



# Making Progress in Prevention Possible:

A Monitoring Framework For The Prevention of Violence  
Against Women And Girls In The Asia-Pacific Region

Summary of the Framework  
June 2021



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**Violence against women and girls (VAWG) is one of the most widespread violations of human rights worldwide, globally affecting around one in three women in their lifetime.<sup>1</sup> However, it can be prevented.**

**The ultimate goal of primary prevention is that women and girls live free from violence. However, to progress toward this long-term goal, changes must be made in the short- and medium-term.**

#### **About this summary**

This summary of the full framework is designed for policymakers and practitioners. It presents:

- the key components for building a prevention framework that is contextually relevant to countries in the Asia-Pacific; and
- an approach to measure change in the short-, medium- and long-term.

This is designed to result in greater:

- consistency in monitoring of VAWG prevention;
- comparability of data; and
- shared learning and capacity strengthening on prevention monitoring across the Asia-Pacific region.

<sup>1</sup> Devries KM. et al. (2013) 'Global health. The global prevalence of intimate partner violence against women'. *Science*, 340 (6140), 1527-1528.

## What is prevention?

The prevention of VAWG is about stopping violence before it starts, by addressing the underlying causes of violence, such as gender inequality, and the attitudes that justify, condone, promote or excuse it. Prevention works across the whole population to mitigate risk factors and amplify protective factors.

A comprehensive, holistic approach to ending VAWG involves a continuum of work across prevention and response.

The emergence of COVID-19 has highlighted existing gender inequalities around the world and exacerbated violence against women and girls.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, in the COVID-19 context, it is especially important to focus on VAWG prevention and response. The UN Secretary-General urged governments to make response to and prevention of VAWG core parts of national responses to COVID-19.<sup>3</sup>

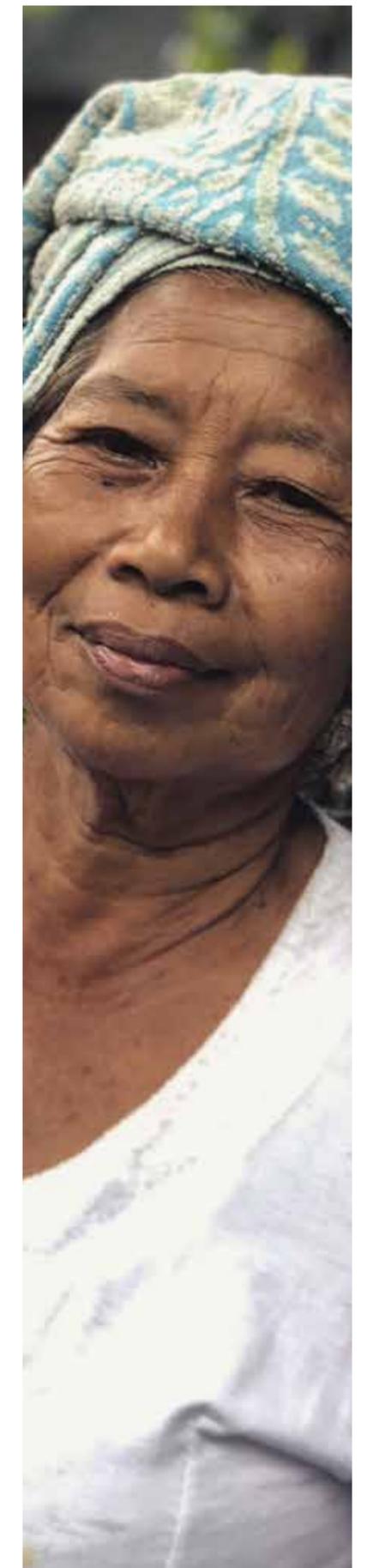
### **Intersections between Violence Against Women and Violence Against Children**

Until recently programmes, policies and research on Violence Against Women (VAW) and Violence Against Children (VAC) have been quite separate. However, evidence suggests that focussing on the intersections between them – which include common risk factors and social norms, co-occurrence of violence, intergenerational effects, common and compounding consequences, and the vulnerable period of adolescence – may help to prevent both VAW and VAC. Collaboration could see countries achieve and measure progress to ending VAW and VAC in line with commitments to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> UN Women. (2020) *COVID-19 and ending violence against women and girls*. Geneva.

<sup>3</sup> United Nations (2020) *United Nations comprehensive response to COVID-19: Saving lives, protecting societies, recovering better*. Geneva.

<sup>4</sup> Guedes, A., Bott, S., Garcia-Moreno, C. and Colombini, M. (2016) Bridging the gaps: a global review of intersections of violence against women and violence against children, *Global Health Action*, 9.



**Asia-Pacific region and aligned frameworks**

Half the world’s population lives in the Asia-Pacific region and evidence suggests that violence against women and girls is common. Countries have invested heavily in addressing VAWG, resulting in significant progress. However, tackling VAWG is complex because different forms of violence exist, and there are substantial variations between country contexts. This monitoring framework aligns with three key global and regional frameworks for tackling VAWG.

1

The indicators in this framework purposefully align with many of the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* indicators. This ensures data collection and reporting activities serve the dual purpose of fulfilling existing obligations for SDGs progress reporting and tracking the progress of prevention.

2

The *RESPECT Women* framework and accompanying *Implementation Package* guide policy makers and programme implementers through action-oriented steps that assist them to plan, design, implement, monitor and evaluate VAWG prevention programmes. These frameworks are complementary – RESPECT focuses on programme-level interventions and evaluation while this Framework focuses on monitoring population-level change (which should include the implementation of RESPECT strategies on a large scale).

3

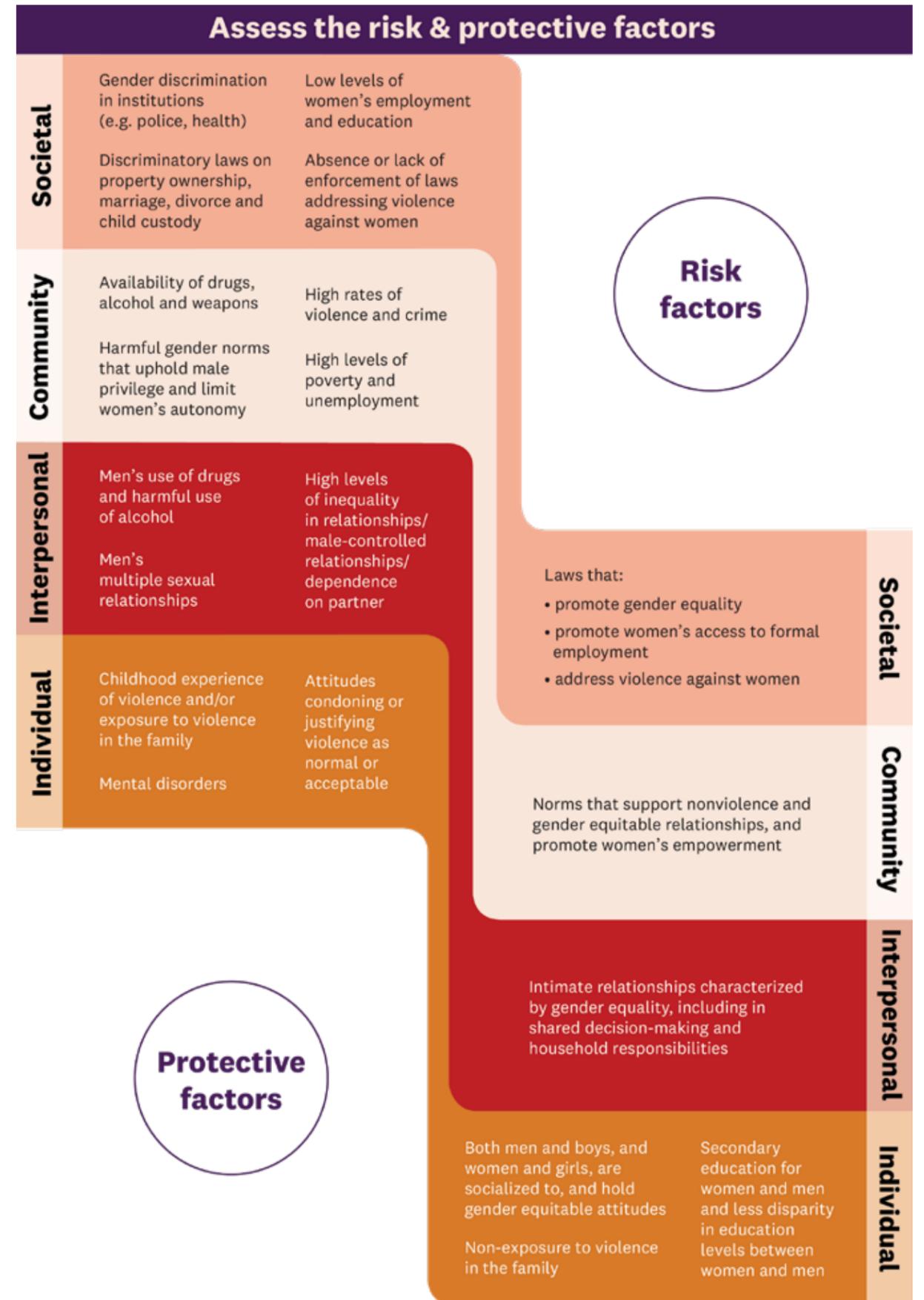
This framework is adapted from *Counting on Change: A Guide to Prevention Monitoring*, a monitoring and evaluation tool for primary prevention of VAWG in Australia.

**Risk and protective factors**

Various **risk factors** operate at the individual, interpersonal, community and societal (including the institutional/state) levels and intersect to increase the risk of VAWG. They must be addressed through policy and programming across all levels. Similarly, **protective factors** operate across individual, relationship, community and societal levels and can serve to prevent and reduce VAWG.<sup>5</sup> Illustrated in Figure 1.

<sup>5</sup> WHO, & UN Women. (2019). *RESPECT women: Preventing violence against women*, Geneva.

**Figure 1: The risk and protective factors of VAWG (adapted from RESPECT)**





**Intersectionality and measuring prevention**

Violence against women must be considered in combination with other forms of discrimination and inequality (such as racism, homophobia, ableism etc.), because these affect and intersect with gender inequality. This *intersectional approach* should inform how population-level progress toward prevention is measured. An intersectional approach includes<sup>6</sup>:

- 1 Creating an Intersectionality Advisory Group to oversee progress.
- 2 Collecting population group disaggregated data sets and analyze and report on these comprehensively.
- 3 Highlighting gaps in data on intersectionality.
- 4 Asking tough ‘intersectionality questions’ such as ‘Who is being compared to whom? Why?’, ‘What inequalities and discriminations are being emphasized by the data collection and analysis?’ (see full Framework for more details on applying an intersectional lens).

<sup>6</sup> Adapted from Our Watch. (2017). *Counting on Change: A guide to prevention monitoring*, Melbourne, Australia

**The expected process of change**

To reduce and ultimately end VAWG, the enabling environment needs to be strengthened and root causes and risk factors need to be addressed. Figure 2 on the next page illustrates this.

1

**Enabling environment is strengthened** (red line): Ensure all elements of an enabling environment are supported, funded and strengthened into the long-term. Elements of the enabling environment underpin and work across the whole process of change to strengthen the setting.

2

**Improvements in the root causes and risk factors of VAWG** (brown line): There will be gradual improvements in the root causes of VAWG and increased gender equality. Change is not linear and can sometimes experience a backward trend in response to certain situations, e.g, backlash or crises.

3

**Demand for formal response services** (rusty orange line): Demand for formal response services is expected to increase in the medium-term as the enabling environment improves. These improvements will raise community awareness, challenge violence-condoning attitudes and encourage reporting of incidents. Once again, progress isn’t linear and demand for services may rise and fall with certain situations.

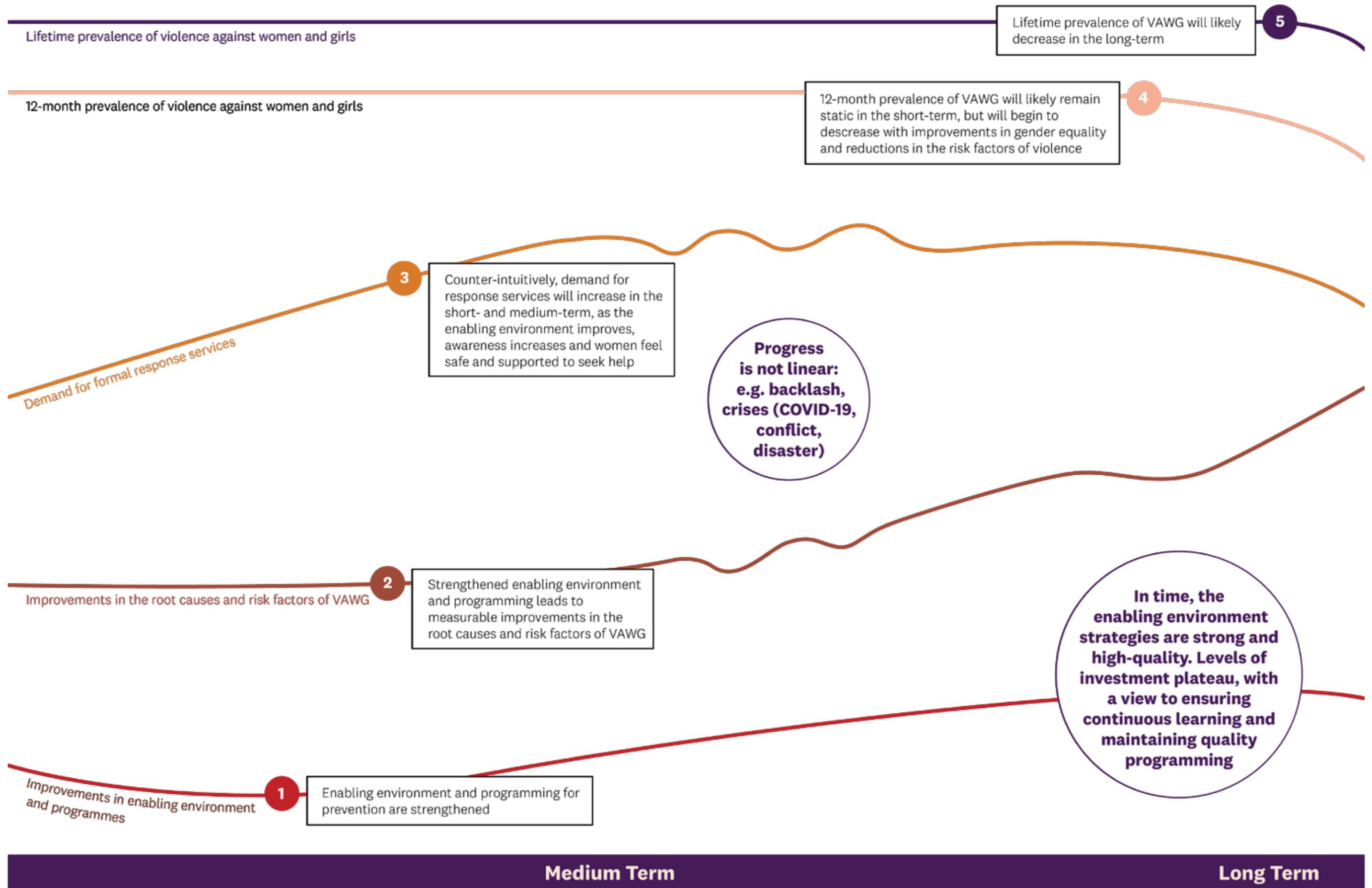
4

**12-month prevalence of VAWG** (peach line): As the root causes and risk factors reduce and protective factors are strengthened, rates of VAWG will decrease. Twelve-month prevalence rates will demonstrate the earliest positive impacts, and these too will vary in response to certain events, however will ultimately, decrease.

5

**Lifetime prevalence of VAWG** (dark purple line) will take much longer to improve, because incidents experienced earlier in people’s lives will continue to be counted. However, as subsequent generations of girls grow up where gender equality, respect and non-violence are the norm, lifetime prevalence rates will start to fall.

Figure 2: The expected process of change



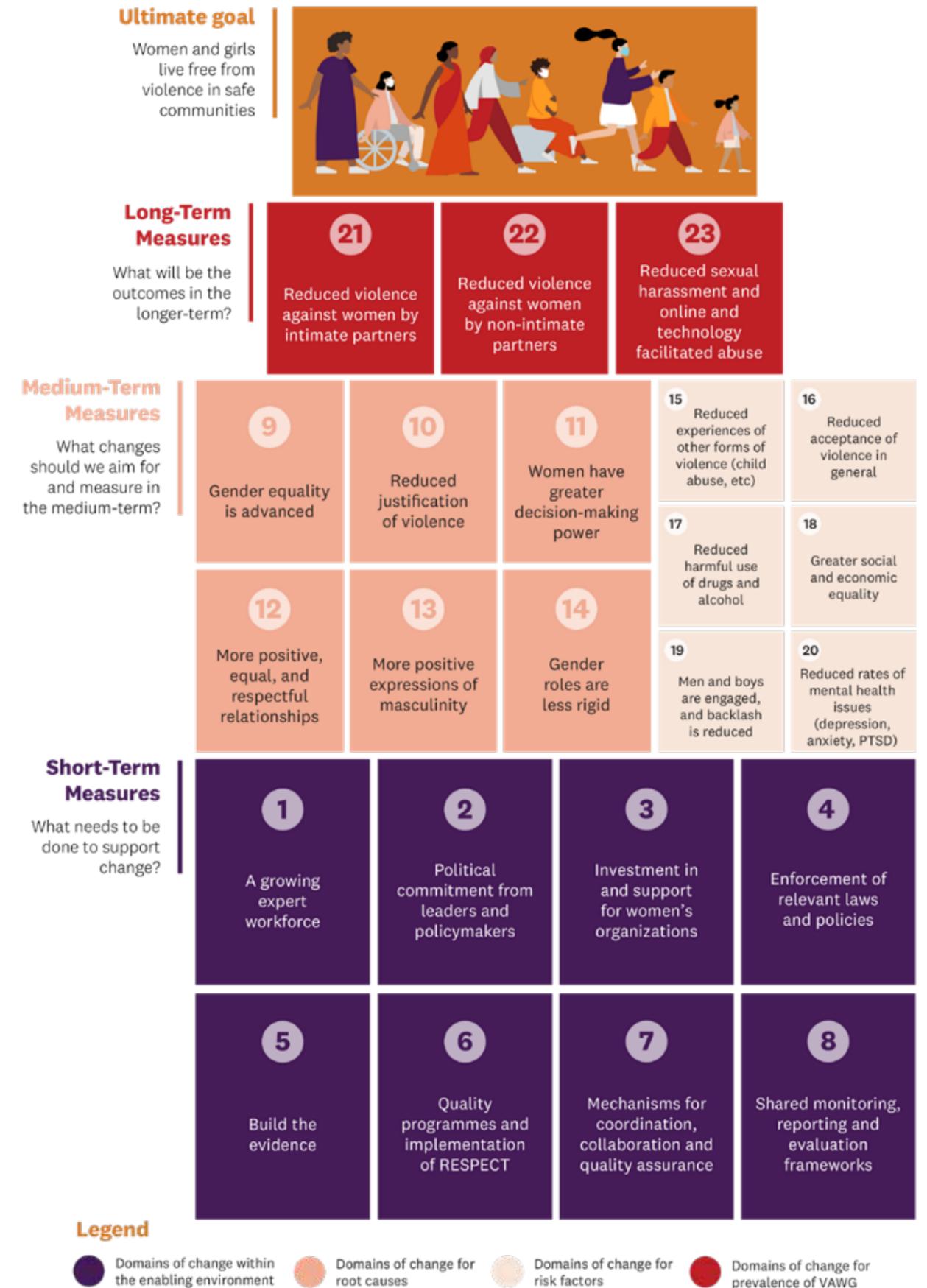


**Domains of change**

In order to track the expected process of change, as outlined in Figure 2, short-, medium- and long-term measures are needed. Figure 3 illustrates the broad domains of change. It is important to think critically about the relationships *between* domains. By looking for progress across *all* the domains of change we start to see how changes might be interconnected and impact on one another.



**Figure 3: The domains of change**



## Measures and indicators

A mix of quantitative indicators from existing population level data sets, plus qualitative research is recommended to understand change over time (see the full framework for examples of research methods).

### SHORT-TERM MEASURES:

#### Strengthening the enabling environment

Building and strengthening programming and the enabling environment is the vital ‘first step’ for reducing the prevalence of VAWG in the long-term and all other changes will depend on it.

Examples of short-term measures:

<b>Domain 3: Invest in, build on the work of and support women’s organizations</b>
Evidence suggests one of the most consistent key factors in driving policy change and results to ending VAWG is feminist activism. <sup>7,8</sup> Women’s organizations are at the frontlines of not only responsible service provision, but also community awareness raising and lobbying, and thus they are vital to prevention. Good leadership must be built, supported and invested in, and their work must be valued. This will help to ensure that women’s organizations continue to contribute to the progress of prevention.
<b>Principles for supporting women’s organizations</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Women’s organizations are not reliant on precarious funding cycles, nor are their budgets cut for ‘cost saving’, but instead are fully funded and resourced.</li> <li>2. Women’s organizations are permitted to work freely without interference.</li> </ol>
<b>Possible indicators for domain 3</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Women’s organizations and other CSOs are permitted to work independently.</li> <li>2. Governments allocate a particular, ongoing percentage of their budgets to support women’s organizations.</li> </ol>

### MEDIUM-TERM MEASURES:

#### Addressing the root causes and risk factors

The medium-term indicators are adapted from the *RESPECT Framework*, and measure change from across the socio-ecological model, tracking changes in norms, practices and structures.

<sup>7</sup> Ellsberg, M., Ugarte, W., Blackwell, A., and Quintanilla, M. 2020. “Long-term change in the prevalence of intimate partner violence: a 20-year follow-up study in Leon, Nicaragua, 1995-2016”. *BMJ Global Health* 5(4).

<sup>8</sup> Weldon, S. Laurel, and Mala Htun. 2013. “Feminist mobilisation and progressive policy change: why governments take action to combat violence against women.” *Gender & Development* 21 (2): 231-247.

Examples of medium-term measures:

<b>Root causes</b> Domain 10: Reduced justification of violence	Reduced justification of violence	<b>Indicator 10.1.1</b> Proportion of men and women aged 15 years and older who believe a husband is justified in beating his wife under some circumstances.
<b>Risk factors</b> Domain 19: Men and boys are engaged, backlash is reduced	Increase men’s participation in gender equitable behaviours, such as parenting and household responsibilities.	<b>Indicator 19.3.1</b> Proportion of men who undertake parental/household responsibilities. <i>(Possible Indicators: how many men do chores or play with their children and how often.</i>

### LONG-TERM MEASURES:

#### Reducing prevalence of violence against women and girls

The long-term measures are aligned with SDG indicators and measure a reduction in violence against women by intimate partners and non-intimate partners and reduced sexual harassment and online trolling.

Example of long-term indicators:

<b>Domain 21:</b> Reduced violence by intimate partners	Reduced physical, sexual and psychological violence by intimate partners	<b>Indicator 21.1</b> Proportion of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to physical, sexual or psychological violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by form of violence and by age
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#### Guidance on national implementation

While this framework offers regional guidance, ultimately, any prevention strategy must be adapted to the national context. The broad principles to guide adaptation cover four key areas:

- developing a national level strategy for prevention;
- stakeholder engagement;
- alignment with other mechanisms; and
- ongoing monitoring and evaluation.

