, include community mobilization and educational programs and engage multiple stakeholders, including men and boys, media and women's organizations (outcome 2).

3. Women-centered quality essential services should be available to all survivors to ensure support and protection and to prevent violence from re-occurring.

Awareness-raising of rights of survivors and availability of services need to be strengthened. Capacity-building of a wide range of service providers, development of clear protocols and guidelines for providing quality VAW services, including coordination and accountability mechanisms, are essential

aspects of this proposed work. Having these services in place also sends a strong message to the community that VAW is not accepted.

How the Programme works

It is envisaged that the three outcomes for this Programme will be operationalized through different modalities.

Outcome 1 will be through country projects supported by HQ technical support. Outcome 2 through a portfolio of branded regional and country projects. Outcome 3 will be operationalized through the UN Joint Global Programme on Essential Services.

Based on these experiences, the second phase for Outcome 3 may be extended through an expansion of the global programme or through a portfolio of branded regional and country projects. The work on EVAW to be carried through this flagship will be partially funded through a Global Technical Support Project to strengthen UN Women's capacity to support EVAW work in the field. A range of technical guidance and tools produced by UN Women or through the joint global programme and other joint agency partnerships will be gradually available to support implementation at country level.

Partnerships for change

To create the enabling environment for such processes and outcomes to occur will require the mobilization, coordination, and capacity-building of a broad range of stakeholders, including authorities from a range of sectors and ministries (economic development, urban planning, transport, community development, women's machinery, justice, police, education, health, etc.), grassroots women's, youth, and men's groups and organizations, UN agencies, regional human rights and women's rights mechanisms; research and educational institutions, private sector, media, etc.

UN Women will partner with UNFPA, UNDP, UNODC and WHO on the UN Joint programme of Essential Services for Women and Girls Subject to Violence. At the regional and country levels, UN Women participates in various UN Joint EVAW Programmes. UN Women will further build on its inter-agency collaboration on prevention of VAW and on the implementation of the EVAW prevention framework which was developed in collaboration with ILO, OHCHR, UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA and WHO. Close collaboration will take place with a range of stakeholders, including representatives of civil society. UN Women will continue collaboration with "What Works to Prevent VAW" initiative.

FACTS AND FIGURES - ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

- 35% of women experience physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence over their lifetime (WHO 2013).
- In 2012, almost half were killed by their family members or intimate partners, whereas for male victims, only 6% were killed by such perpetrators (UNODC 2014).
- In the majority of countries with available data, less than 40% of the women who experience violence seek help of any sort. Among women who do, most look to family and friends and very few look to formal institutions and mechanisms, such as police and health services. Less than 10% of those women seeking help for experience of violence sought help by appealing to the police (UNDESA 2015).