



# The Ripple Effect

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Sharing promising practices, innovations  
and evidence on ending violence against  
women and girls in Southeast Asia

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This publication presents highlights of results achieved under the regional programme, “Leveraging Technical Tools, Evidence and Community Engagement to Advance the Implementation of Laws and Provision of Services to Women Experiencing Violence in Southeast Asia.” UN Women would like to thank the governments of Indonesia, Lao PDR, Timor-Leste and Viet Nam as well as the local community leaders, civil society organization and NGOs for their leadership in this regional programme. For their valuable contributions to costing the provision of services to support survivors, UN Women thanks the team at National University of Ireland, Galway. Special thanks goes to the Government of Australia for its generous direct financial support for this project and broader commitment to ending violence against women and girls in Asia and the Pacific. UN Women also acknowledges the bravery and strength of the survivors of violence who have spoken out and shared their stories, which teach and guide us.



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The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) is a global champion for women and girls; UN Women was established to accelerate progress on meeting their rights worldwide.

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## UN Women

At the country level, UN Women supports governments in adopting laws and policies for preventing and responding to violence against women and girls aligned with international standards.

UN Women partners with governments, UN agencies, civil society organizations and other institutions to advocate for gender equality, women's rights and ending violence against women, and actively works to change harmful norms and engage men and boys as partners.



Photo: UN Women/Pathumporn Thongking

UN Women supports expanding access to quality multi-sectoral responses for survivors covering safety, shelter, health, justice and other essential services. Evidence-based policy guidance helps to step up investments in prevention—the most cost-effective, long-term means to stop violence against women and girls.

UN Women works with governments to develop dedicated National Action Plans to prevent and address violence against women, which help clarify roles and strengthen coordination among diverse actors required for sustained and meaningful action. UN Women also advocates for the integration of violence against women in key international, regional and national frameworks, such as the post-2015 development agenda.

## The Regional Programme

The regional programme entitled “Leveraging Technical Tools, Evidence and Community Engagement to Advance the Implementation of Laws and Provision of Services to Women Experiencing Violence in Southeast Asia” spanned three years (June 2013 - June 2016) and was generously funded by the Government of Australia.

To meet its ambitious goals, the programme sought to provide governments and civil society with the knowledge and tools for assessing, costing and accelerating the implementation of laws, National Action Plans and services. Sustainability was ensured at the government level by supporting increased capacity in using these tools, along with strengthened national commitment and leadership in driving these issues forward. As a complementary strategy for ending violence against women and girls (EVAWG), the programme was also able to enhance community leadership for positive social norm change to prevent VAWG before it happens. The regional programme covered the Southeast Asia region with particular focus on four countries: Indonesia, Lao PDR, Timor-Leste and Viet Nam.

**The Regional Ending Violence against Women and girls (EVAWG) Programme was guided by the following four outcomes:**

- 1. Enhanced accountability mechanisms for the implementation of laws and the provision of services to women and girls experiencing violence in Southeast Asia;**
- 2. Increased government commitment to enhance resources for gender-responsive multi-sectoral action plans on EVAWG in Southeast Asia;**
- 3. Increased community leadership and social mobilization to reject and prevent VAWG in selected communities in Southeast Asia; and**
- 4. Increased use of knowledge, evidence and good practices by key stakeholders to influence government policies, programmes and strategies to EVAWG in Southeast Asia.**

# Why regional programming?

The Regional EVAWG Programme is a concrete example of the positive change that can be achieved when local commitment is enhanced by exposure to new ideas that have been tested in other contexts and capacity-building to generate the individual and institutional transformation needed to end violence against women and girls.

Such a multi-country approach at the regional level allows for new kinds of partnerships and peer learning opportunities, producing a ripple effect and enabling the reproduction and adaptation of evidence-based initiatives in other countries.

## The challenge

Violence against women and girls: Pervasive across the region

25 - 60%

In Indonesia, men's reports of their use of physical or sexual violence against their partner ranged from 25 to 60%<sup>1</sup>

38%

38% of East Timorese women have experienced physical or sexual violence by an intimate or non-intimate partner since the age of 15<sup>2</sup>

58%

In Viet Nam, more than 58% of ever-married women reported experiencing physical, sexual or emotional violence in their lifetime<sup>3</sup>



1 in 3

In Lao PDR, one in three women has experienced physical, sexual, or emotional abuse by a partner<sup>4</sup>



90%

### Harmful social norms

In Lao PDR more than 90% of men and women agreed that it is important for a man to exert power over his wife<sup>5</sup>



82%

Domestic violence in Timor-Leste is viewed as a private matter, as a result, 82% of women seek help only from family instead of the formal or customary justice systems<sup>6</sup>



In Viet Nam son preference is resulting in a highly skewed sex ratio at birth: 113 boys to 100 girls (2013)



### Insufficient legal protection

- In Indonesia 15 forms of sexual violence have been identified but the law only recognizes four<sup>7</sup>
- In a multi-country study of Asia and the Pacific, 67% of men who admitted to committing rape reported no legal consequences<sup>8</sup>
- Across Asia and the Pacific, 33 out of 39 countries have dedicated national legislation on violence against women.<sup>9</sup> However, limited implementation of laws and policies results in widespread impunity for perpetrators
- Marital rape is still only criminalized in 14 countries in Asia and the Pacific<sup>10</sup>

**"In Lao PDR, violence against women is under our traditional culture of silence. Nobody talks about it, and I didn't either. Silence, silence, silence! But no! Silence will never change our social norms."**

Ms. Bouaphanh Ratthida, Head, Division of the Advancement of Women and Children, Ministry of Education and Sports (Lao PDR)

**"An important finding from this study is that cost estimates show that the Essential Services Minimum Package is not a substantial burden for governments."**

Dr. Nata Duvvury, Senior Lecturer, School of Political Science & Sociology, National University of Ireland, Galway

## The costs

### The costs of inaction



#### In Viet Nam<sup>11</sup>

- Domestic violence survivors earn 35% less than women not abused
- Direct cost of violence = 21% of a woman's monthly salary
- Domestic violence leads to total productivity losses + potential opportunity costs of 3.19% of 2010 GDP
- Total direct/indirect costs of domestic violence = 1.4% of 2010 GDP

### The costs of taking action

Findings reveal<sup>12</sup> that implementing a minimum package of essential services for women experiencing violence will account for:



**0.29%**  
of GDP in  
Timor-Leste<sup>13</sup>



**0.25%**  
of GDP in  
Lao PDR<sup>14</sup>

## The call to action

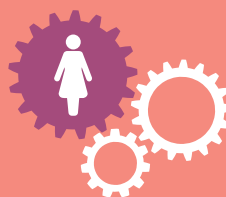
Regional collaboration, innovation and coordination are key to:



Translate laws and policies into action



Mobilize communities and youth to change social norms



Enhance capacities and resources for essential services



Monitor if laws and policies are being implemented to meet women's needs

**"I see that some of the villagers feel really concerned about violence. It is a subject that nobody talked about before, and some even felt that it was their duty to do something [about it] in their community. People started to think about the relationships between men and women... because really, we're talking about community dialogue."**

Ms. Isabelle Cazottes, Gender and Health Advisor, CARE International (Lao PDR)



# What did we achieve?

The following results highlight the achievements from the Regional EVAWG Programme



## Embracing non-violent communities in Viet Nam

Preventing violence against women and girls is about much more than awareness-raising, it's about living it every day. Communities in Da Nang, Viet Nam are doing just that.

As part of the SASA!\*-inspired project “Community mobilization in prevention of violence against women and girls in Da Nang”, the community members<sup>15</sup> listened, learned, discussed and together developed the “Safe – Equal – Non-Violent Community Code of Conduct” with the help of UN Women, the Da Nang Women’s Union and Paz y Desarrollo.

Acting as a complement to the revised “Happy Village Policy”<sup>16</sup>, the Code focuses on gender equality, respectful relationships and non-violent communications. In this way, the Code encourages community members to strive for a community free of violence against women and girls.

A sign of success is that the Code has inspired a ripple effect of activities as community members embraced the idea of a better life without violence against women and girls. These include the formation of Parents’ Clubs and Men’s Clubs.

Using a manual for the Parents’ Clubs, parents conduct monthly meetings to learn about treating their spouses equally and respectfully, using positive discipline with children and controlling anger to communicate without violence. Members have also been trained to provide peer-to-peer assistance to other parents within their community.

At Men’s Clubs, a trained young man and an older man pair up to provide peer support to other men and boys to become advocates to challenge the deep-rooted patriarchal values that condone VAWG by promoting alternative masculinities based on equal and respectful relationships with women and girls.



Ultimately, the real success of an initiative is how people use it. In coordination with Parents’ Clubs and Men’s Clubs, community members are organizing awareness raising events about the different forms and consequences of VAWG. “The programme has produced concrete results through community mobilization for the social norm change, transforming attitudes and beliefs that drive violence. By adopting respectful relationships and gender equality in their daily lives, individuals reject violence before it occurs.” Ms. Hoang Thi Thu Huong, Vice President of the Da Nang Women’s Union explained. Communities proposed holding different events based on local interests and levels of knowledge, which resulted in a mixed-sex football tournament to promote equal roles and respectful relationships between men and women, dramatic performances and a knowledge contest on gender equality and VAWG at a family festival coordinated by Parents’ and Men’s Clubs.

Photos: UN Women/Phan An

**“I think success, limitations, and challenges are similar between countries in ASEAN. For example, the most shared challenge is the capacity of officials and the lack of data. Some participants shared some models from countries like Lao or the SASA! model in Da Nang. I think we can continue to use the model that was successfully implemented in Da Nang in the national thematic project on GBV prevention and response in Viet Nam.”**

Ms. Tran Thi Bich Loan, Deputy Director of the Gender Equality Department, Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (Viet Nam)



## A milestone for domestic violence survivors in Indonesia

How do you know when a law is making a difference? For domestic violence survivors in Indonesia and the service providers that support them, this is an important question that can have life or death consequences.

The recent development of a monitoring and evaluation framework for the Indonesian Domestic Violence Law 12 years after it was passed is a milestone for survivors, service providers, activists and the government.

The framework enables the impact of prevention, protection, response and recovery actions to be assessed and means that government entities and civil society groups now have enhanced capacities to perform their work on ending violence against women and girls.

The project received the support of the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection and 22 NGOs providing services to survivors of violence against women. Consultations were held involving the Ministries of Justice, Health and Religion and civil society groups. Significantly, the consultations also included input from domestic violence survivors- the real experts.

Testing of the framework was carried out in Jakarta and in two districts at East Nusa Tenggara province, which produced feedback that was then factored into its development. The collaborative spirit that developed between the government and civil society groups during the project is critical to its success.

The lead agency on the project, the National Commission on Violence against Women, Komnas Perempuan, strengthened their advocacy position as a result of their leadership. They are using the new framework to improve the quality of their annual report on violence against women, which is a leading reference for understanding the issue in Indonesia.



Scan or click to see a video from Viet Nam.



Photo: Komnas Perempuan





## A lesson in shifting attitudes: school-based programming in Lao PDR

Changing deeply held beliefs about men's and women's roles in society is not easy, which is why initiatives that bring young people into the conversation are so important in addressing attitudes towards VAWG early for long term change.

In Lao PDR, a school-based manual for preventing and rejecting violence against women took on a life of its own, becoming a catalyst for individual and institutional transformation.

The manual was developed by UN Women and benefitted from the inputs and political leadership of the Ministry of Education and Sport (MoES). Its development was informed by models recognized as good practice, such as the GEMS<sup>17</sup> manual and the SASA!<sup>\*</sup> methodology. One school in the capital region was selected to pilot the manual. Ten teachers were trained on how to use it and 60 students were trained by the teachers.

After the intervention, teachers said they had improved their knowledge on gender equality and ending violence against women and girls and expressed commitment to expanding the initiative. Teachers observed that students who had been exposed to the curriculum were showing increasingly respectful behaviour towards them and other students.

Two champions made this work possible at the MoES: the Deputy Minister, Mr Lytou Bouapao, and Ms Bouaphanh Ratthida, Head, Division of the Advancement of Women and Children, whose commitment helped drive the success of the initiative.



Photo: Danho/Danny Hodgson and UN Women/Nicole Hosein

Their support led to a ripple effect as the Deputy Minister expressed his desire to extend the curriculum within the public school system across the entire country by 2020. Mr. Bouapao has been an outspoken advocate for the role of youth in ending violence against women and girls, speaking publicly on the issue on many occasions.

Ms Bouaphanh Ratthida attended all the community-mobilization trainings, including the SASA! sessions that were organized. She later used the school-based curriculum and the SASA! concepts she had been exposed to, to revise the MoES's own Gender Equality Manual with which over 200 government officials were then trained using the Ministry's own resources. She became an active advocate on this issue, even contributing lyrics for a song about ending violence against women. The song was later produced and performed by Aluna, one of the country's most famous singers, as part of the 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence campaign.

Ms Bouaphanh noted that piloting the curriculum has already inspired the government to upscale it into 16 additional schools in eight other provinces, with funding by the government. This time around, schools in rural areas are being favoured over those in urban settings, in order to live up to the promise of the SDG's of "leaving no one behind".



Photo: UN Women/Andrea Nyberg



Scan or click to see a video from Lao PDR.





## Improving response services for women and children experiencing violence in Timor-Leste

Responding effectively to violence against women and girls requires a variety of resources, such as skilled personnel, emergency assistance and shelter, funding for necessary services such as health treatment, police response, legal assistance, counseling and so on. Governments need clear information to make decisions on which services are needed and where, and how to allocate budgets to meet those needs. Many countries lack reliable data on which to build a case for improving response services for women and children experiencing violence, as a result of uneven record-keeping, inadequate accounting mechanisms and gaps in institutional monitoring and data management.

To remedy this, a study looking closely at the cost of services for women and children experiencing violence<sup>18</sup> was done for the first time in Timor-Leste in 2014-15 with the aim of providing information to the government on the resources required in the social services, health, police and justice sectors. The costing study has already been used for advocacy, enhancing institutional

capacities, and supporting the resourcing of a Minimum Package of Essential Services (MPES).<sup>19</sup>

The costing figures immediately delivered practical results, enabling the NGO Fokupers<sup>20</sup>, which provides shelters and psychosocial services to women and girls experiencing violence, to increase their resources for services. “We used this costing information for advocacy. We met with the Ministry of Social Solidarity about a proposal we gave them for shelters,” explained the Director, Ms. Marilia de Silva Alves. “First, they refused our budget by more than 70 per cent. So we advocated using the costing study, and used it to explain why we needed the funds. In the end, the Ministry of Social Solidarity agreed to support the full budget we requested.” The resource and cost estimates for response services will also inform the new National Action Plan on Gender Based Violence, which is being developed under the leadership of the Secretary of State for Support and Socio-economic Promotion of Women, with technical assistance from UN Women.

**“The costing study was very helpful for Timor-Leste, especially for the Ministry of Social Solidarity. They did research based on the costing study and based on the result, the Ministry set up their next year’s plan. Thanks to the study we could also have an influence on the line ministries to increase their budget.”**

Mr. Henrique de Silva, National Director for Gender and Policy Development, Secretary of State for the Support and Socio-Economic Promotion of Women (Timor-Leste)



## Forging links: Viet Nam and Lao PDR

Fostering mutually beneficial regional and national-level dialogues is an effective way of sharing promising practices, innovations and evidence on ending violence against women and girls without reinventing the proverbial wheel.

Two such learning exchanges were held in Vientiane, Lao PDR and in Da Nang, Viet Nam between the two countries in 2014. Representatives from key partners, such as the Women's Unions, NGOs, and the MoES and the National Commission on the Advancement of Women (NCAW) in Lao PDR came together to build capacities, and exchange lessons learned and good practices.

A prominent outcome from the exchange was the introduction to and adoption of the SASA!\* model. At the first exchange, the model was introduced to participants who recognized the value of its positive messaging about the benefits of non-violence, and saw its application in their own countries. They chose to adopt the SASA! approach as a model to explore further and a few months later, a training was held in Da Nang led by a SASA! expert who was part of the original Raising Voices team that saw the successful roll-out of this approach in East Africa. Both countries have since adapted the SASA! approach to their respective contexts (see results from Viet Nam and Lao PDR).



**“The thing I feel most proud of is the support and commitment of the local authority when we implemented the project. At the same time, we received active support of community members. They really welcomed the project to their areas and during the implementation, they supported and joined with us in activities.”**

Ms. Hoang Thi Thu Huong, Vice President in Da Nang Women's Union (Viet Nam)

Photo left: UN Women/Andrea Nyberg





## Leveraging the power of ASEAN

In a fortuitous case of good timing, the Regional EVAWG Programme coincided with the development of the ASEAN Regional Plan of Action to Eliminate Violence against Women. In December 2014, experts from the UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific were invited to join a working group led by the ASEAN Commission on Women and Children (ACWC) and the ASEAN Committee on Women (ACW) to help draft the Regional Plan of Action.

As the only external partner invited to serve on the Working Group established to develop the Plan, UN Women leveraged its knowledge and experience supporting countries under this regional programme to advance the implementation of laws and policies. UN Women



Photo: Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, the Royal Thai Government

also helped to create spaces in which a broader group of regional stakeholders – NGOs, UN agencies and the donor community - could provide inputs to the Regional Plan, many of which were incorporated into the final draft.

The Regional Plan of Action on EVAW lays out concrete priorities and actions to implement the ASEAN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (2013) and was adopted by the ASEAN Heads of State at the 27th ASEAN Summit in November 2015.

The partnership with ASEAN is yet another example of the ripple effect, widening the reach of national and regional level dialogues on ending violence against women and girls. By increasing the use of knowledge, evidence and good practices to support a key regional strategy to ending violence against women and girls, national government policies, programmes and strategies throughout Southeast Asia will also be positively influenced.

## \*What is SASA!?

Developed by the NGO Raising Voices in Uganda- an early grantee of the UN Women Trust Fund to End Violence against Women, SASA! is a community mobilization model to prevent violence against women and girls. The approach focuses on identifying power relations in order to understand and shift the root causes of violence against women and girls. It centres around engaging a critical mass of people across the community to create positive social change. The approach is being successfully deployed around the world and adapted to local contexts, thanks in part to rigorous research which demonstrated that the approach is effective in reducing violence at the community level.<sup>21</sup> Under the aegis of the Regional Ending Violence Against Women Programme, Viet Nam and Lao PDR both developed innovative community mobilization interventions inspired by the SASA! model.

**“The [SASA! training] content is very intensive, interesting but easy to understand. Facilitators [UN Women staff and a local consultant] gave many good and relevant examples, using a lot of participatory methods to create excitement and enable the active participation of learners... I have changed myself and become more aware and cautious in order to not exercise power over my wife or my female co-workers.”**

(male participant)



# Timeline



Photo: UN Women/Vantane Arunotai

## November 2013

Regional inception and planning workshop with key partners and stakeholders held in Bangkok, Thailand

## July 2014

First learning exchange on best practices on community mobilization between Viet Nam and Lao PDR held in Vientiane, Lao PDR

## October 2014

Regional Workshop on Regional Experiences and Promising Practices on Monitoring the Implementation of Laws and Policies to End Violence against Women held in Bali, Indonesia

## February 2014

UN Women and regional partner, the Asian Forum of Parliamentarians for Population and Development (AFPPD) co-organize a one-day meeting of Champion Parliamentarians on promising strategies to EVAW held in Chiang Mai, Thailand

## September 2014

National consultation with key stakeholders to map existing services and minimum ideal services for a minimum package of essential services held in Dili, Timor-Leste



Photo: UN Women/ Jeremias Gomes

“Now I understand the concept and types of power thanks to the SASA! training. I also recognize that I have used my power over my children when they wouldn’t listen to me. However, now I see that this wasn’t a good way to act with my children. I need to control my emotions and use my power in a positive way to educate my children about non-violence at home.”

(female participant)



**“What has she done to be violated body and soul? She has a heart and warm blood flowing through her veins like everyone else...She is every woman... Many think of them as the weaker sex, but they are determined and full of courage.”**

song lyrics to ‘She is Every Woman’ by Aluna (Lao PDR) written for the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence 2015



Photo: UN Women/ Andrea Nyberg

**March 2015**  
SASA! methodology introduced to key stakeholders in Lao PDR, Vientiane, Lao PDR

**July 2015**  
The 2nd ACWC-ACW Working Group meeting on the draft ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on Elimination of Violence against Women, Bangkok, Thailand



Photo: UN Women/Pathumporn Thongking

**May 2016**  
Regional Consultation on The Judicial Resource Book on Strengthening Jurisprudence on Violence Against Women and Girls, Bangkok, Thailand

**December 2014**  
Second learning exchange between Viet Nam and Lao PDR held in Da Nang, Viet Nam

**December 2014**  
UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific is invited to join a working group led by the ASEAN Commission on Women and Children (ACWC) and the ASEAN Committee on Women (ACW) to help draft the ASEAN Regional Plan of Action to Eliminate Violence against Women

**April 2015**  
The 1st Regional Consultation on ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on Elimination of Violence against Women, Bangkok, Thailand



Photo: UN Women/ Pathumporn Thongking

**December 2015**  
Asia-Pacific Forum on Preventing Violence against Women and Girls: Evidence and tools for social norm change, Bangkok Thailand

**June 2016**  
Result-Sharing Meeting on Leveraging Technical Tools, Evidence and Community Mobilization Engagement to Advance the Implementation of Laws and Provision of Services to Women Experiencing Violence in Southeast Asia, Bangkok, Thailand

**“What’s impressive is learning experiences from other countries. It’s interesting to know how they implement their programmes and what they plan for the future, the comparison between countries and differences with our country.”**

Ms. Victoria Moriana Sibi, Deputy of Women Right’s Protection, Office of the Assistant Deputy on Domestic Violence, Ministry of Women’s Empowerment and Child Protection (Indonesia)


# Endnotes

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13. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
15. The meetings on developing the Safe – Equal – Non-Violent Community Code of Conduct were organized in 9 villages and residential areas of 3 target wards and communes with 450 participants (289 females and 161 males) who represented a range of local stakeholders.
16. In 2011, the government of Viet Nam issued a legal document Circular No.12 /2011/TT-BVHTTDL, to promote the “Happy Family” concept across the nation where families are rewarded based on a set of criteria stipulated in the Circular. While the criteria includes “husband and wife are equal and support each other”, families are expected to have “no domestic violence” and “maintain cultural values of traditional families” where women are expected to keep family happiness. The criteria was revised by the community to promote gender equality, include bystanders’ roles and put survivors’ rights at the core of response.
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19. The MPES was developed in conjunction with the Ministry of Social Services and representatives from the Ministries of Health and Justice and a wide range of non-governmental organizations operating in Timor-Leste and reflects the existing commitments of the Government of Timor-Leste made in the NAP-GBV.
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