



# Stepping Up Solutions to Eliminate Violence against Women and Girls in Asia and the Pacific (2017-2021)



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UN Women is the UN organization dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. A global champion for women and girls, UN Women was established to accelerate progress on meeting their needs worldwide. UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality, and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to ensure that the standards are effectively implemented and truly benefit women and girls worldwide.

This publication presents highlights of results achieved under the regional project, “Stepping Up Solutions to Eliminate Violence against Women and Girls in Asia and the Pacific”. UN Women would like to thank the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and the Republic of Korea, Ministry of Gender Equality and Family, for their generous support.

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**“Now I go to the market to buy food, clean my house and cook which was unthinkable for me before. Through the training, I have learned how to manage and restrain my anger. I would never ever use violence against my wife anymore. It’s never a good choice!”**

Tam Kim, 65, a retired officer in Da Nang

## Introduction

**Violence against women and girls (VAWG) has devastating physical, emotional, financial and social impacts on women, children and communities and is a major impediment to women's economic empowerment and sustainable development. Violence at home, in public and private, and in the workplace, has many costs for affected individuals, their families, communities, businesses and societies.**

The regional project “Stepping Up Solutions to Eliminate Violence against Women and Girls in Asia and the Pacific” is quite literally stepping up solutions by bringing together a wealth of evidence, knowledge and innovative approaches from every facet of society involved in ending VAWG for good. The project unites men and boys, teachers and students in schools and universities, local, national and regional governments and policymakers, the judiciary, law enforcement, service providers and celebrities, and it is amplifying the voices of activists and survivors. Studies, activities, events, training and community mobilization initiatives spanning a number of critical areas together represent enormous steps in policy, prevention and

response for women and girls experiencing or at risk of violence.

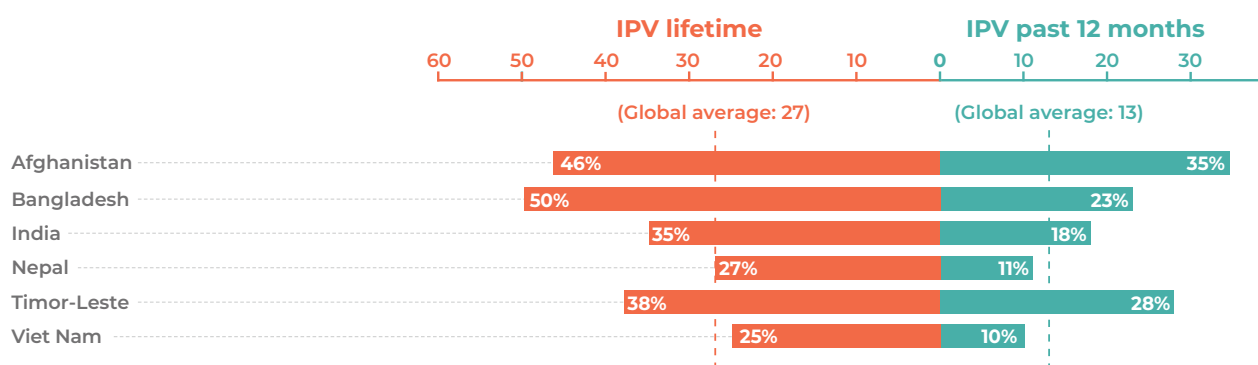
Running from March 2017 until September 2021, the Stepping Up project was rolled out by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) as an ambitious regional initiative that contributed to policies, interventions and innovative approaches across Asia and the Pacific.

In addition to regional level work, the programme focused on implementing community-based and school-based projects in Viet Nam and Timor-Leste. It supported evidence-building on VAWG prevention, workplace responses to VAWG, linking violence against women (VAW) and violence against children (VAC), and research on technology-facilitated violence.<sup>1</sup>

The Stepping Up project was generously supported by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and the Republic of Korea, Ministry of Gender Equality and Family.

### COUNTRY PREVALENCE ESTIMATES OF INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE (IPV)

This chart shows country prevalence estimates of intimate partner violence (IPV) during the lifetime and in the past 12 months among ever-married/partnered women age 15–49 in six key countries supported by the project.\*



\*WHO 2021, Violence Against Women Prevalence Estimates, 2018: Global, regional and national prevalence estimates for intimate partner violence against women and global and regional prevalence estimates for non-partner sexual violence against women, pp. 90-96.

1. Next to the response to VAWG, UN Women in Asia and the Pacific focuses on primary prevention and social norm change as a strategic priority in the movement towards gender equality and ending VAWG. As the evidence base on what it takes to prevent VAWG and change social norms grows UN Women is building prevention approaches such as through a regional prevention strategy, developed for Asia and the Pacific.



Photo: UN Women Viet Nam/Pham Phuong Anh

# LEGAL/POLICY

One aim of the project was to contribute to an enabling legislative and policy environment in line with international standards on ending VAWG and other forms of discrimination, including support to efforts to establish anti-sexual harassment policies among several universities, introducing guidelines on VAWG essential services and providing technical inputs in national strategies to reduce and end VAWG.

## Towards an unbiased, survivor-centred criminal justice system

Nidd worked in a factory in Bangkok. She was raped by a co-worker and became pregnant.

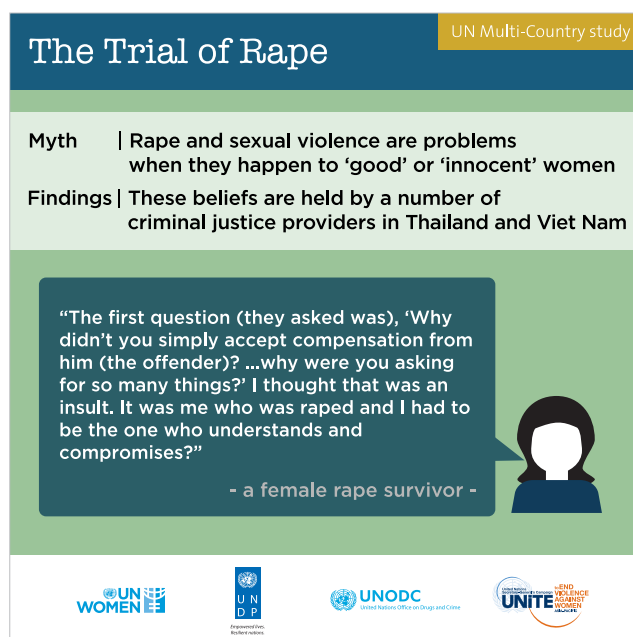
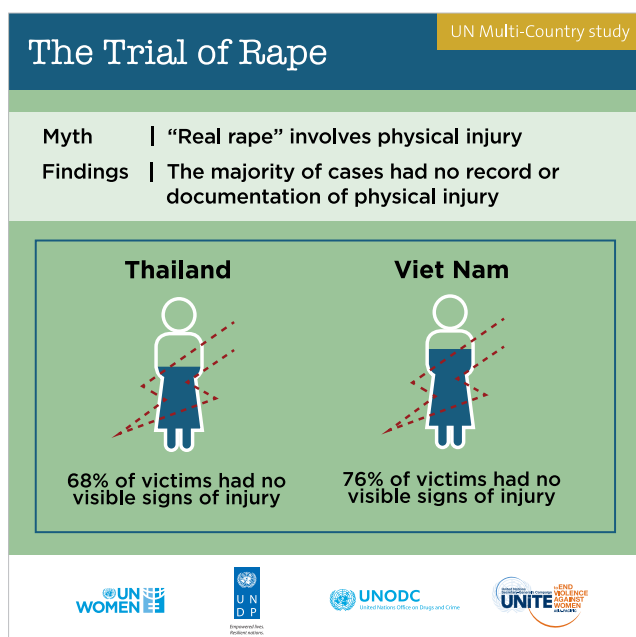
*"I was so embarrassed and scared... I did not dare to tell anyone. I only wanted to commit suicide."*

With support from the Women and Men Progressive Foundation, she reported her case to the police - but the treatment she received from the police was surprising and disempowering. She was interrogated four times by male inquiry officials and asked, "Why didn't you simply accept compensation from him (the offender)?" She went to the police station more than 10 times for her case to be able to proceed and throughout the process, the police tried to mediate and settle her case against her will. She was told to accept the money and drop the case because "after all, he (the offender) is the father of your baby."

Eventually the case went through to the prosecution stage. "The system is not women-friendly. But I can't surrender just because of that. I was about to but then I thought I wanted my kid to grow up knowing that his/her mom was strong and that justice, at least for women, must be fought for."<sup>2</sup>

Nidd's experience is far from unique. Women face social, cultural and institutional barriers to justice for sexual violence. Harmful social norms perpetuate gender discrimination and stereotyping, including cultural constructions of femininity and traditional perceptions of manhood and men's perceived sexual entitlement. Family honour and social stigma often mean that 'saving face' is more important than justice. Too often, justice institutions and structures replicate gender inequalities in society.

**Trial of Rape** is the first study of its kind in the Asia-Pacific region analysing how the criminal justice systems in Thailand and Viet Nam respond to reported cases of rape and sexual assault. It demonstrates that many police and justice officials believe common myths about sexual violence, such as that sexual assault must result in visible injury if the incident truly happened without consent, and that sexual violence is usually perpetrated by a stranger while in reality, most perpetrators and victims know each other already by the time of the incident. Too often, women do not seek help because when they do speak out, many feel blamed for the violence committed against them by the very people tasked with protecting them. This study has been used by advocates and Governments to bring about reforms in justice and response systems.





2. UN Women, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) (2017). The Trial of Rape: Understanding the criminal justice system response to sexual violence in Thailand and Viet Nam, p. 31.

The Trial of Rape
UN Multi-Country study

Legal and institutional factors influence attrition

The case file analysis found one victim who had to go to the police station more than 10 times before her case could proceed. Throughout the process, she said, the police tried to mediate and settle her case against her will. She was told to accept the money and drop the case because, “after all, he (the offender) is the father of your baby.”





The Trial of Rape
UN Multi-Country study

To protect women’s human rights and end violence against women, the study recommends to:

- Prioritize safety
- Train skilled responders
- Focus on quality services
- Coordinate services among justice actors and other response actors





## The Trial of Rape study identified priority recommendations in the following key areas:

- Establish quality essential justice services for victims that prioritize their safety, protection and support.
- Build institutional capacities to transform organizational cultures and create gender awareness and sensitivity.
- Promote comprehensive legal and policy frameworks.
- Ensure approaches sensitive to sexual violence survivors are reflected in criminal justice policies, practices and resources.
- Develop effective internal and external oversight and accountability mechanisms.
- Promote specialized expertise at all stages of the criminal justice system.
- Promote an integrated and coordinated criminal justice, government and civil society response.
- Develop effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.
- Prioritize resources, both human and financial, for effective delivery of services.

Source: UN Women, UNDP, UNODC (2017). The Trial of Rape: Understanding the criminal justice system response to sexual violence in Thailand and Viet Nam, pp. 93-101.



## HeForShe University Tour

Universities are where many young people taste independence for the first time. It is a time of shaping minds and developing character, and for some, it is a time of challenging traditional norms and ideas. It is an incubator for the next generation to build a better future. With this in mind, the HeForShe University Tour engaged with students at several leading Thai universities including Webster University, Chulalongkorn University, Thammasat University and Mahidol University International College on the theme of ending VAWG on campuses.

Research and anecdotal evidence indicate that VAW is a severe problem at universities globally. UN Women is committed to working with universities to prevent VAW, which includes sexual harassment and assault, IPV, dating violence and stalking. Beyond the impact on survivors, such violence also has negative impacts on the university and campus community at large.

Inadequate prevention and responses to violence perpetuate the problem, putting other students at risk. Inaction also fuels a more general tolerance of VAW. In enabling women to learn, universities have an obligation to keep them safe and to help them have a life free from violence.<sup>3</sup>

The University Tour took place in September 2019. UN Women reflected with students at the universities on their role in ending gender inequality. It appeared that none of the universities had campus sexual harassment policies prior to this. University administrations adopted concrete commitments including policies and protocols to make campuses more gender-equal and safe, continuing the conversation of gender equality, strengthening partnerships between faculty and students, and developing research on inequality and violence.

3. UN Women (2018). Guidance Note on Campus Violence and Response.

**“Knowledge and action are key to combating gender-based violence, at both individual and structural levels. By creating an enabling environment for everyone to learn about unequal gendered power relations, universities can play an important role in fostering a culture of inclusivity that will help decrease gender-based bias, stereotyping and violence. We are proud to lead the way in Thailand with this HeForShe University Tour.”**

Dr. Pirongrong Ramasoota,  
Vice President of Chulalongkorn University

Concrete actions and commitments from university administrations after the HeForShe University Tour:<sup>4</sup>

- Chulalongkorn University noted interest in conducting research on sexual violence and harassment.
- Mahidol University International College will engage in both research and the creation of a policy targeting violence on campus.
- Webster University has committed to increasing collaboration with students.
- Thammasat University pledged to support gender equality efforts on campus and officially announced on 25 November 2020 its commitment to prevent sexual harassment on campus. Thammasat is the first Thai university to have a dedicated policy on preventing and responding to sexual harassment and sexual violence on campus. The policy was informed in part by the **Guidance note** on campus violence prevention and response.
- Additionally, students from Stamford University who attended the HeForShe University Tour engaged in action for change on their own campus. With the support of UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, Stamford University students led the #PolicyPlease campaign, resulting in the formation of a students' Gender Equality Club to advocate for positive change and the creation of a policy addressing gender-based violence on campus.

4. See <https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/news-and-events/stories/2019/10/heforshe-takes-the-message-of-gender-equality-to-students-and-staff-in-university-tour>



## Framing violence against women at the Asia-Pacific Beijing +25 Review

In 2020 the world marked the 25th Anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. This historic framework aimed to advance the rights of women and was agreed at the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995. It remains the most progressive blueprint ever for advancing women's rights.

UN Women worked closely with national Governments, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) to assess progress and determine the approaches to advance gender equality in preparation for the **Asia-Pacific Regional Review of the 25th Anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (Beijing +25 Review)**.

Ending VAWG was successfully positioned as a high-profile issue throughout the event. At the conference, this message was reinforced by Ms. Dubravka Šimonovic, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, and the United Nations top independent expert on VAW.

The Beijing +25 Review is remarkable because it presents opportunities to link grassroots advocacy with intergovernmental processes and create a feedback loop that reinforces what is needed both immediately and in the longer term.

**“We are now seeing a lot of progress around the world but violence against women is still widespread and persistent. It is present in all countries and remains one of the greatest obstacles to achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women.”**

Ms. Dubravka Šimonovic, United Nations Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences

### Highlighting violence against women at the Asia-Pacific Beijing +25 Review

Ms. Šimonovic’s participation elevated attention for ending VAWG during the Beijing +25 Review. Her visit included dialogues with the media, civil society organizations (CSOs), governments and ASEAN representatives on the latest evidence and thinking regarding VAWG, femicide, using the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), General Recommendation 35 on VAW,<sup>5</sup> VAW data, trends in VAW legislation with a focus on sexual violence and rape, and state accountability.

UN Women and UNFPA, as co-chairs of the UNiTE Working Group, organized events to connect practitioners, thought leaders, policymakers and media on the frontline issues guiding action to end VAW today:

- The United Nations Special Rapporteur was invited to join a CSO Forum in Bangkok, held in advance of the Beijing +25 Review meeting, to hear from advocates in this region and share key messages;
- A session was held with the media to discuss trends and messages (such as marital rape, data on VAW, and the lack of National Action Plans on VAWG);
- Meetings with United Nations agencies.

A high-profile event during the Beijing +25 Review called **“Rewriting the Narrative: Asia Pacific Commemoration of the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence”** featured personal storytelling, global experts, celebrities, music and dance for 400 participants representing CSOs, youth groups and Governments. The event highlighted the voices of survivors of violence, activists and experts. As a result, commitments to ending VAW were made by participants from Governments, CSOs, activists, influential personalities and celebrities. Feedback was extremely positive, with participants connecting emotionally to the many facets of VAWG. One participant stated: “After seeing 10 years of United Nations events, this was the best event at the United Nations that I have ever seen.”

5. On 14 July 2017, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW Committee) adopted General Recommendation No. 35 on gender-based violence against women, updating General Recommendation No. 19. See <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hrbodies/cedaw/pages/gr35.aspx>.



# PREVENTION

Today there is evidence to show that violence against women and girls is preventable. The Stepping Up project sought to share this evidence and knowledge, and test some key programmatic approaches.

Prevention targets harmful social norms, attitudes and behaviours and works with individuals and communities to promote respectful relationships and gender equality, and eradicate the root causes of gender-based violence.



## A deepening partnership to prevent violence against women and girls

Through **Stepping Up**, UN Women worked with the **Prevention Collaborative** to provide technical assistance to the UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific and six UN Women country offices – Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Timor-Leste and Viet Nam – on the prevention of VAWG. The regional office cooperated with these six country offices to enable a deeper partnership with global prevention experts, noting that large-scale, strategic and population level actions are

needed to prevent violence in order to achieve the reductions in VAW that are sought.

The partnership with the Prevention Collaborative has deepened UN Women's work on prevention of VAWG in the region including through the development of a regional strategy on VAW prevention and creating new evidence on what works to prevent violence.

**“It has been a pleasure to work with very dedicated UN Women staff and partners to learn about their programming contexts, the opportunities and constraints they face, to reflect strategically together about how they can best make a positive contribution to violence prevention, and to work together at a very practical level on how to strengthen programmes and document learning.”**

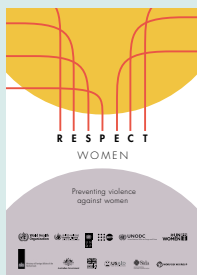
Dr Lyndsay McLean, The Prevention Collaborative

In partnership with Prevention Collaborative, UN Women has advanced the dialogue with partners at the country and regional levels on the links between women's economic empowerment and VAWG. This has resulted in shifts in project design and strategies with UN Women partners, bringing attention to areas such as:

- Women's economic empowerment and VAWG;
- Prevention and violence against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer and other (LGBTIQ+) populations;
- The new RESPECT framework led by the World Health Organization (WHO) and UN Women;
- A focus in Timor-Leste on trauma-informed prevention and response programming;
- Engaging men and boys in prevention, and gender responsive positive parenting.

Through this partnership, UN Women and the Prevention Collaborative have achieved the following results:

- Rolled out of the RESPECT framework in Bangladesh, India and Nepal in partnership with WHO via an 11-week webinar series.
- Developed prevention resources, tools and strategies tailored to the regional and country context, including:
  - Guidance on designing and implementing behaviour change programmes;
  - Discussion tools on engaging men and boys in Nepal to end VAWG and prevent violence against/among LGBTIQ+ groups;
  - Guidance on promising and effective approaches to violence prevention in Bangladesh.
- Incorporated lessons learned from the Connect with Respect project, and designed a gender-responsive positive parenting curriculum to end VAWG.
- Developed a regional prevention strategy and coordinated with UN Women offices in the Pacific and the programme entitled "**Pacific Partnership to End Violence Against Women and Girls**" to align prevention strategies.



RESPECT Women is a prevention framework launched by WHO in partnership with UN Women. It has support from twelve UN, bilateral, and multilateral agencies, which outlines steps for a public health and human rights-based approach to scaling up prevention programming on VAW. It builds on the learnings compiled in the United Nations Prevention of Violence against Women Framework (2015), and in additional systematic reviews, to provide evidence-based strategies on preventing VAW.

The framework outlines seven inter-related intervention strategies derived from the word "respect":

- R**elationships skills strengthened
- E**mpowerment of women
- S**ervices ensured
- P**overty reduced
- E**nvironments made safe
- C**hild and adolescent abuse prevented
- T**ransformed attitudes, beliefs and norms

Source: WHO 2019, RESPECT women: Preventing violence against women. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2019/05/respect-women-preventing-violence-against-women>



Photo: UN Women/Thao Hoang

## SASA! and Male Advocate Clubs in Viet Nam

Localized to the country context, SASA! and Male Advocate Clubs — two evidence-based models — are engaging members of the community to foster critical reflection on gender and power, and to spur local level activism. Taking a cue from the highly successful **SASA! programme** in Uganda that worked with communities to prevent VAW,

UN Women Viet Nam and the Da Nang Women's Union adapted this approach to set up clubs of the mothers and fathers of schoolchildren and they mobilized communities around the schools. Four phases of the SASA! model were completed in three communities in Da Nang.

### Male Advocate Clubs

Through the Male Advocate Clubs, UN Women took a primary prevention approach by addressing the underlying causes and risk factors for VAWG perpetration and empowering men to adopt non-violent masculinities and gender equitable attitudes, as well as strengthening their relationship, communication, and conflict resolution skills. The model was successfully piloted in two communities in Da Nang city by UN Women and the Da Nang Women's Union in 2015-2016, through *Partners for Prevention*, a regional joint programme of UN Women, UNFPA, UNDP and United Nations Volunteers.

A rapid assessment showed positive results on community mobilization for social norms change and transforming attitudes and beliefs. Focus group discussions with local women and men have demonstrated positive results and changed attitudes of men and women who believe they should respect each other, share household chores and care work to maintain an equal relationship. There was a reduction in the belief that men are the main pillar of the family and women should only be caretakers of the home. Through the project, both men and women strongly objected to VAW, supported actions to hold perpetrators accountable and were willing to work together to stop violence in the community.

Participants now better understand how to prevent VAW in their communities. With strong community ownership and government support, the approach has become a model for replication in other communities following the City's Directive No. 39-CT/TU dated 22 April 2020 on "Building a safe Da Nang City free from violence against women and children." There are also ongoing conversations to replicate the project nationwide under the National Programme on Gender Based Violence Prevention and Response 2021-2025.

UN Women brought representatives from every province to see the Male Advocate Clubs in action. Several of these observers went home to set up similar clubs. In Ho Chi Minh City, inspired by the success of the model in Da Nang, six Male Advocate Clubs were established with the support of the city.

### **What is SASA!**

Developed by the non-governmental organization, 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 VAWG. The approach focuses on identifying power relations in order to understand and shift the root causes of VAWG. 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. Under the aegis of the Regional Ending Violence against Women Programme, Viet Nam and the Lao People's Democratic Republic both developed innovative community mobilization interventions inspired by the SASA! model.

**"What really inspires me, is that when I go to the community, I see men who were trained by us really committed to work against gender-based violence. They really become a champion in the community."**

Le Thi Lan Phuong,  
UN Women, Viet Nam



Photo: UN Women

## Ending violence starts with education

Prevention should start early in life by educating and working with young boys and girls to promote respectful relationships and gender equality. Working with youth is often overlooked by public policies and interventions to prevent and eradicate VAW. Because this stage of life is a critical time when values and norms around gender equality are forged, the Stepping Up project worked with educators to promote transformative attitudes and behaviours in schools.

**Connect with Respect<sup>6</sup>** is an evidence-based education programme to prevent VAWG. It is a tool for schools and teachers to dialogue about healthy and respectful relationships, sharing power, gender equality, and preventing VAW from a young age. The programme aims to develop student skills

and attitudes central to respectful relationships, and strengthen student ability to recognize and respond to VAWG.

UN Women is working in partnership with the ministries of education in Timor-Leste and Viet Nam in select schools to focus on developing skills and networks to change harmful social norms, through arts and educational programmes, engaging male and female students, their teachers, parents and the wider community.

Partnerships were strengthened with ministries of education in Timor-Leste and Viet Nam to implement school-based prevention of violence initiatives through the adaptation and implementation of the Connect with Respect tool.



Connect with Respect aims to empower teachers and school communities to prevent, address and respond effectively to gender discrimination and VAWG. The project works with:

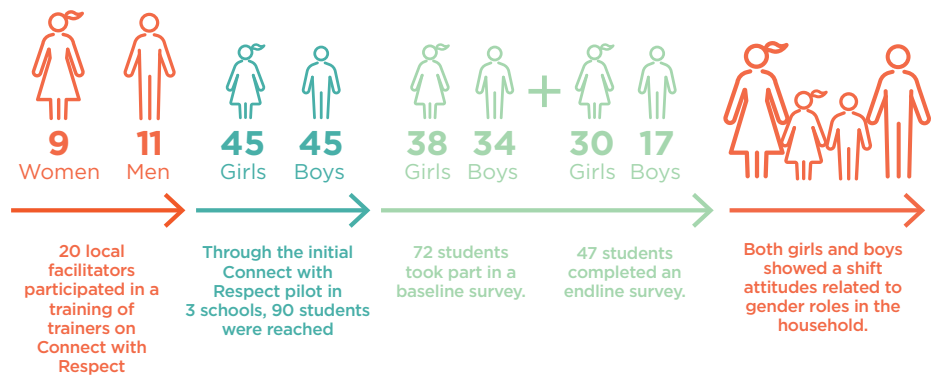
- **LEARNERS:** To build equitable attitudes and behaviours among students. Students model non-discriminatory and non-violent attitudes and behaviours.
- **TEACHERS:** To create safe learning environments. Schools are provided with evidence-informed extra-curricular activities to address VAWG as well as effective violence-response mechanisms.
- **PARENTS:** To develop family and community understanding and to promote action.
- **LEADERS:** To create an enabling policy environment. Clear guidelines will be put in place to address VAWG in schools and schools will be supported by a national framework.

6. UN Women, UNESCO, UNICEF and Plan International 2016, Connect with Respect: Preventing gender-based violence in schools: Classroom Programme for Students in Early Secondary School (age 11-14), <https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2016/04/connect-with-respect>

## Timor-Leste

In partnership with the Timor-Leste Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport and the University of Melbourne, UN Women facilitated a training of trainers workshop on the adaptation, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of the Connect with Respect tool in selected schools in Timor-Leste.

### Highlights of the Connect with Respect project in Timor-Leste



**“In my long career as a teacher, I have never seen comprehensive materials like Connect with Respect. It enriches our civic education knowledge to teach our children to prevent violence at the school and in the community.”**

Geraldo Reibero Soares, School Principal,  
EBC Cassait, Timor-Leste

During the 16 Days of Activism against Gender Based Violence campaign, Connect with Respect participants (students and teachers) engaged 448 students, teachers, parents and community members (208 women, 240 men) through drama and storytelling, and they examined how their attitudes changed at home and school after participating in the extracurricular activities. Teachers shared experiences of the closeness and respect they gained from their students after

applying positive discipline in the learning process, the benefits of mutual decision-making at home with their partner and the impact that using non-violent discipline strategies had with their children.

The changes shared by students include sharing household work at home regardless of gender roles and being more considerate and respectful to peers.

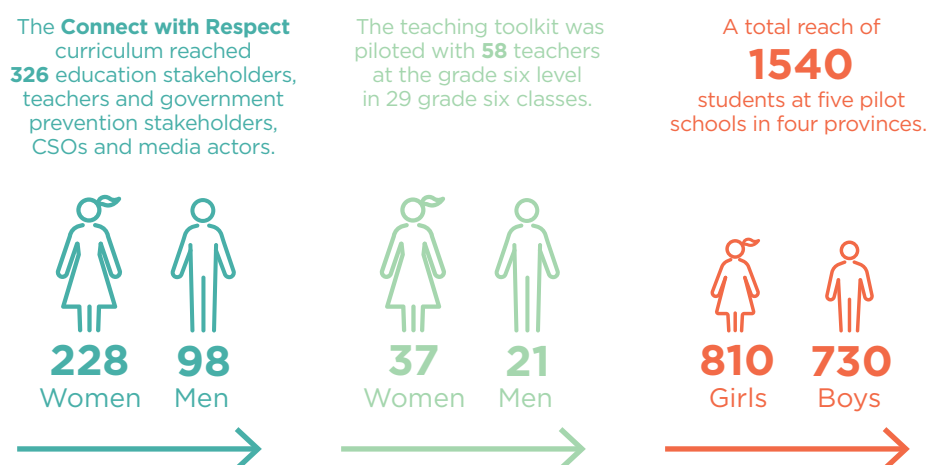
## Viet Nam

With technical assistance from the University of Melbourne, 50 participants from the Ministry of Education and Training, school leaders and core teachers in eight schools across seven urban and rural regions, were equipped with knowledge and practical tools to monitor and evaluate the Connect with Respect tool at a two-day training in March 2019.

A follow-up event led to further training and refining to better implement the curriculum leading to wider application of the toolkit in selected schools. Considering the successful implementation of training, the Ministry of Education and Training has suggested that the Connect with Respect

project should be scaled up in the country. As a result of the programme's initial investment in Connect with Respect in early 2020, UN Women provided technical support to the Ministry of Education and Training to integrate Connect with Respect approaches into their revised curriculum and provided a training document to guide the implementation of the curriculum using the Connect with Respect approach. There are plans to revise and introduce the Connect with Respect toolkit to the leaders of the Ministry of Education and Training in 63 provinces of Viet Nam upon the completion of the pilot. The Ministry also plans to develop guidance for the nationwide scale up of Connect with Respect.<sup>7</sup>

### Highlights of the Connect with Respect project in Viet Nam



## Multi-country study on violence against women and violence against children

While the fields working to end VAC and VAW have largely developed separately, recent reviews and analyses of large datasets have identified multiple intersections between VAC and VAW including: co-occurrence, shared risk factors, similar underlying social norms, common consequences, intergenerational effects, and the period of adolescence as unique period of heightened vulnerabilities to both types of violence. These intersections suggest that collaboration between the sectors is essential to achieve a more effective prevention and response. UN Women, UNFPA and

the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in the Asia-Pacific region partnered to conduct a multi-country study on how VAC and VAW intersect. The study, '**Ending Violence against Women and Children - Opportunities and Challenges for Collaborative and Integrative Approaches**', explored existing examples of collaboration and the integration of VAC and VAW policies, services, and programmes, as well as challenges and future opportunities in the East Asia and Pacific region, with a focus on four countries – Cambodia, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines and Viet Nam.

7. Due to COVID-19, school closures delayed the implementation of the end line survey, which was completed in 2020.



## ASEAN youth gather to generate social change

Twenty youth representatives from member countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and more than 100 Vietnamese youth gathered together with international and local experts for the **Gender Dialogue: Engaging ASEAN Youths in Gender initiatives workshop**, which highlighted the potential for youth to generate social change for gender equality and the empowerment of women at both regional and national levels by 2030.

The dialogue was the culmination of a five-day “Training of Trainers: **Change Makers** — Youth Activists for Gender Equality” using UN Women’s

‘The Change Makers’ toolkit for young activists to end VAWG.

The programme also provided small grants to help participants share the knowledge they gained through the training with their peers and initiate campaigns or projects in their local communities.

Following the course, at least 12 projects were conducted in communities in ASEAN member countries with financial and technical support from the organizers to tackle the issue of gender inequality.

### Youth As Change Makers: A young activist’s toolkit for ending violence against women and girls (2017)



Young people are the leaders and change makers for today and tomorrow – they have the opportunity to shape the world they want. A focus on young people is crucial for advancing gender equality, for preventing and eradicating VAW, and creating a world in which men and women live in healthy and respectful relationships with each other.

The Asia-Pacific UNiTE Campaign secretariat, together with a group of Asia-Pacific regional members of the UNiTE Youth Network, developed a regionally focused, youth-friendly training manual for peer educators to help facilitate discussions on gender equality, VAW, healthy relationships and positive activism. The Change Makers toolkit continues to be used by countries from China to Bangladesh.

# "MYTHS AND MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT SEXUAL VIOLENCE"

Photos: UN Women/ DoDiDone Co.,Ltd.



การให้เกียรติเป็นพื้นฐานที่จะยุติการละเมิด และเคารพกฎหมายทางเพศได้  
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 โดย: นิตยสาร...  
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## นิทรรศการพลังสังคมหยุดคุกคามทางเพศ SOCIAL POWER EXHIBITION AGAINST SEXUAL ASSAULT

#Don'tTellMeHowToDress



## Standing up to a culture of victim blaming

"What were you wearing?" "Why did you go out alone?" "You were asking for it." Challenging the notion that women's appearance and behaviour are to blame when they are assaulted and that sexual violence is acceptable, that women are responsible, or it should not be spoken about is at the heart of the #Don'tTellMeHowToDress exhibition, organized by the campaign founder Cindy Sirinya Bishop, who is a Thai model, actress, author and activist.

The #DontTellMeHowToDress exhibition features clothing worn by survivors of sexual violence and aims to debunk the myth that women should avoid dressing provocatively or exposing themselves

to the risk of assault. This includes questioning the silence which does not hold perpetrators accountable for their actions and the common impulse to question the behaviour of the victim rather than the perpetrator of sexual violence.

The exhibition has been held in sites in Thailand, the Philippines and Singapore, and it has been launched as a **virtual exhibition as of 2021**.



## Human Library

Survivors and activists against discrimination and violence became living books to share their personal experiences of discrimination, inequality and violence at the Human Library event in Bangkok. People from different backgrounds played the role of library books, each one telling a personal story about their experiences with inequality, stigma and violence, as they explained their motivations to advocate for positive change as part of the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence.

The human “books” were a diverse group of storytellers from different racial and ethnic

backgrounds, social classes, and with different gender identities; all with different life experiences to share. These included survivors of sexual violence and human trafficking, individuals from the LGBTIQ+ community, and women from sports and the media, among others.

During small group discussions between the “books” and guests, “books” gave open and frank answers to questions in a judgment-free safe space, and guests were invited to confront and eliminate their own internalized prejudices and myths about individuals from different backgrounds with different identities.

**“Somewhere, there is someone like me who is looking out the window wondering if anyone is thinking of them, and I ask you to be aware because you can be someone’s hope. Everyone thinks these things are not their business. We turn a blind eye to poverty and addiction and trafficking like it is not our business or there is nothing we can do. But there are ways we can prevent trafficking.”**

**“Book” Sophia Loibl, human trafficking survivor**

## TikTok #HeForSheAtHome challenge 2020

During the COVID-19 pandemic, millions of people spent more time at home. Gender inequalities in the home became increasingly apparent when it comes to women's contributions to housework and caring for children, the sick or the elderly. In addition, reports of domestic violence rose as women were confined to their homes with their abusers.

In response to the increased burden of care work and increased reports of domestic violence during COVID-19, UN Women launched the **#HeForSheAtHome campaign** to encourage men and boys – husbands, partners, brothers, sons, roommates – to create respectful relationships at home and do an equal part of the care work.

During the campaign, men shared films of themselves doing chores or taking care of their children on their favourite social media channels to show their support for shared caregiving and balanced relationships with the hashtag #HeForSheAtHome.



Photo: Cindy Sirinya Bishop

## Making Progress in Prevention Possible

Preventing VAW at scale begins with a vision for a future without violence, a sense of possibility and knowing the evidence regarding what approaches have worked in various settings. Doing so at a national level requires the ability to assess and track progress as it unfolds, and to keep directing funds and resources to approaches that have promise.

To track progress in prevention over time, UN Women partnered with the **Equality Institute** in Australia to adapt a model resource to measure progress on prevention at national levels. The model resource, **Counting on Change**, was developed by Our Watch, an Australian non-profit organization dedicated to the prevention of VAW. The adapted monitoring framework titled '**Making Progress in Prevention Possible**' was developed to assist in setting the vision for a future without violence, and tracking progress toward that goal. The purpose of this framework is to guide policymakers and practitioners through the key components for building a prevention framework

that is contextually relevant to countries in the Asia-Pacific region using an intersectional approach, and to illustrate how to measure change in the short, medium and long term.

The Framework:

- Provides broad level guidance on monitoring the prevention of VAWG;
- Illustrates the process of change and the domains of indicators that should be used to measure change against the recognized risk and protective factors of VAWG, as identified in the RESPECT Framework;
- Provides guidance on how to measure population-level (as opposed to programme level) progress towards the elimination of VAWG;
- Promotes the benefits of having regional consistency and comparability in VAWG data for prevention, as well as the benefits of collating shared learnings and supportive capacity development approaches.



# ESSENTIAL SERVICES/RESPONSE

A third aim of the project was to contribute to an enabling environment for increased investments in essential services to respond to and mitigate the impacts of VAWG. This was achieved by training service providers, and by increasing investment in quality essential services, in line with global guidelines and informed by new evidence on the economic costs and impact of VAWG.

Essential services are services provided by the health, social services, police and justice sectors to women and girls experiencing violence.

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## Roll-out of Essential Services Package for Women and Girls Subject to Violence

To improve the quality and accessibility of essential services for the survivors of gender-based violence, a Joint United Nations Programme was established on Essential Services for Women and Girls Subject to Violence with participation of UN Women, UNFPA, UNDP, UNODC and WHO. This programme sought to fill the gap between the agreements made by countries at the international level for responding to VAWG and work done at the country level to develop quality services and responses.

### 1. Regional and national workshops

In June 2017, more than 130 representatives from health, justice, police and social affairs and civil society of 12 countries<sup>8</sup> in Asia and the Pacific gathered to strengthen coordinated and multi-sectoral response to gender-based VAWG in the context of the global plan of action on VAWG and the **Essential Services Package for Women and Girls Subject to Violence**. Not only did the workshop bring together key stakeholders from different sectors to advance conversations, but the sessions highlighted the critical role that each and every sector plays in supporting survivors of violence. For instance, women often face difficulties when trying to access justice and legal systems after experiencing violence, such as stigmatization or reliving trauma when they have to speak about their experiences multiple times. Because of this, it is important that justice services providers and police – as well as other actors providing essential services – are sensitive to the needs of survivors. During the workshop, participants received practical guidance on survivor-centred methods and coordination across different sectors.

This multi-sectoral approach has received tremendous positive feedback, and it created significant momentum in the following months to replicate the regional workshop

at the national level in multiple countries, with support from UN Women. For instance, UN Women and partners at UNFPA, WHO, UNDP, UNODC supported Nepal, Papua New Guinea, Sri Lanka and Timor-Leste to roll out the Essential Services Package at the national level by developing and facilitating major multi-sector meetings. These meetings were instrumental in shaping cross-sector agreements to build coordinated responses.

### 2. Law enforcement response

Strengthening the policing and justice sector response, particularly that of law enforcement, has consistently been cited as one of the most challenging issues when responding to VAWG. A positive initial contact experience with police is crucial for survivors of violence and a high-quality police and justice response must be available and accessible to all women and girls who are navigating an often-complex justice system, especially those who are most marginalized and are at greater risk of experiencing violence.

To respond to this need, UN Women, under the framework of the United Nations Joint Global Programme on Essential Services, in partnership with UNODC and the International Association of Women Police, developed the **Handbook on gender-responsive police services for women and girls subject to violence**.

The UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific has been supporting country offices to have access to and use this Handbook across the region.

8. Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, India, Indonesia, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Timor-Leste.

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## Better use of data on violence against women

Over the past decade, global attention has shifted to collecting more and better data and evidence to support efforts to eliminate all forms of VAWG. The focus is on collecting data that can be used to inform and improve evidence-based programming to prevent and respond to VAWG.<sup>9</sup>

Having clear data and evidence on VAW is a critical starting point to develop effective policies and programmes to eliminate VAWG. Robust data and evidence is essential for impactful lobbying and advocacy, and contributes to making a strong case for allocating resources to eliminate and prevent VAWG. Evidence-based and data-driven approaches lead to more effective implementation and result in improved quality and availability of essential services, protection and justice for women and girls who have experienced violence. Data can demonstrate what is effective to prevent and respond to VAWG, and it can identify similarities and differences in women's and girls' experiences of violence and their ability to access essential services. The most useful data are disaggregated by sex as well as additional factors (such as age, race or ethnicity, wealth quintile, class, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, religion, nationality, or migrant status).<sup>10</sup>

The **ASEAN Regional Guidelines on Violence against Women and Girls Data Collection and Use** provide guidance to support ASEAN member countries to generate reliable data to inform evidence-based advocacy efforts, resource mobilization, budget-making, policy formulation and implementation and to monitor the impact of policies and programmes that aim to prevent and respond to VAWG. The Guidelines further support States to report on their targets and indicators on ending VAWG related to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The guidelines bring together leading recommendations on the collection of the three main types of data on VAWG.<sup>11</sup>

1. Administrative data are routinely collected and come from VAWG cases that are identified and reported, registered and handled by authorities and service providers – for example the police, prosecutors, courts, social welfare, social services, child protection, health and education.
2. Prevalence data come from surveys, including demographic and population surveys. This type of data captures the prevalence of VAWG for different age groups, factors that contribute to VAWG, people's attitudes toward VAWG, help-seeking behaviours, descriptions of perpetrators and negative consequences of VAWG on women and their children.
3. Costing data come from 'costing studies' – studies that determine and analyse the estimated monetary costs of VAWG by measuring and quantifying the various consequences for individuals, households and national economies. Costing data can estimate the impact of VAWG and estimate the costs of providing essential services to survivors of VAWG, using both prevalence and administrative data.

A major accomplishment of the Stepping Up project was support provided to countries to effectively use the Guidelines. For instance, in 2020 the project organized a series of online learning sessions in multiple countries to create a better understanding of the different types of VAW data and how to use them effectively. Due to demand from countries, the guidelines have been translated into Bahasa Indonesia, Thai and Vietnamese.

9. UN Women (2020), ASEAN Regional Guidance on Violence against Women and Girls Data Collection and Use, p. 31. <https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2018/04/asean-regional-guidelines-on-violence-against-women-and-girls>

10. Ibid., p. 31

11. Ibid., p. 12

## Online violence against women in Asia: A multi-country study

Information and communications technology (ICT) and the Internet have radically transformed how people interact. Freedom of expression and access to information are fundamental rights that enable a range of other human rights. The transformative potential of the Internet and digital technology is under threat due to high levels of ICT-related VAWG.

Conducted prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the study assumed an even greater relevance given how critical access to ICT became during the pandemic. The study presents new knowledge on ICT-related VAWG in five countries in Asia: India, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippines and the Republic of Korea.

### Manifestations of ICT-related violence against women and girls

- Sexist and misogynist comments or gender hate speech;
- Cyberbullying and mob attacks, online harassment, cyberstalking, discrimination and threats of violence (sexual and non-sexual);
- Digital voyeurism including non-consensual filming with hidden cameras, morphing/transmogrification,<sup>12</sup> cyberflashing, online threats and blackmail;
- Identity theft and fake profiles;
- Non-consensual dissemination of intimate photos/videos (sometimes referred to as 'revenge porn');
- Doxing,<sup>13</sup> sextortion,<sup>14</sup> online grooming, predation and exploitation of women and girls;
- Online harassment of women over dress and behaviour deemed "inappropriate" by those intent on moral policing of women's bodies and actions.



As the study found, ICT-related violence is common in all five countries with women and girls at higher risk than men of experiencing violence in digital spaces: offline VAWG is replicated online. At the same time, online violence is hardly reported to authorities.

Similarly to VAWG, hate speech and toxic use of digital media are driven by misogyny and

gender inequality. To counter cyberviolence and online opposition to gender equality, the study recommends that all digital users – including men and boys – are engaged in addressing harmful behaviours online. Similar to responses to offline VAWG, including survivor-centred approaches, should be applied in response to online violence.

12. Splicing photos or videos (for example, using "deep fake" applications to morph the head of a victim/survivor onto another image).

13. Disclosure online of personal data (for example, mobile phone numbers), frequently accompanied by malicious suggestions from the perpetrator for others to contact the victim/survivor.

14. Extorting sex or sexual favours by threatening to disseminate intimate images and rape footage.

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## **A training tool for prosecuting violence against women**

The **Training Package for Prosecutors Responding to Violence Against Women and Girls in Asia and the Pacific Island Region**, developed by UN Women and Global Rights for Women, was designed to fill a gap for engaging prosecutors in transformative conversations and journeys to reimagine how cases of VAW are responded to and handled by justice systems. Often, training of first responders is procedural and may not seek to transform attitudes and biases, including victim blaming, that often prevent women from seeking and achieving justice. This training package was designed with the survivor at the centre, and it allows for reflection about biases and discrimination in the justice system and full response systems, that may hold women back from reporting when they experience violence.

## **Case studies on promising workplace responses to intimate partner violence**

**Ending Violence is Our Business: Workplace Responses to Intimate Partner Violence in Asia and the Pacific** is a collection of case studies showcasing what businesses and workplaces can do to address IPV, as an issue that affects a large number of employees in all countries.

This collection of case studies demonstrates what businesses and workplaces can do to address IPV, as an issue that affects a large number of employees in all countries. Increasingly, private sector businesses and workplaces are acknowledging the many supportive actions they can take to assist their personnel, customers and audiences to live free from violence. These case studies show that companies have significant roles to play, and workplaces are part of a supportive environment that does not tolerate violence and abuse.

## **UN Women support to mid-term review of ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on the Elimination of Violence against Women**

UN Women and ASEAN are partnering to complete a mid-term review of ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on the Elimination of Violence against Women, and document progress in South-East Asia. As part of this process, UN Women supported in-country consultation workshops and provided recommendations for the development of the workplans of the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children and the ASEAN Committee on Women for 2021–2025. Collaboration between ASEAN and UN Women is a significant step and underlines the commitment of ASEAN to ending violence in the region.

